

‘RELOCALIZATION AND PREFIGURATIVE MOVEMENTS’ AS SOCIAL
NETWORKS AGAINST GLOBALIZATION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF LOCAL
ALTERNATIVES TO GLOBAL CAPITALISM

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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon an older periodization concerning worldwide social movements, we can say that the current decade is the first one of a period characterized by the strong presence of ‘relocalization and prefigurative social movements’. While earlier forms of organized collective actions either remained almost exclusively confined to the limits of the nation state (labor movements and new social movements) or explicitly rejected the nation state as the objective of their presence and chose a global action (global movements), modern relocalization movements reject both types of action and prefer an action focused directly against globalization. They act outside and away from the state and focus on territorial regeneration of the local autonomy as the cornerstone of self-governed and direct-democratic communities, with strong egalitarian social ties and a propensity for coequal participation.

These contemporary movements appear as forms of local resistance to globalization, but they are not showing trends of spatial or social isolation or marginalization, as happened, for instance, to most old communes and intentional communities of the past century. Instead, these are cosmopolitan communities that combine creatively community resilience and defence of the locality with the open spirit of cooperation, experimentation and constant learning. As far as their general structural influence is concerned, relocalization movements are opting more for 'solidarity economy' rather than 'social economy', since in the former case the solidarity practices affect the whole economic activity (production, circulation, consumption and accumulation), while in the latter case solidarity simply appears in the final phase (products, resources, goods, services). Therefore, local and autonomous communities fulfill social and economic functions in a most embedded and effective way.

In this sense, 'relocalization and prefigurative movements' can be seen, under certain conditions, as organizational frameworks of an anti-capitalist life project aiming to construct symbiotic and autonomous communities based on: (a) de-commodification of goods and services, (b) relocalization of production and culture; (c) ecological approach to life; (d) the critique of dependency and consumption, and (e) direct democracy. In this way, they reject capitalist modernization, unlimited growth and free trade. Their development trends depend on their potential to achieve their objectives and convince about the feasibility of implementation of the paradigm they propose.

Keywords: **relocalization movements, prefiguration, solidarity economy, peer production, degrowth**

‘Relocalization and prefigurative movements’ as social networks against globalization: the construction of local alternatives to global capitalism

INTRODUCTION

Drawing upon Wieviorka’s older periodization on worldwide social movements (Wieviorka, 2005), we can say that the current decade is the first one of a period characterized by the strong presence of ‘relocalization and prefigurative social movements’. While earlier forms of organized collective actions either remained almost exclusively confined to the limits of the nation state (labor movements and new social movements) or explicitly rejected the nation state as the objective of their presence and chose a global action (global movements), modern relocalization movements reject both types of action and prefer an action focused directly against globalization. They act outside and away from the state and focus on territorial regeneration of the local autonomy as the cornerstone of self-governed and direct-democratic communities, with strong egalitarian social ties and a propensity for coequal participation.

In this paper, I would try to discuss the worldwide presence and significance of a new generation of social movements, the so-called ‘relocalization and prefigurative movements’ (hereafter, RPMs), from the point of view of social movement theory. There are three main points I would mention here. First, RPMs are

to be considered as a set of movements clearly distinguishable from the movements in the past. Second, their activities should be analyzed as a local bound form of collective action not only politically directed against globalization (relocalization) but also experientially aiming to install, according to specific social values, direct democracy and solidarity economy as both a method of setting personal and social relationships within involved communities and a project to cope with the adversities of an external hostile capitalist world (prefiguration). Third, I would approach RPMs' collective action as a mixed form that strongly combines the instrumentality of political action aiming to protect, produce and reproduce the commons that members of the involved communities require in order to share a distinctive way of life, and the reflexivity of cultural action aiming to invent, produce and reproduce the collective identities and the meanings that same members need in order to secure an effective way to 'be together'.

RPMs are the outcomes of both weakness and strength of people acting collectively, as was the case of urban movements of the last quarter of the last century (see Castells, 1983). In other words, RPMs are also born as a symptom of the weakening or dissolution of progressive or revolutionary collective subjects of the past (centralized class and political movements). Nevertheless, they also proven to be decentralized and locally focused collective efforts aiming to generate new strong resistance spots against globalized domination of capitalism.

This article consists of four parts. In the first one, some keywords such as 'solidarity economy', 'peer production', 'degrowth' and 'RPMs' are defined and briefly discussed. In the second part, a radical political project based on symbiotic and autonomous communities supported by RPMs is assumed as an alternative productive model and its features are described. In the third part, features of the attempt of the

capitalist mode of production to recapture alternative and egalitarian social spaces of solidarity economy, by integrating them in the logic of commodification, are analyzed. And in the last part, some considerations on the contradictory coexistence of both production models and the dynamics of their mutual adjustment are put forward.

DEFINING SOME CONCEPTS

1. SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Solidarity economy is not identical with social economy. Although in the current literature the two concepts are often interchangeable, they are in fact clearly distinguishable from each other, because they describe clearly different ways of organizing social and interpersonal relationships.

On the one hand, social economy refers basically to projects of economic nature with 'social face', -that is, to private initiatives aiming at cost-effective management of inputs- while introducing social 'virtues' in economy, such as distributive justice, equal opportunities, meritocracy and individual rights. Although clearly related to a business new concept of investment and cooperation, the social importance of the principles of social economy are exhausted in a rhetoric of desisting from aggressive capitalist strategies and economic practices that wildly exploit work and deplete natural resources. Social economy is part of the logic of the 'third sector' that in times of economic crisis finds room for growth because it represents forces that are not so much at risk from the limitations of either public budgets (state sector) or the entrepreneurship investment (private sector).

It consists of 'social businesses' that –despite the social face they are called to show- have to be productive, competitive, flexible, innovative, economically viable and often subsidized by external institutional actors (state, EU etc.). These businesses often combine work in the company (business) with the 'voluntary' action, which produces a flexible, seasonal and poorly paid precariat. For the neoliberal state these businesses are a necessary supplement to policies of employment and mitigation of social exclusion to the extent that they combine flexibility, insecurity and lack of unionization. In other words, they are to some extent vehicles of the capitalist 'welfare policy' in an economic crisis and extended social impoverishment.

On the other hand and in contrast to the above features, solidarity economy (hereinafter SE) essentially consists of human and social bonds of a different kind in which economic arrangements tend to be subsumed under a 'social logic', rather than being dominant over it. Here social relations based on the guiding principles of reciprocity and redistribution (Polanyi, 2001) are not only key ingredients of economic practices but also generate collectivities that clash with the logic of the capitalist market integration. Thus, SE includes collective projects that apply principles of equal partnership in production, exchange economy, workers' self-management, self-help, solidarity action and a logic of the gift. At the same time, these projects strengthen actions aiming at the general or common interest and not merely at the interest of their members, as in the case of social economy (Nikolopoulos & Kapogiannis, 2014: 34).

Furthermore, SE is a set of activities of actors that consciously develop collective resistances to globalization and create radical collective practices compared to the claims of traditional forms of collective action (either political or syndicalist). So SE favors the commons-based peer production, the equal access to the results of

production, the horizontal co-operation, the direct-democratic organization of the groups, the sharing of knowledge in the production process and so on. We will elaborate more on SE in the second part of the present paper.

2. COMMONS-BASED PEER PRODUCTION

According to Salcedo et al (2014: 3), “commons refers generally to that which is not driven primarily by restrictive/private appropriation but to a process that is driven by general interest”. Commons-based peer production or peer to peer production or peer production (hereinafter PP) includes collaborative production projects between peer producers. It is a collaborative, horizontal and commons-based productive process where people can (freely, openly and without hierarchical or subordination relationships between collaborators) contribute through collaborative and participatory practices to create a common pool of knowledge, code and design. Thus, democratic think tanks and collaborative productions created in the PP are constantly open to new contributions (ibid.).

The digital PP is applied to online communities of free software such as GNU / Linux operating system, Apache web server, the Wikipedia, the Open Street Map, the Slashdot, the NASA Clickworkers, the SETI @ home project etc.). A fundamental pattern of this groundbreaking mode of production is that people’s participation in these communities is motivated by a variety of incentives and motives, often ranging from the pure pleasure of creation and the stimulation of ‘making things’, to a special sense of purpose, to companionship and social links around a joint venture or a more ambitious social experiment (Troxler, 2010). However, PP is not limited to a purely digital domain. It also involves a series of tangible and physical goods produced

through fabbing projects and open source hardware projects (ibid.). A local example of PP and solidarity economy in Greece is the ongoing effort to build a regional community of 14 villages in Sarantaporos area of Thessaly Region aiming to create cooperativeness for the production of commons goods (creativecommons.ellak.gr/ 2015).

The commons-based PP opens new opportunities and ways to contribute to the public good, by ensuring the collaborative commitment of thousands of ordinary people in the voluntary, creative, non-commercial and participative creation of intellectual, cultural and tangible goods. Furthermore, Benkler and Nissenbaum (2006: 394) assert that PP is perfectly correlated to the virtuous behavior, because PP “offers an opportunity for more people to engage in practices that permit them to exhibit and experience virtuous behavior”. In this sense, PP serves “as a context for positive character formation” (ibid.: 395). PP is about how individuals relate to each other in a shared productive effort.

Compared to capitalist commodity production, PP is based on spontaneous decentralization (instead of the conventional management and the bureaucratic organization) and uses social encouragement and incentives (instead of pricing strategies, commands and instructions). It displays two explicit advantages over commodity production. First, it accomplishes an informational advantage, because it makes a full use of a huge variety of human creativity and motivation. And, second, it achieves to maximize the effectiveness of the work produced, because it renders informational resources available to potentially huge collectives (ibid.: 400-2).

3. DEGROWTH

Degrowth concerns collective projects aiming at a recovery of the local scale and the territorial domain of human activities (cultivable land, established material, cultural and relational inheritances). This is a conscious return to the rhizomes of the human experience; that is, persons may be able to influence their very own experiences. The term 'degrowth' is linked to 'relocalization', which is meant to be a process of intense activation of the 'regional' and 'local' arising from the weakening of the 'national' in a globalized context. From the degrowth perspective, relocalization is literally a 'rebirth of places', that is the local sovereignty in the frame of a decentralized and locally controlled politics and production structure (Latouche, 2011).

The main target of degrowth is to create small local communities favoring the de-commodified practices of a democratic and cooperative economy as well as of a critical consumption, contrary to the practices of late capitalism leading to commodification, productivism and unbridled consumerism. It is considered as a political project - umbrella connecting in a broader social coalition various collective actors who have environmental concerns and progressive social targeting and bring together their specific social demands (Kallis, 2011).

4. RELOCALIZATION AND PREFIGURATIVE MOVEMENTS

RPMs are building cores of community resistances based on local autonomy and relocalization strategies that open alternatives against modern globalized lifestyles; they are working to build community resistances to challenges of climate change, the depletion of fossil fuels and economic insecurity (Starr & Adams 2003). As forms of collective action resisting globalization, they can be analyzed in terms of three

fundamental characteristics: the re-territorialisation of resistance, the prefiguration of social changes and the communitarization of relationships (Psimitis, 2014).

I) Re-territorialisation: Facing the de-territorialisation of globalization, RPMs develop forms of resistances based on experiences and know-how that are shared among similar and territorially defined collective actions. In place of the pattern of the ‘movement against the neo-liberal globalization’, which is a horizontal transnational and global cooperation of multiple movements, RPMs propose territorial determination of actions, spatial dimension of relationships and a closed and direct cooperation between involved people. Having as fundamental constitutive principle to refuse the mediation logic in political, economic, intellectual and ideological level, RPMs build a particular conception of collective action. Thus, social problems and direct action in everyday life are interwoven in the field of localized spaces. Within this framework, political interventions are meant as a durable grass-roots work of a radical transformation of social relationships and everyday life as they are experienced at a local scale.

II) Prefiguration: RPMs strive, through collective efforts focused on the present, to prefigure in an exemplary way the social coexistence of the future. But prefigurative practices are not today’s constructions preforming and theatrically performing a remote and blurred future, because they supposedly are projected in this; they rather are preformed constructions of future’s ways of life and social bonds that are invading today’s forms of life and social organization. In this sense, they are fragments of the future that cannot wait to be accomplished as long-term strategic goals and, therefore, they come to be autonomously installed in a blurred, alienating and hostile present. According to Kulick (2014: 366), RPMs represent a range of dilemmas that actors face when inspired by the social transformation they desire are trying to shape their

own structures, practices and daily experiences beforehand. Therefore, collective actors perform prefigurative practices just to the extent that they are attempting to shape social transformation 'from within', here and now. According to Boggs (1977: 100, referred to by Luke, 2015: 2), prefiguration is defined as: “The embodiment within the ongoing political practice of a movement, of those forms of social relations, decision-making, culture, and human experience that are the ultimate goal”.

As a form of action, prefiguration depends on a collective commitment: the outcome sought of the action does not constitute a strategic goal placed in the future, but is performatively present within the action itself at the time it takes place. In other words, actions, means and results are inseparably tied together; they not give rise to an unbalanced relationship between cause and effect. Thus, RPMs are characterized by experimentation and learning ethos, based on moral integrity, collectively shared subjective meaning and authenticity; they invent geographically localized alternatives against globalized patterns of living, producing, communicating and working together.

Prefigurative practices combine five processes: (a) collective experimentation; (b) imagining, producing and circulating political meanings; (c) creating new and future-oriented social norms and conducts; (d) their consolidation in movement infrastructures; and (e) diffusion and contamination of ideas, messages and goals to wider networks and constituencies (Yates 2015). David Graeber identifies prefiguration with direct action, and he defines it as: “[a] form of resistance which, in its structure, is meant to prefigure the genuinely free society one wishes to create. Revolutionary action is not a form of self-sacrifice, a grim dedication to doing whatever it takes to achieve a future world of freedom. It is the defiant insistence on acting as if one is already free” (Graeber, 2012: 159).

III) Community: The concept of 'community' is fundamental to the prefiguration of the desired society and deals with the creation of egalitarian social relationships and decentralized community institutions. Unlike current criticisms on the concept, community should not be regarded as an enclosed, confined and marginalized reality, but as a daily political practice which establishes familiar and responsible relationships within collectivities. Therefore, it concerns no groups simply adjoined by common interests that differentiate them from other groups, but qualities of social bonds achieved with cooperation among people and shared responsibility towards nature. RPMs are grass-roots invented communities with socially viable institutions of collective self-recognition and self-government.

FEATURES OF THE RADICAL POLITICAL PROJECT: THE ANTI-CAPITALIST FIGHTING

Considering the above, SE belongs to the dynamics of an anti-capitalist life project supported by symbiotic and autonomous communities which are based on: (a) an ecological conception of life; (b) the relocalization of production and culture; (c) the de-commodification of goods and services; (d) the critical consumption; and (e) the equal relationships in political and economic production. SE consists of collectivities of communitarian type that resist globalization, defend nature and rely on equal relationships, mutual trust, collective and individual responsibility and solidarity. At the end, it represents a completely alternative lifestyle incompatible with the modernization model of globalized capitalism. In this light, the influence of SE is not limited to the economic production but extends to the processes of political decision and bio-psychic development of people.

As far as economic production is concerned, SE utilizes a radical use of solidarity, building a pattern of economic activity far away from market performances of capitalism. Indeed, any collective solidarity project shows completely different features compared with private enterprises. Thus, within SE framework, labor is the organizational factor; economic relationships are characterized by cooperation, reciprocity, donations and exchanges without profit, while the type of ownership of means of production is cooperative and communitarian. In contrast, the corresponding features of private capitalist enterprises are capital, profitable transactions and private individual or individual shareholder ownership (Biolghini, 2007: 38-9).

Within SE, solidarity does not appear at the end of the production cycle to supposedly correct to some extent faults and deficiencies of the economy and overcome some of its shortcomings. Instead, it enters and circulates in the entire spectrum of the cycle of production, circulation, consumption and accumulation (Migliaro, 2003). Thus, solidarity does not simply appear in the end of the cycle as a simple compensatory mechanism in order to redistribute a marginal part of the wealth and assist those harmed by their participation in the outcomes of the economy; it rather becomes an organic part of the economy, deconstructing the very capitalist production relations.

Regarding political production, SE promotes horizontality of relationships through direct democracy, rejection of heteronomy and self-institution. It encourages self-management, individual responsibility towards collectivity and continuous experimentation on ways of understanding each other and cooperating. Thus, regulation of internal conflicts and disagreements is every time achieved through flexibility, decentralization and anti-bureaucratic functioning of a political democracy that is adapted to small local scale, focused on reversing the exploitation relationships,

and draws on democratic traditions and political cultures as ‘indigenismo’, anarchism, the Gandhian thought, the rousseauian theory and village anthropology (Starr & Adams, 2003).

Political community does not fall back in autistic ways, instead it follows changing circumstances in the world, learns how to be taught, and it is extroverted regarding the sources of knowledge and introverted regarding the human, political and ideological resources it uses to solve problems. Financial activity is founded on political arrangements aiming to safeguard a communitarian symbiosis based on freedom and equality and prefigured within the limits of local scale experiments.

Socio-cultural formation and bio-psyche reproduction in a SE community are based on an experimentation and learning ethos which is rooted in local grounds and autonomous actions. Everyday social practices such as education, communication, socialization, care and assistance to people in need are applied not as a strategic goal, but through an experientially embedded confidence that people are here and now free and able to build alternative ways of implementing these practices in such living communities. Therefore, the SE communities both utilize political dialogue and cultural reflexivity to develop potential or latent qualities and combine modern expertise with tradition to construct collective memories that fit the path that has been collectively pursued.

FEATURES OF THE CAPITALIST RESPONSE: THE MARKET RECAPTURE OF ALTERNATIVE SPACES

As noted above, SE is not identical with social economy, mainly because a part of the latter is ‘new entrepreneurship’ (hereinafter NE). The concept ‘entrepreneurship’ has flooded the concept of social economy, thus making the latter a vague and nebulous hybrid construction, certainly of dubious conceptual usefulness and political clarity. The logic of NE as a component of social economy is to emphasize ‘business innovation’ as the driving force of capitalist development, while concealing the inequality practices and exploitation relationships through the use of pompous terms such as ‘business responsibility’, ‘social accountability’, ‘sustainability’, ‘best practices in corporate social responsibility’, ‘social footprint’, and so on.

NE today constitute the most socially aggressive strategy of capitalist economy, in the sense that it manages to insert capitalist practices and market attitudes into domains that offer public services and common goods and that, until a decades ago, they seemed extraneous to choices, behaviors and attitudes animated by individual self-interest and selfish utilitarianism. In fact, this penetration of capitalist practices is exactly what extensively occurs in fields such as knowledge, education, health and public welfare.

In this way, companies within NE appear, on the one hand, as potential sources of employment of unemployed and working poor people, but, on the other hand, they seem to fit with their products and services in normal competition-driven market conditions. Therefore, priorities of the economic sustainability and efficiency prevail over democratic organization and social targeting. By taking advantage of the economic crisis and misleadingly appealing to the principles of SE, NE often speculates (as we will see below) on the concept of innovation in order to introduce both material reward and profit in typically solidary and cooperative pursuits through commercialization or subsidized activities. Typical feature of this practice is the

flexible use of workers either as seasonal employees in private companies or as unpaid ‘volunteers’ in NGOs. Apparently, NE, as it is embedded in the dynamics of capitalist competition, undermines cooperative values on which it supposedly relies.

Some typical cases of using business innovation as capitalist recapture of SE are: First, the invasion of new multinationals in the ‘cooperative economy’. The AirBnb (of a total value of \$ 10 billion and with just 600 employees) and Uber are new ‘players’ who claim to belong to SE. They present themselves as equally acting compared to exchange networks, collective kitchens, time banks etc. Nevertheless, while they are claiming to rely on social cooperation for dealing with the crisis, they are creating a new informal economy of uninsured workers, where everything is to be rented in the appropriate price: homes, automobiles, technical tools and even workforce itself (Kallis, 2014).

Second, multinational companies can legally pay and use open source from the General Public License (which is a widely used free software license that guarantees a variety of users -individuals, organizations, companies- the freedoms to run, study, share and modify the software) in order to make profits. Then, we have a paradox. On the one hand, open sources are created within a model of open cooperativism, similar to the SE model, which combines commons-oriented peer production patterns with shared ownership and self-governance practices. On the other hand, multinational companies are allowed to use the free software code for profit. In Bauwens words: “we do have an accumulation of immaterial commons, based on open input, participatory process, and commons-oriented output, but that it is subsumed to capital accumulation” (Bauwens, 2014, also see Bauwens & Kostakis, 2014). Furthermore, the peer production networks, which by structure defend open source and free software, often attempt themselves to combine open cooperativism with innovation

and entrepreneurship (see, for instance, Ellak.gr/2016/02), which has the effect of blurring the distinction between open cooperativism and capitalist competition, thus undermining cooperative values.

Within this context, contradictory projects, values and actions coexist with each other: These projects are sometimes inspired from needs of collaborative and peer to peer creation of a common, and another time they are induced by capitalist modernization demands oriented toward the innovation of modes of capitalist exploitation. The result is a contradictory reality, a strange hybrid construction that, as noted above, is vague and nebulous, of dubious conceptual usefulness and political clarity.

This reality is precisely the ‘new entrepreneurship’ of ‘social economy’. The NE project takes advantage of technical features of globalization, crisis and unemployment conditions, and displays a ‘social face’, carrying innovation as a ‘Trojan horse’. The introduction of innovation to the business activity is viewed in itself as a revolutionary pattern of modern enterprise. However, the history of the concept and the historical use of the corresponding business practices testify to the contrary. In fact, the driving force of capitalism was sought in the figure of innovative entrepreneur’ long before the recent emergence of ‘new entrepreneurship’. Already in the early twentieth century, the Austrian economist Josef Schumpeter had noted that the capitalist system drew its power from business innovation. Nevertheless, he argued that innovation is not an element belonging to the mere economic activity but is a factor that shapes social relations of production.

Schumpeters’ thesis, compared to today’s exuberant and opportunistic use of the term ‘innovation’, is clearly different. Schumpeter considers innovation as a

phenomenon specific and rare because it upsets the whole financial system and not as a small and simple technique of improvement already existed in business reality. In order for innovation to be implemented, businessman is required to show a genuine new combination between technologies, credit, production process and distribution as well as selling process of the products. According to Schumpeter, business innovation is a process that dissolves the embedded balances, since its implementation releases a ‘creative destruction’ that leaves nothing like it was before (Schumpeter, 2015). Innovation, therefore, is not recently discovered; it has always been a feature of capitalist enterprise and a tool at the discretion of businessmen. Once it becomes part of the weaponry available to the business management to withstand market competition, it obeys the logic of the expanded reproduction of capital; with or without a social face.

But the recapture of alternative economic and social practices of SE by the market is not limited to the commons-based PP. Capitalist response penetrates even the degrowth domain. According to criticisms set forth from the principles of ecology, socialism and feminism, among degrowth supporters is widespread an apolitical attitude, a one that seems detached from social struggle and prone to over-generalizing (Brownhill et al., 2012). So, many degrowth supporters monolithically insist on condemning hyper-consumerism, but they do not seriously deal with issues related to production, power relations and radical social transformation.

So, they show the degrowth project as an easy and simple reform that may well be achieved in the context of the capitalist economy; that is, they talk about the goal of a ‘de-growing capitalism’ which will reduce over-consumption through the harmonious cooperation between capital, labor and the state; but they do not express any concern about the exploitation and domination relations as part of the productive

system (ibid). Thus, social ‘sterilization’ of degrowth, that is the objective of degrowth isolated from the conflictual content of social relations of production, can be a new strategy of capitalism. In other words, degrowth could be a new ‘developing market’ in which a new entrepreneur should invest for future profits.

READJUSTMENT FEATURES: MUTUAL FEEDBACK BETWEEN CONTRADICTIONARY PROJECTS

The guiding principle of autonomous RPMs is the assumption that capitalist modernization inevitably ends up in subsuming societies to the logic of profit and exploitation of both humans and nature. Therefore, in their effort to resist globalized capitalist modernization, they choose local scale action. With this option, they create the conditions of an alternative development aiming to use local knowledge and local traditions for de-commodifying local communities and creating and circulating freely knowledge, ideas, goods and services. Commons-oriented PP, politicized degrowth and the various SE practices –such as: productive communities, workers' self-management of factories, work collectives, producer cooperatives, land redistribution movements, communal farms, social centers, social clinics and pharmacies, free tutorials, self-managed publishing cooperatives, pirate radio stations and so on- are the fields of action where RPMs are organized and form their principles.

The radical aspect of RPMs is that, unlike the ‘alter-globalization movement’, they reject the scenario of a ‘democratization 'of globalization’; therefore they reject the reformist transformation of globalized capitalism. Thus, RPMs are forming collective resistances that defend a communitarian approach to the good life, solidarity, egalitarianism, democracy and accountability toward nature (Psimitis,

2014). Faced with these radical collective ventures, capitalist strategies attempt to embed the dynamics of solidarity and cooperation into the logic of the market and profit. We saw that, in practice, their meeting form a hybrid field of economic and social practices in which coexist contradictory strategies in addressing inequalities. SE and NE collide with each other and interweave with one another. Thus, when SE principles and NE goals seem to work in an osmotic way, then follows that ‘social economy’ is the modern development sector of the capitalist economy. Conversely, when SE is claiming its autonomy and collides with the logic of NE, then multiple examples of community resistances to exploitation of labor, alienation of people and environmental deterioration are produced.

Dynamics of cooperation and conflict of patterns coexist, inequalities of old and new type intertwine with everyday egalitarian and emancipatory practices. They form contradictory principles of behavior orientation, namely exploitation and emancipation, solidarity and utilitarianism, mobility and rhizome, tradition and innovation, etc. The interpenetration between contradictory practices and behaviors does not prefigure a certain scenario of future development. This finding may be a strong reflective advocacy for prefigurative practices implemented by RPNs, if these are assumed to be preforms of the future, a performative expression of a desired future in an inherently contradictory and ambiguous present!

The dividing line between SE and NE is now, in the eyes of many people, thin and permeable. This makes difficult the work of local resistance communities to highlight their inherent differences face to instrumental dynamics of NE. Whether SE will be able to withstand the ‘invasion’ of NE and defend its own principles and values is certainly not a matter of theory but of strong connection between egalitarian political struggles and solidarity experiential practices.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Following an older classification of new social movements (Kriesi, 1996), we can see relocalization movements as mixed forms of collective action that combine: (a) an instrumental action, because they aim to produce and protect specific collective goods (commons); (b) a subculture, because they aim to produce or reproduce their collective identity; and (c) a counterculture, because they often reproduce their collective identity through highly contentious actions.

These movements appear as forms of local resistance to globalization, but they are not showing trends of spatial isolation and social marginalization, as happened for instance with most of old communes and intentional communities of the sixties and seventies (Oved, 2013). Instead, they are cosmopolitan communities combining creatively community resilience and defence of the locality with the open spirit of cooperation, experimentation and constant learning.

‘Relocalization and prefigurative movements’ may be considered as organizational frameworks of an anti-capitalist life project aiming to construct symbiotic and autonomous communities based on: (a) de-commodification of goods and services; (b) relocalization of production and culture; (c) ecological approach to life; (d) the critique of heteronomy and consumerism; and (e) direct democracy. In this way, they reject capitalist modernization, unlimited growth and free trade. Their development trends depend on their potential to achieve their objectives and convince about the feasibility of implementation of the paradigm they propose. This feasibility depends on the ability of the relocalization movements to empirically set up the field of ‘solidarity economy’ as an alternative social model to ‘social economy’. To achieve

that, they should combine both the identity-oriented and expressive action and the political and instrumental action in a balanced way. By doing this, it is very likely that they will develop radical and effective forms of action rather than being institutionalized or degenerated into entrepreneurial spirit.

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