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The Politics of Dissent

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POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE 1

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(eds.)

Politics of Dissent



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EDITION

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The Politics of Dissent

Abstract

In Politics of Dissent the framework for analysing politics of dissent is outlined. The outlined framework problematizes the conventional understandings of dissent as something characterising individual historical figures. The chapter provides both a theoretical underpinning of dissent as well as an approach to investigate the current contestations taking place on a global level. Politics of dissent entails the questioning of consensus. It conceptualises dissent as a collective process taking place on everyday level. It conceptualises moments of dissent. Finally it investigates the emergent institutions of dissent. That is the creation of new institutions or the renewal of the existing ones.

Starting with no

John Holloway (2005: 1) takes negativity as the starting point (NO as a scream of refusal) in his very stimulating book, *Change the World without taking Power*, which aims to open up a new way of constructing a Left project, through a new language and mentality. According to Holloway, “We start from negation, from dissonance. [...] Our dissonance comes from our experience, but that experience varies”. The rejection of the world we feel to be wrong, and not only fragmented or isolated experiences, would be the first necessary step towards changing the world. We would also start our reflection on dissent and the necessity of politics of dissent by taking ‘no’ as the starting point. In this way, we would aim to show some of the social and political implications of dissent.

In 1983, the Chilean group C.A.D.A. (Colectivo de Acciones De Arte) did a performance called ‘No +’ (see López, 2009). This was staged in response to the commemoration of the ten years of dictatorship. The intervention consisted in offering an open sentence (‘No +’) to be filled in by anonymous peasants who appropriated themselves of it by writing ‘No + death’, ‘No + pain’, ‘No + dictatorship’, etc, and avoided a police order. On walls, canvasses, and posters, the anonymous insurgency against the dictatorial regime spread throughout the country.

Some years later, on the 5 October 1988, a plebiscite was held in Chile in order to decide if dictator Augusto Pinochet should decide if he was to continue eight more years in power or not. The citizens voted against this, and the situation is

re-created in the film 'No' by Pablo Larraín, based on the play *El Plebiscito* by Antonio Skármeta. Despite its unquestionable popular success, the film shows the increasing relevance of advertisement and marketing techniques to persuade public opinion and, more importantly, the way in which the dictator, but not his political and economic model, was defeated.

When comparing the two cases, some preliminary reflections on dissent can be made. Firstly, it is clear that the opposition, or dissent, against dictatorship was present for a long time, but it took a while before it was publicly articulated and became part of the institutional change. Dissent can be manifested in the public sphere or not, but as a 'no', as negation, it is constantly being (re)produced. It is necessary to see the moments of dissent as moments of visibilisation and to assess whether the moments are challenging the existing social order or are adapted to the institutional order. Secondly, the 'No +' performance entails a questioning of the political and social orders and the rejection of the oppressive system. The 'No' campaign, on the other hand, may be a firm protest against dictatorship, but it does not reject the neoliberal model within which it is rooted. On the contrary, the model is assumed by the following governments during the transition to democracy. Thirdly, it is important to highlight agency, the actors who undertake political actions. The space opened by the 'No +' performance makes it possible for every ordinary citizen to become an active agent of dissent through completing the sentence and rendering the opposition to the system visible. The 'No' campaign reflects the appropriation of the means of mediated politics to persuade people whose participation is basically reduced to the moment of voting. Finally, the role of collectivisation must be emphasised. The 'No +' campaign must not be understood as individual (meaning individuals who complete the sentence). Its anonymity, which is necessary to avoid a police order, does not contradict the collectivisation of dissent. All the participants find a way of connecting their experience to a collective struggle. The 'No' campaign also has a collective meaning, but due to the fact that participation is only possible through election, a division is created between the leaders of the campaign and the supporters.

Returning to Holloway's idea about negativity, we now approach the idea of dissent as being based on singular experiences but sharing a common feeling of disagreement and rejection of the existing political order. Therefore, our understanding of dissent refers to social and political questioning (not just to mere critique or a need for palliative reforms), to undoing consensus and rendering excluded actors and struggles visible. It cannot be reduced to individual dissent (within a political organisation or against an unjust system) since it is a collective process seeking alternative conceptions or ways of living. The politics of dissent

assume the relevance of experiences opposed to the dominant order in order to render new actors, struggles and ways of organisation visible.

To present the dimensions of dissent and its politics, we are focusing on the following aspects: the questioning of consensus, everyday dissent, the moments of dissent and the institutions of dissent. Thus, the politics of dissent will move beyond negation and towards constructive and creative processes in order to change the existing order.

The questioning of consensus

In the past few decades, a constant de-ideologisation of the political debate has taken place, as reflected in the electoral goal of gathering left and right wing parties around the centre, the common assumption of the logic of neoliberalism and the unquestioned need for open economies. Politics have developed so as to support processes of de-regulation and privatisation of the public without any opposition being uttered by the social democratic parties which actually fostered the politics whilst they were in power.

This ideological vacuum within the political system has been defined as post-politics. According to Chantal Mouffe, the post-political world is characterised by its emphasis on consensus based on individual interests or in rational agreements. Thus, passions and collective identities are abandoned, and the possibility of antagonism is excluded. This situation leads to a lack of political interest in people and to increasing de-politisation, as showed by abstention in political elections or difficulties of mobilisation. Mouffe (2005: 24-25) explains that “politization cannot exist without the production of a conflictual representation of the world, with opposed camps with which people can identify, thereby allowing for passions to be mobilized politically within the spectrum of the democratic process.”

Dissent becomes essential to democratic processes, and its exclusion or oppression weakens democracy since a plurality of voices would not be included in the decision making, would be left out of the public sphere, and could not contribute to the common good. However, in this regard, we differ from Mouffe's position in terms of her conception of the relation between conflict (what we call dissent) and institutions. Mouffe is supportive of representative democracy and wants to find a solution in which the conflictual approach must transform the existing institutions profoundly. Indeed, she rejects more radical approaches to deserting from representative democracy and traditional institutions (Mouffe, 2013).

In our conception, institutional change must be assessed from a broader perspective focused on political and social change. The existence of dissent, and its

potential to undo consensus and render new struggles and actors visible, can lead to different situations; from co-existence with the dominant institutions to their reform or their questioning, followed by the need of creating new institutions. We situate ourselves closer to the opposition between consensus and dissensus as described by Jacques Rancière (2010). In his view, consensus deligitimates what is proper and what is not, and dissensus, on the other hand, unveils the impropriety of this division. Dissent, or dissensus according to Rancière, goes beyond institutional change or relations of power since it allows for the introduction of new subjects that question and disrupt the arbitrary distribution of political participation.

Dissent consists in the expression of oppositional voices and the manifestation of disagreement against the dominant order, but it must be taken into consideration that not all people are included in the political discourses since they are excluded through the politics of consensus. Dissent also consists in giving visibility to disagreement and opening up spaces to do so. Thus, we are looking at ways of producing dissent, from hidden spaces (everyday dissent in disguised forms) to its irruption in public spaces and its potential for institutionalisation.

Everyday dissent

As mentioned above, our conception of dissent is not attached to individuals who represent oppositional values against an unjust system or undemocratic political party behaviour. Our main interest lies in dissent as a collective process. This does not contradict the fact that individuals carry acts of dissent in their everyday lives; they do so by sharing a sense of disagreement against the dominant system. In other words, dissent is not necessarily visible and may not even be articulated, but it reflects social and political questioning from different places which are always socialised and singularised.

There has been a tendency to consider dissent from a political party or, at least, as focused on articulated organisations. Everyday dissent and also the most spontaneous forms of dissent have consequently been overlooked. John Holloway (2010) points out an alternative vision when he underlines that rebels today are ordinary people such as a woman in the supermarket or walking by in the street, a man driving a car, or children after finishing their school lessons. This vision emphasises the contradiction within people, between their social identities that constrain them and the potential they all have to express such identities. Ordinary people share lines of continuity since they hold in common their opposition to capitalism and its effect of transforming people (subjects) into objects.

The existence of everyday resistance is valuable to account for more invisible forms of dissent, which however can transform into the renunciation of domination in the public sphere. James C. Scott (1990) defines *infra-politics* as tactical ways of resistance produced in hidden spaces where the relations of domination can be avoided. By the creation of these protected (but not necessarily physical) spaces, free of surveillance and control, forms of disguised dissent which apparently do not challenge or contradict the dominant system can take place.

Being conscious of the disguised dissent produced by ordinary people does not entail the withdrawal of open dissent but, on the contrary, constitutes a germinal phase of the collectivisation of defiance. Furthermore, it questions both the idea of passive assumption of domination by ordinary people who instead are aware of the limits fixed by domination in terms of what can be done or said and the reduction of dissent at the individual level, since *infra-politics* are based on the creation of shared collective codes and tactics. The disguised dissent is abandoned when the defiance becomes public. This moment is partly grounded in the accumulation of invisible forms of dissent which become visible. We refer to this moment as the moment of insurgency by which dissent becomes public and opens up the possibility of further articulation.

Moments of dissent

When dissent abandons the disguised tactics or renounces to assume the rules of the exclusionary public space based on consensus and the delimitation of the actors that have access to it, a new space of political possibilities is opened. We do not consider the moments of dissent as exceptional in history (in other words, it is not necessary for them to be a revolution; scale and scope can vary), neither do we see them as the continuity of the hidden resistances (although they can be grounded in them, they do not fully explain the disruption and the shift to public defiance). Essentially, the moments of dissent require an open questioning of the political and social orders, regardless of their being translated into a broader societal change or a narrower institutional change. What matters in our opinion is the possibility of rethinking the order from an alternative perspective, which was not considered before and by actors who were also not previously present in the public discussions. Thus, new ways of understanding politics and social change are confronted with the dominant ones.

Jacques Rancière (2011) underlines that the political moment is a reaction against consensus. The political moment happens when the temporality of consensus is interrupted and an alternative description of the situation and a new relation between people emerge as significantly opposed to other(s). Rancière

specifies that political moments rely on the constitution of scenes of dissensus. Politics of dissent would maintain and expand the scenes of dissensus in order to avoid their absorption by the dominant logic. Following Rancière, the creation of alternative worlds depends on the ability to win the battle of interpretations against other actors, such as politicians or media, who are trying to appropriate them.

Compared with everyday disguised dissent and invisible dissent (not included in the political or media agendas), the moments of dissent constitute a public situation of the confluence of multiple singularities and movements and open up the possibility of articulation or better connection between the existing (disguised or invisible) struggles. The openness of the moments of dissent is essential in order to think of an alternative world (what is possible and what is not) and to initiate alternative political practices which transgress the partition of the political order (who can be legitimate speakers and who cannot).

We consider that the issue of articulation or interconnection of dispersed and isolated struggles must be assumed to overcome the disguised or local level of dissent (but without denying its importance). However, the confluence is made possible, but the moments of dissent generate the scenes of dissent without ensuring their continuity. Therefore, another relevant topic must be taken into serious consideration: the institution of dissent or, in other words, the continuity and development of dissent beyond moments of questioning and proposals for alternative interpretations.

Institutions of dissent

The shift from invisibility to visibility or from spontaneous moments to more articulated projects are matter of institutionalisation; the creation of new institutions or the renewal of the existing ones. In a discussion with John Holloway (2012), Michael Hardt comments that the concern for institution is originated in the need for organisations. Spontaneity, as in revolts or moments of dissent, is an initial starting point but it is not enough. Rebellion must be organised and gain continuity, which is achieved through the creation and renewal of institutions. The institutions of dissent must strengthen the scenes of dissensus and face the challenge of being developed in contact with established institutions, e.g. those supported or controlled by the state. However, renouncing the creation or renewal of institutions would reduce the impact of dissent and the possibility of social change in which the voices of excluded groups are taken into account.

Alan Sears introduces a term which reflects our idea of the institution of dissent. He talks about the infrastructure of dissent “through which oppressed and

exploited groups developed their capacities to act on the world” (Sears, 2007: 6). Through mobilisation and the creation of new repertoires of thought and action, new ways of organising emerge to increase the effectiveness of social struggles. Furthermore, Sears adds that the infrastructure of dissent contributes to developing a collective memory, an internal analysis, alternative communication and guidelines to take action. In this conception of institution, the creation of organisations is not a way of abandoning the claims from more spontaneous moments of dissent or revolts but of empowering social struggles through a process of collectivisation. As noticed by Jeff Shantz (2010: 2) in his proposal of infrastructures of resistance, the absence of durable organisations or institutions leads to demoralisation or retreatment into subculturalism.

Although these infrastructures are of course important for the articulation of hidden struggles and strengthening organisation, we think that it is equally important not to limit them to the terrain of the shadows of the dominant institutions or to the pre-insurrectionary forms. The moments of dissent open up an unexpected political potential for the transformation of society, but it takes an institution to ensure continuity. Continuity does not mean fixing institutions or adapting to the existing ones. To maintain the conflictual essence of dissent institutions is a process rather than a result. The challenge is how to preserve and reformulate dissent, so as to move beyond the negation of the dominant order in the direction of the collective constitution of alternatives. The politics of dissent is precisely that process, which must be constantly rethought on the basis of practical experiences.

Book structure

This volume contains nine chapters offering different theoretical and empirical perspectives on the politics of dissent. The contributions have been structured into three sections: organisation, movements and alternatives. The sections reflect different dimensions, in which dissent is expressed, from a multiplicity of perspectives ranging from the more disguised forms to political organisations. Whilst the focus on organisation shows how the different ways of dissent are in transition in the search for a more stable continuity, the analysis of movements (and moments, we would add) is based on concrete experiences of dissent which openly challenge the political consensus and introduce new actors in the public arena. Finally, the interest in alternatives relies on the importance of how dissent is being concretised in different proposals, even though a complete and coherent programme that would set up the constitution of an alternative world is still far away.

The first bloc addresses the challenges raised by the need for organisations to establish prolonged forms of resistance adapted to the current times. Two types of shifts are identified: from movement to political party; and from movement to mobilisation. These allow us to think of hybrids or new organisations of dissent.

The chapter by Martin Bak Jørgensen and Óscar García Agustín *The Post-modern Prince: The Political Articulation of Social Dissent* investigates the organising processes and discursive articulations enabling or translating the 'passage from the social to the political'. Basically, it shows how social movements in three settings have developed from bottom-up social platforms to establishing a type of political party. Playing with Gramsci's notion of the 'modern prince', i.e. the communist party consisting of a collective intellectual, Agustín and Jørgensen investigate how a new type of political party creates new articulations in the space between the social and political arenas, and attempts to re-politise the political arena and challenge existing political regimes. In the chapter, they look at recently established parties in Slovenia, Spain and the UK. It is important to pay attention to this phase of social movement organisation as it refers back to the discussion on the potential of social movements for social and political transformation. Social movements appear, have a high level of energy but very often quietly disappear. In a post-political society characterised by the apparent lack of alternatives and the backlash of ideologies, the emergence of social movements raises the question of the extent to which they can break the political consensus and articulate a long-term discourse which can bring alternatives to the system. While the creation of new bonds between social movements and parties, has been part of the political agenda in Latin America during the last decade (Cocco & Negri, 2006), we have only seen few examples of this development in Europe, with the Green parties being the exceptions. Expanding the understanding of social movement, the authors offer an empirical analysis of the ways in which large social mobilisations organise and articulate political claims in a Europa still affected by the economic crisis as well a deeper political crisis.

In his chapter *Current Western Reactions to Mass Surveillance. Movement or Just Protests?*, Sandro Nickel likewise investigates social mobilisation going beyond our traditional understandings of social movement. Since the summer of 2013, an extensive system of surveillance came to the attention of the general public. It was learned that the American NSA, the British GCHQ and other Western agencies are extensively surveying billions of Internet users worldwide, employing a so-called 'collect-it-all' approach. The reaction was loud protests by the general public and a heterogeneity of different actors engaging in various forms of protest against the surveillance system. The initial puzzle addressed in this chapter is why the protests did not follow the traditional trajectory of social

movement developments. Clearly, there was dissent and visible reactions to the surveillance, but the outcome in terms of organisational structures was different from that identified by the literature on social movement over the years. Nickel goes through the literature and puts forth a number of hypotheses which can explain why the protests did not develop into a mass-scale social movement. Yet, the protests are there and dissent is apparent, so the analytical challenge is how to characterise and understand this particular type of social protest. New forms of protests elsewhere in Europe and beyond also point to a need for reflecting and theorising over the organisational processes of social mobilisation. The ongoing insurgence in Gezi Park Istanbul does not resemble the rigid definitions of a social movement either, but no one would dismiss that organised protest is taking place every day. The chapter therefore offers reflections on this specific question: If not a social movement, what then?

Both chapters in this section of the book offer empirical insights into the organising forms of dissent in contemporary times. Both show that there is a need to challenge and expand our theoretical assumptions regarding social movements and to investigate how these alternatives, whether institutionalised or non-institutionalised, develop into social and political practices. The politics of dissent take many forms and bring out new dynamics and relations between the social and the political.

The second part of the book includes four chapters of contemporary movements. While a rich literature has been looking into European and American social movements and a myriad of studies exist which are focusing on the mobilisations arising with the Arab Spring, there are still many regions where protests, contestation and mobilisation have been given less attention (Cox & Fominaya, 2013; Khondker, 2011; Azzellini & Sitrin, 2014). This section offers analyses of social mobilisations and practices of dissent in Brazil, Turkey, Nigeria, Spain and the US. Without being explicitly comparative, the chapters provide us with the possibility to identify commonalities and particularities in the forms of protests taking place on a global scale.

Giuseppe Cocco opens this section with the chapter *The Dance of the Fireflies*. The title refers to the works of the deceased Italian philosopher and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini, who described resistance using the metaphor of the fireflies: “There are moments of exception in which human beings become fireflies, luminescent beings, dancing, erratic, elusive and resistant as such” (in Didi-Huberman, 2009: 19). Cocco reads the coming together of the multitude with the insurgence in Brazil 2013 as an example of human beings becoming fireflies. Cocco’s focus on the aesthetics of the Brazilian insurgence can perhaps be compared to Franco “Bifo” Berardi’s work in *The Uprising – On Poetry and*

Finance (2012). Bifo calls for an insurgent aesthetics being capable of creating a new world. In his chapter, Cocco identifies how the young and the poor reaffirm the basic principles of politics, of democracy and of freedom through actions and language. Drawing parallels to the European experiences with fascism, he analyses the discursive regime of the government and argues like Chantal Mouffe that democracy must be taken (Mouffe, 2000). Cocco outlines the heterogeneity of the Brazilian multitude and argues that for the first time, the protests were successful in showing that the horizon of democratic deepening is implied in the achievement of the right to politics not possessed by the poor of the favelas, outskirts, and peripheries. Hence, struggle is constitutive for justice, and without struggles there cannot be justice. Transforming the rage and indignation into political action is therefore necessary in order to deepen democracy. According to Cocco, especially youths carry the conviction that this can be done regardless of the reactions from the Brazilian government. He writes that the youth carried a conviction that “hell is not something to fear in the future, but it is already present”. This paraphrases the mobilisation of irregular and precarious migrants in Germany. Here the slogan was ‘*Eine Ziege, die schon tot ist, fürchtet kein Messer mehr*’ [‘A goat that is already dead is no longer afraid of knives’]. As in Brazil, we are witnessing how the invisible becomes visible and struggle for their rights.

Yavuz Yildirim’s chapter *Pushing the Limits of the System in Turkey* offers a historical perspective on the role of civil society and social movements in Turkey. Yildirim argues that British and American social movement literature is difficult to apply to the Turkish case, due to the particularity of the Turkish civil society and political culture. Historically, Turkish movements have not been independent of the state and rarely organised by grass-root movements generally, but rather institutionalised and state-related in their struggle for power. Yet, the recent uprisings in Gezi Park and elsewhere in Istanbul show a new development in the role and potential for social and political change in the Turkish context. The chapter analyses the evolution of the Turkish social movements since 1968, providing a broad overview with an emphasis on the connections of the alter-globalisation movements in the 1990s. The main argument offered by Yildirim is that Turkish movements have not been able to initiate changes in the public policies directly but have pushed the limits of the established systems towards a deepening of democracy. At the same time, he also claims that new social movements have focused much more on direct actions and demands, similar to the Spanish *Indignados* and the various manifestations of the Occupy movement; this has turned them into a symbol of new era of the Turkish social movements. Yildirim argues that the global forms of dissent are being transplanted into both

the organisational forms and the claims-making of the Turkish social movements today.

In *Manual Transmission. The Do-It-Yourself Theory of Occupy Wall Street and Spain's 15M*, Justin AK Helepololei touches on one of the issues sketched out above. What happens when protests die out? Whereas Agustín and Jørgensen's chapter pointed to an organisational development of social movement transforming into a new type of party, Helepololei offers a different perspective. Studying a specific type of output, do it-yourself-manuals of the Occupy movement and the Spanish 15M, he investigates how political actions are sustained after the actual mass mobilisations started to decrease. As the excitement of 2011's global wave of protest encampments subsided, participants in the one-year anniversary demonstrations of both Occupy Wall Street and the 15M addressed earlier critiques of centralisation through the production of "do-it-yourself" manuals, calling for modes of sustained resistance in the shape of economic disobedience. Helepololei argues that the rejection of "politics as normal" is transformed into the positive content of building a new normal, outlined through collectively-written manuals for living-in-resistance. While activists have produced manuals previously and for various purposes, the intention and the timing of these manuals are unique. Rather than supplements to mobilisation, manuals (and the collective-yet-dispersed actions they outline) *became* the mobilisation. The chapter argues that re-orientation towards less visible forms of contestation requires re-evaluation of the way in which we study these and other instances of protest mobilisation in terms of their scale, stability and success. As a window into how participants hope to go about creating the worlds they wish to live in, and how these approaches differ among instances of mobilisation, we will learn how these post-plaza modes of discussion engage with the movements' values and visions of social change.

The final chapter of the second section of the book also looks at the Occupy case, but this time in a Nigerian context. Many of the recent studies of social movements in an African context have focused on the North African countries involved in the Arab Spring or at South Africa, which has witnessed a high level of social mobilisation historically as well as in recent times. Less attention has been given to the Sub-Saharan countries. In the chapter titled *Occupy Nigeria. Paradigm shift in Mass Resistance*, Lucky Igohosa Ugbudian investigates the mass resistance emerging in early January 2012 under the heading *Occupy Nigeria*. Ugbudian argues that mass resistance has usually been characterised by the sporadic movement of protesters across earmarked routes within states, often resulting in confrontation with security operatives, culminating in violence. A general characteristic of all the Occupy manifestations as well as the *Indignados*

movement in Spain has been anti-violence. Ugbudian shows how this way of organising was transplanted into the Nigerian context. January 9 to 12, 2012, the mass resistance against government removal of subsidy on refined petroleum products, premium motor spirit (PMS), took a different form as regards method and organisation. The organisers, i.e. Nigerian trade unions and civil society groups, relied on mass and social media as well as on using the concept of occupy borrowed from Wall Street and London as a slogan to mobilise the people. Thus, Occupy Nigeria became a platform of non-violent resistance for the reversal of the government policy through protesters occupying designated parks, squares, streets and roads in the federation. Prior to the mass resistance and mobilisation, there was a general belief in government circles that any mass resistance would not last more than a few days, as in previous cases. Ugbudian shows how organisation, mobilisation and sensitisation, as well as the nature of the mobilisation, constituted a paradigmatic shift from previous mass resistance.

These four chapters share the conclusion that mass mobilisation carries a transformative potential which can lead to democratic transformation. This transformation can be subtle, and the system will not change overnight, but the authors, especially Cocco, Yildirim and Ugbudian, all argue that these instances of mobilisation are necessary in order to detect the flaws in the democratic systems (or point to the lack of these) in the cases analysed here. These four chapters also show that movements develop at particular moments.

The third section of the book outlines alternatives to the neoliberal market economies. Taking the neoliberal restructuring of the economies and social systems as their starting point, the each of the three chapters constituting this section offers an alternative to the political, social and economic orders.

In the first chapter of this section, *Commonwealth, Commonfare and the Money of Common. The Challenge to Fight Life Subsumption*, Andrea Fumagalli begins by outlining what he describes as cognitive bio-capitalism. Here he argues that in cognitive bio-capitalism, knowledge, when separated from every product in which it was, is or will be incorporated, can still in itself carry on a productive action. In other words, knowledge can assume the role of fixed capital, thus becoming some sort of “cognitive machine” which substitutes simple and complex living labour with stored labour. With the crisis of the Taylorist-Fordist paradigm and the shift to cognitive bio-capitalism, the Keynesian welfare state is progressively dismantled which affects the juridical definition of the common goods. Based on this diagnosis, he argues that it is increasingly necessary and urgent to introduce a new idea of welfare; an idea that can deal with the two main elements that characterise the current phase of the Western capitalist countries: precarity and debt condition as dispositives of social control and dominance;

and the generation of wealth that arises from social cooperation and general intellect. The alternative outlined is the commonfare characterised by two aspects. Firstly, the remuneration of social cooperation implies the introduction of unconditional basic income, which also Christian Ydesen and Erik Christensen focus on in the following chapter. Basic income together with a minimum wage makes it possible to expand the range of choice in the labour market, i.e. to refuse a “bad” job” and then modify the same labour conditions. Secondly, this relates to the management of the commonwealth and the common goods. However, he argues that these two strategies are not sufficient to create an alternative. Fumagalli argues that it is necessary to build up an alternative macro-financial circuit which can be autonomous from the dominant financial oligarchy. To do this requires two interrelated instruments, which he unfolds in the chapter: a financial institution of the commonwealth and a currency of the commonwealth - or a currency of the common. The currency of the common differs from other crypto-currencies, e.g. Bitcoins or Brixton £s, by not being cumulative or subject of speculation. Being a non-property, it will enable the mitigation of the dependence of workers from the economic constraints of the sale of their labour-force and therefore the wage relation. Here, dissent takes the shape of an alternative to the financial system as we know it.

As mentioned, Christian Ydesen and Erik Christensen are looking into the idea of a basic income. In the chapter *Creating a Network of Dissent: The Heretical Idea of Basic Income*, they first discuss the development of the idea and second, present an argument as to why this instrument can be a tool to overcome some of the problems the current economic crisis and austerity politics have created. The idea of a basic income is characterised by its ability to transcend the topography of the established political landscape. For example, it seems plausible to say that it contains elements that may appeal to both socialists and liberals. In that sense, a basic income holds a potential rarely found among other political ideas. However, since the breakthrough of neoliberal hegemony, the idea of a basic income has increasingly been forced to live a life in the periphery of the dominating discourse, but during the last ten years, it has at the same time gained an ever stronger foothold in new global social movements. What this means is that the idea of a basic income is not waning or even dying. The global and expanding organisation Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), which is working in favour of the implementation of a basic income throughout the world, has endeavoured to demonstrate how a basic income would solve some of the negative aspects of the current economic crisis. The idea is not to ‘repair’ the system but to present an alternative. In this chapter, Ydesen and Christensen are using the Danish discursive political landscape as an empirical case to show the potential of the basic

income idea for cutting across the poles of the contemporary political topography and manifesting itself as a viable and forceful political idea.

The last chapter carrying the title *No Future - Degrowth as Dissent in the Wealth Society* was written by Peter Nielsen. Like the authors of the two preceding chapters, Nielsen provides an analysis at a structural level. He unpacks his notion of degrowth by arguing that we should rethink the notion of dissent. He claims that the current development of advanced capitalist societies is characterised by a multidimensional and deep crisis, but even so, there seems to be very little dissent in a country such as Denmark, judging by traditional standards of critical theories. It seems that dissent has been replaced by consent, but Nielsen asks if this is really the case. Taking this question as a point of departure for the chapter, he analyses the theoretical and practical dissent in advanced capitalist societies in the last 100 years in order to establish what has shaped the contemporary configuration. He argues that the prevailing critical theories and practices have failed to address a major societal development in the past decades: The formation and decay of the Wealth Society. He argues that what we have is primarily a vital consensus revolving around neoclassical economics and neoliberal politics in a society dominated by consumerist values and media culture. Economic growth is the pivot. On the other hand, dissent is widespread in the shape of degrowth, which is primarily a structural and diffuse phenomenon resulting from a myriad of uncoordinated and largely unintended actions. Degrowth in this sense constitutes a counter culture.

Whereas the two former sections identify particular political actors, the contributions in this section present systemic critiques. The actors here are the common, the political-economic system and the counter culture. Each chapter carves out an alternative to the existing order. These can be seen as steps towards developing institutions of dissent.

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