The life at the gates of the iron cage

Power relations through practices of participation in the Third Sector

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0. Introduction

This research study is fundamentally about what people say and do regarding participation in spaces provided and sustained by organizations of the Third Sector, and the power phenomena entailed in those sayings and doings. The title of this dissertation and, more specifically, the reference made to the iron cage (Weber, 1934), one of the most well known metaphors in the field of the social sciences, might offer some hint regarding the interests, premises, and direction of the study. Nevertheless, it is indispensable to provide the reader with a general background on the origin, formulation, and empirical approach to the object of study.

0.1. Shaping a problem

The interest in this territory of social life arose through a series of reflexions on the confluence of different subjects. Those subjects, as loosely defined points of departure for depicting more delimited areas of inquiry, included (1) participation, an idea that circulates widely through the most diverse settings under an array of conceptions and prescriptions for practice; (2) the Third Sector, entailing a more or less distinguishable collection of organizations with varied forms and goals; and (3), at a more conceptual level, the links between specific forms of organization and power relations or, if you may, the overlapping character of organizational phenomena and certain kinds of power phenomena.

0.1.1. Participation

As for participation, its presence in many spheres of social life is what initially caught my attention. There were some issues that resulted intriguing for me, such as: (1) the links between participation and democratic ideals and aspirations; (2) the aura and expectations it seems to raise every time it is brought into a situation; and (3) a diffuse conception of participation as some sort of path that reverts

disequilibriums through active involvement. These issues led me to think about the ways in which attempts to put participation into practice unfold, the relation of such attempts with the settings and contexts in which they take place, and their consequences.

0.1.2. The Third Sector

Regarding the Third Sector, the definition and boundaries of the category – which seemed to be blurry – and the scope of organizations it pretends to include made me realize that the category has two sides. One side constitutes one of many attempts to give name to an area of social activity and the other consists of an attempt to take that area of activity towards a given direction. At that time, I thought that the diversity of undertakings and forms of organization included in the category of Third Sector was challenging in many ways. Besides the wide range of variations in terms of their aims, concerns and dimensions, organizations located in the Third Sector seemed to have different relations with governmental authorities and the corporate world. Some of those relations could be seen as collaborative, others could be posed in terms of coexistence, and yet others conflictive. While the character of these relations appeared to have something to do with regional geopolitical features particular to where organizations are located, the political positions of agents involved also seemed important. Then, it occurred to me that all those differences, the relations among them, and attempts to put them into one category should rather be seen as a contest. More than a territory for disputes, the Third Sector, as a path for collective activity, could be seen as a territory in dispute. On the basis of this idea, I wondered what was at stake in such a dispute, what sides were confrontation, how alliances were managed, and what were the directions through which disputes could flow.

0.1.3. Power and organizations

As for the links between organizational phenomena and power phenomena, I found it curious to see how mainstream organizational psychology had traditionally confined the study of power to a somewhat secondary section that was relatively isolated from other topics. It is not that I considered that everyone in the discipline should study organizational power phenomena or that no one had studied it before. What I found intriguing was the contrast between the minor place granted to power in organizational psychology, and the thought that many aspects of an

organization, if not all of them, entailed some kind of constraining effects in one way or another. Seen this way, power phenomena is entangled with organizational phenomena in terms of regulation, discipline, molding, and control. This led me to consider the benefits of elaborating a systematic attempt to delimit the specificities of that overlapping character of power and organizational phenomena from the point of view of organizational psychology.

The visualization of the possible links between participation, the Third Sector and power phenomena in organization, which came easily considering that all of them were based on similar interests, allowed me to pose some basic questions. First, it was clear for me that participation, as an idea crossing many spheres of social life, was particularly important as a feature of the Third Sector in as much as they both frequently appear together. This led me to ask which were the bases and consequences of this association. Second, the connections between the idea of participation and the specific attempts to put it into practice, as well as the bases and consequences of such attempts seemed to be more interesting when addressed in terms of their relations with the characteristics of Third Sector organizations. Third, and more important, the presence, kinds, and unfolding of power phenomena entailed in those attempts to put participation into practice emerged as the focus of an incipient research problem. This was particularly relevant when considering the implications of the loose idea of participation as a remedy for disequilibriums and its place in a space in which collective initiatives could find a way through, by turning themselves into formal organizations. As a result of these first questions, the line of inquiry started to acquire shape as a view focused on power phenomena, regarding the ways participation is put into practice in Third Sector organizations.

0.2. Structure of the study

Of course, the line of inquiry itself still had to be elaborated. In order to do so, the first step would consist of a systematic review of the literature with regard to participation and the Third Sector, in order to depict the area of study in a more accurate manner, taking into account existing frameworks, conceptions, and approaches. The second step would necessarily imply the selection of a set of analytical tools. They would provide a conceptually informed formulation of the problem and the bases for an empirical approach. These initial considerations

shaped, ordered, and directed this research study. Figure 1 shows a diagram with each of the stages that consists of four major blocks: (1) the object, (2) the look, (3) the problem; and (4) the results. Each of these blocks covers two or three of the chapters included in this dissertation.

0.2.1. The object

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 are intended to depict the boundaries and questions regarding the object on which this research study is focused, that is, the links between participation and the Third Sector. Chapter 1 offers a problematizing overview of conceptions and approaches to participation, stressing the ineluctable character of the subject in many areas of social life and the variety of meanings and uses it has. Emphasis is placed in discussing the implications of the differences among the meanings and uses of participation. This offers a scheme for locating and describing the common aspects and variations among different attempts to put participation into practice. The chapter concludes with the discussion of some non obvious and often neglected issues in the study of participation, pointing out the links among these issues and power phenomena, and the relevance of their study to better understand social life.

Chapter 2 is aimed at describing and discussing the phenomenon of the Third Sector and the forms in which it has been conceived, stressing its place as an area of social activity located at the margins of the Market and the State. The chapter offers a brief overview of the origins, trends, and regional Third Sector characteristics. Emphasis is placed on the discussion of the uses and limits of the criteria through which organizations are ascribed to the Third Sector. Some characteristics existing in the academic literature on the subject are also included, in order to underscore the thematic areas that have been studied. This problematizing view of the Third Sector results in a framework for understanding the relationships among the Third, Public and Private Sectors, as well as their embeddedness in everyday life. Throughout the chapter, a depiction of the Third Sector as a simultaneously descriptive and normative conception in which participation constitutes a central concern is progressively elaborated.

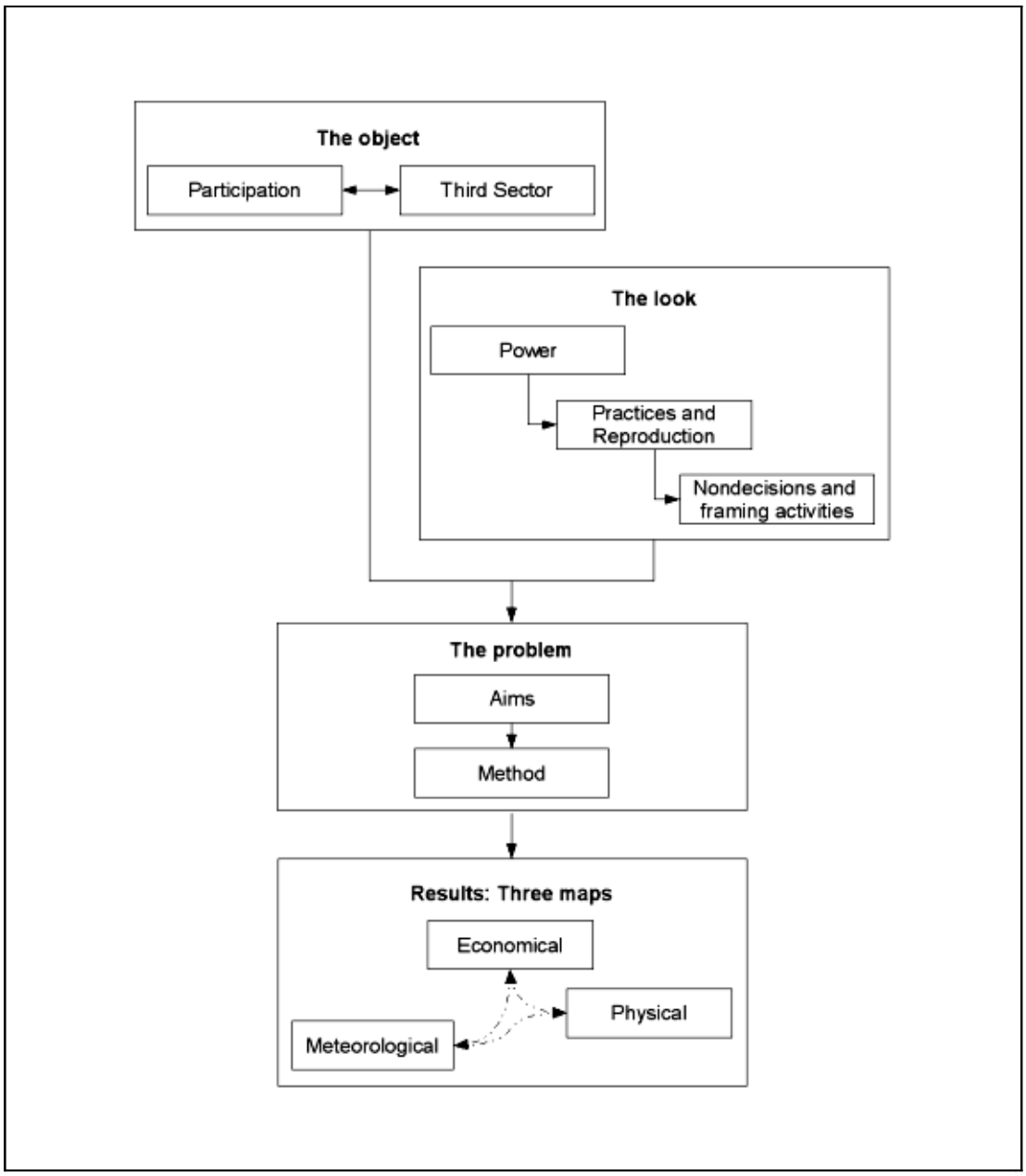

Figure 1.
Structure of the research study

0.2.2. The look

The systematic review in what constitutes the object of this research study, requires a specific framework. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 are intended to establish the basis for a conceptual look at that object. I use the word 'look' to refer to an analytical view, one which depicts a theoretical framework for addressing power phenomena through practices. Chapter 3 discusses a perspective of power that serves as a useful conceptual formulations for inquiries on the imbrications between participation and the Third Sector. The chapter includes an overview of

different conceptions of power, issues around which debates on the conception of power take place, and the place of power in social science theories. The most relevant section of the chapter presents Foucault's conception of power by contrasting it to other conceptions. Emphasis is placed on the advantages of Foucault's conception of power as a starting point for dealing with the complexities of the links between participation and the Third Sector. Instead of arguing for or against different approaches, the chapter is aimed at depicting the path and the reasons why Foucault's conception of power was held as the first, broadest element in the conceptual framework that has informed this research.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of Bourdieu's conceptual framework for the analysis of social practices and their place in the links between social order and everyday life. The chapter describes concepts such as *habitus* and field, stressing how they serve as an analytical path for the perspective on power discussed in Chapter 3. I underscore the implications of Bourdieu's concepts when addressing issues as organizational life, politics, social change, and the relations between the State and the Market. These concepts and the relationships between them are shown as useful tools for addressing in terms of practices, the ways in which different forms of power operate in a given setting and how they distinctively manage to reproduce the relations in which they are founded according to the specificities of each setting.

Chapter 5 presents Bachrach and Baratz's idea of nondecision and Goffman's concept of footing as aspects that highlight specific phenomena of study that are relevant regarding the relationship between participation and the Third Sector. The chapter describes the idea of nondecision, underlining its importance in the study of collective decision making. Additionally, I discuss the analytical applicability of the idea to stress its limits and propose a reinterpretation. Goffman's set of concepts for analyzing how social encounters are given a frame is also described. While Goffman's frame analysis is presented as a useful tool for the study of nondecisions in activities explicitly devoted to decision making, emphasis is placed on the scope of its applicability which includes practically every participatory activity that has the form of a collective, non-ordinary event.

0.2.3. The problem

The third block of the dissertation includes Chapters 6 and 7. These chapters entail the formulation of the research problem so it can be empirically addressed. Chapter 6 consists of an account of the aims that this research study intends to achieve. The chapter begins by revisiting the two first blocks, the object and the look. They serve as the basis for delimiting the research questions and objectives, in a problematizing and theoretically informed manner. The objectives of the study are displayed in four groups: (1) the specificities of participatory practices, (2) the decision making processes, (3) the power relationships thus enabled, and (4) the taken for granted participatory nature of the Third Sector. Each of these groups is focused in a different, yet complementary aspect of the relationship between participation and the Third Sector, and the power phenomena it entails.

Chapter 7 offers a detailed description of the methodological design and its implementation. According to the formulation of the problem, the empirical approach to the study of participation in the Third Sector is rooted in the qualitative tradition. The chapter shows how an ethnographic study is able to account for participation in terms of its practices. Considering that the ongoing performance of practices and their traces have been the focus of attention during empirical work, the chapter elaborates on the concept of practices form the point of view of its empirical implications. Details are offered on how the corpus of data was built by means of observation, interviews, and the selection of documents. I offer a step by step description of the interpretative analysis with special attention to the decisions made throughout the process.

0.2.4. Results

The fourth block contains the results of the study in the form of three analytical maps. Chapter 8 offers an introductory overview of these maps by pointing out the logic behind their construction. Each of the maps is presented as the result of drawing the boundaries, locations, and flows that result from the more or less stable patterns sustained by practices of participation at a specific layer and scale.

Chapter 9 shows the results that belong to the layer of the economic map of participation. These results are based on an approach to the Third Sector that conceives it as both the product and the producer of a specific market. The chapter starts by making explicit the wide conception of economy on which it is

based. In this sense, economy is a way of accounting for activities that are shaped in particular manners when they are given value and are then exchanged. The chapter elaborates on the distinctive forms of activities that get to function as goods, stressing the different principles upon which they acquire value and the characteristics of the exchanges through which they circulate. Emphasis is placed on the effects of this market-like functioning in the relationships, the reason for being, and the arrangements of organizations that belong to the Third Sector.

Chapter 10 focuses on the formation, development, and functioning of Third Sector organizations. The map in this section characterizes the activities of organizations from the Third Sector in terms of the imbrications between *participation* and organizational arrangements. It offers a figurative physical interpretation of the practices and relations that sustain these imbrications. The key elements of this map are the expectations, concerns, and formalization processes through which many of these arrangements come into being. The chapter includes detailed accounts of the enactment of participatory encounters and decision making as distinguishable, yet overlapping, closely related areas of activity.

Chapter 11 focuses on the symbolic dimension of the activities performed by Third Sector organizations. The image of meteorology as the leading metaphor serves as the basis for the mapping in this chapter. The map displays the interplay among intentionalities, memories, and expectations in order to determine how the meanings that lead the activity of this sector are conformed. The key issues in this chapter are: (1) the relationships among past, present and future as places in which the experiences and ongoing activities of agents involved are located; (2) the cloud of conceptions and images through which these experiences and activities are shaped; and (3) the role of these conceptions and images in the unfolding of formalized, non-ordinary events.

Chapter 12 is the concluding chapter. It starts by revisiting the whole process in terms of the rationale upon which the problem and the empirical approach were defined. The most important section of the chapter is devoted to a discussion about the meaning and implications derived from the results offered in each of the three maps. Finally, based on the principle findings of the study, some areas of inquiry are suggested for further research.

0.3. Crossing voices

If something characterizes this study besides the specificity of the object it addresses, it is the attempt to construct a research problem. This research problem is based on a series of concepts that serve as tools for underscoring the power-participation phenomena as a legitimate area of interest for the social psychology of organizing phenomena. The main purpose was non other than to offer a systematic empirical approach that allows a new way to look at an area of inquiry that deserves more attention both in practical and academic terms.

As can be expected, the relationship between a researcher and an object of study is one of love and hate. In that pervasive relationship, the researcher cannot but see what happens around him through the lens of his research interests. My case is far from being an exception, and thus, I cannot help but thinking of the process through which this study has been carried out as the outcome of a participatory process. In this process, different voices have had a prominent role, shaping each stage of the study in ways that might not have been possible if those voices – some closer to me than others – would have been absent. Needless to say, the responsibility for the results is, for better or worse, completely mine. Nevertheless, I could not avoid maintaining those different voices in the text. This is why the reader will find some shifts in my writing, from the first person singular form to its plural form, as well as the impersonal form. In this sense, this work is but the account of a place and a moment in the unfolding of a network of conversations that have a life of their own. It is my hope that was has been said brings some openings into these conversations.

1. The making of participation

Nowadays, participation is a common subject in many organizational settings, despite of the fact that there is a huge variety of approaches and practices attached to the label. This variety results interesting because, among other things, it exposes the different and, to some extent, contradictory meanings, directions, and practices the word 'participation' seems to stand for, depending on the kind of context in which the phenomenon is located and on the social position of actors involved. As a starting point, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of these approaches to participation.

Participation, as something that occurs in the world, is pervading the most varied spheres of social life. A quick look at the newspapers can reveal this growing presence. Let us consider the following examples. In Spain, this quick look allowed us to find: (1) the constitution in the Basque Country of a *Participatory Council for Victims of Terrorism*, (2) the collection of proposals made by groups of citizens for their inclusion in participatory budgets in the city of Sevilla; (3) the launching of the platform *VoicE*, a citizen participation initiative, partially funded by the *European Commission*, in the *Autonomous Community of Valencia*; (4) the announcement of a new Youth Council for offering young people another channel of participation in the city of Pamplona; (5) the creation of activities for fostering citizen participation in the Getxophoto festival in Bilbao; (6) the statements made by students occupying different faculties in the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* in a fight against the implementation of *European Space for Higher Education* stressing that their activities are an attempt to raise an authentic participatory dynamic for building a democratic, transparent functioning of the university. In Mexico, we can find the following cases: (7) in the State of Mexico, the municipal councilors, who are responsible for the introduction of citizen participation in programs designed and approved by the local government; (8) the

citizen councils in the State of Nuevo León, composed by outstanding members of the community in order to collaborate with the government in the elaboration of proposals for the well being of the population; (9) the *Act of Citizen Participation of the State of Aguascalientes*, which is intended to regulate the instruments of participation in that territory; (10) the different forms of involvement in the *First National Civic Strike*, in Mexico City; and (11) the fear that the then unprecedented possibility for Mexican citizens in foreign countries to vote in the 2006 presidential election failed as a result of low participation.

In these examples, participation is associated to different issues, some of them graver than others, and seems to find their reason for being in an attempt to allow people to take part in those issues, or enhance the possibilities they already have. These attempts are all related to current institutional spaces and imply some form of organization, whether in terms of the settings in which they are displayed or regarding the arrangements for their functioning. Of course, the selection of these examples is arbitrary in as much as it is not the result of a systematic search. Nevertheless, it helps to underline the overflowing presence of participation in the most diverse settings, and its association to different purposes and forms of organization.

This growing presence, which in our view is but a joint effect of the myriad of attempts to enable participation in particular settings, makes of participation a subject that cannot be ignored, particularly in the life of organizations. There is something about participation that, nowadays, turns it into something unavoidable. In fact, many scholars talk about this ineluctability in terms of 'participatory orthodoxy' (Biggs, 1995; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Natal, 2007). The wide circulation of the idea of participation requires responses in many settings, but in order to raise the necessity of responses, participation has to be previously positioned as a subject about which conversations have to be held. This leads us to consider the settings and the ways in which this ineluctability is sustained. The need for participation might be experienced and conceived in different ways for a local government, a group of neighbors, the workers of a factory, the middle managers of a company, or the members of a professional association. As a consequence, the kind of responses that can appear might also be different.

As an effect of the ineluctable character of participation, the implications of each attempt of putting participation into practice and the conditions under which it occurs seem to be of the uttermost interest. As for the implications of these attempts, some of the most interesting are likely to be found in the institutional dynamics in which they are inserted. Participation seems to require of some forms of organization (e.g. the creation of participatory organisms, the design of process that are participatory, the development or adoption of guidelines for participation, or adjustments in the organizational chart intended to facilitate participation). Hence, the deployment or the concretion of such attempts in terms of organizational arrangements raise questions on the kind of effects it produces in organizational situations and contexts. Besides, considering that participation, as a word of the ordinary language, is far from being univocal, the ways in which it is understood in each attempt, lead us to think about the progressive diversification of its meanings. In any case, the effects of trying to put participation into practice – whether in terms of the functioning of organizations or in terms of the conception of participation itself – appear as a relevant area of inquiry.

In consonance with this wide view of participation, the focus of interest of this chapter is not confined to the discussion of conceptual or operative definitions. It is not that such definitions – as a part of the outcomes produced by the academic work on participation – are not relevant. In fact, theoretical and empirical productions on participation are important in as much as they are also a response to the ineluctable character of the idea. As such, it is important to understand the part they play in the unfolding of participation, how they get caught by the subject and what kind of distinctive features they add to the specific meanings it acquired and the specific attempts by which it is put into practice.

The work presented in this chapter intends to establish a point of departure for advancing in the understanding of these issues. The description and discussion of current conceptions and practices regarded to participation have been developed on the basis of a literature review. The materials consulted include reports, working papers, conference proceedings, and journal articles published during the last twenty years, the majority of which have been produced in fields such as industrial relations, organizational psychology, community psychology, and sociology. The first section is devoted to the variety of meanings associated to participation. The second section describes and discusses four different

approaches to participation in order to underscore their variations and commonalities. The third section explores variations of participation in terms of the different areas of social life in which it is unfolded. The fourth section offers some clues on what different attempts of putting participation into practice might have in common. The fifth section deals with the wide range of aspects involved in participation by describing a scheme for locating and describing those variations. The sixth section discusses some traditionally neglected, yet undoubtedly important issues in academic productions on participation. The seventh and final section sums up the contents of the chapter, highlighting the results and proposing some lines of inquiry.

1.1. The meanings of participation

In spite of being a term that is frequently brought into conversation in a wide variety of academic and professional settings, participation eludes its formulation into a widely accepted definition. According to Dachler and Wilpert the literature on the subject “includes a plethora of undefined terms and characteristically lacks explicitly stated theoretical frameworks. [Moreover,] different value systems imply different definitions of participation, so that the term participation has a variety of meanings across investigators” (1978, p. 1). Despite of being one of the oldest areas of research in disciplines devoted to the study of organizations (Glew, O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, & Van Fleet, 1995), after almost 30 years, there are no reasons to think that things are different. But recognizing this does not necessary lead us to propose yet another definition, at least not in the ordinary sense of the word. On the contrary, our assumption is that the question cannot be answered by making a collection of explicit, well delimited definitions, contrasting the terms of those definitions, and developing a new definition as a result of that contrast. Such an approach would lead us to neglect the domain of the praxis and the role that tacit or diffuse assumptions can play. Several unintended consequences might be derived from treating participation only in terms of its existing definitions. One of such consequences, crucial in our view, is that of identical statements linked to different practices.

1.1.1. Participation as varied achievements

It is true that most definitions of participation, either conceptual or operative, are somehow close to the idea of sharing: Being consulted by your supervisor (Vroom,

1960); having some degree of influence in decisions (Ascigil y Ryan, 2001); making decisions jointly (Baloff & Doherty, 1989); feeling that 'we are all in the same boat' (Anderson & West, 1998); involving stakeholders in the most important phases of a process (Rebien, 1996); taking responsibility over one's own situation in a collective manner (Montero, 1996); etcetera. But even if we admit that sharing is at the core of the phenomena, what it means to share and how this sharing is actually accomplished is by no means deductible or univocal. In fact, some studies on the subject that are designed with an ethnomethodological background are conducted without a prior definition in the idea that it is not "something that is simply switched on" (Potter & Hepburn, in press) but an ongoing accomplishment.

1.2. Multiple versions

Multiple approaches to participation are thus distinctive versions, varied ways of looking, and, more important, diverse practices. In the following section, an attempt is made to explore this plurality by means of the description of four different perspectives. One of such perspectives, presented through the story of a peculiar neighborhood vindication, emphasizes the potency of collective undertakings that do not follow a straight, institutional path. The second perspective is focused on participation as a mean for revitalizing the democratic systems. In the view of this perspective, the functioning of participation lies in introduction of the right methods and the procedures. The third approach makes a plea for participatory decision making as a mean for enhancing the adaptive responses of an organization. In this approach, participatory decision making is enabled by softening the hierarchical and functional ordering, so that new solutions can be raised. The fourth approach, which as the first one is presented by means of a specific case, has its axis in the idea of the emergence of concerned groups and their capability for creating new configurations of certain areas of the public sphere. The enabling of self-provision is crucial in this approach. The four specific approaches should not be considered as representative of the universe of conceptions and approaches to participation. They are just an effective way of illustrating the kind of issues that are at stake when dealing with a diffuse, plural object as participation.

1.2.1. The power of the informal

Back in the days of the Greater London Council, as Peter Spink's (1989) vivid account shows, inhabitants of the suburbs near to Red Lion Lane were concerned with a raise in traffic. Drivers trying to avoid traffic jams were starting to use minor streets as if they were substitutes of high speed ways. As the situation got more intense, people started talking about it. Then, a local councilor suggested that those concerned with the problem should gather their signatures and ask the borough to solve the problem. Encounters in the neighborhood pub worked as a catalyst for the proposal, and soon the signatures were handed over to the competent commission. As no answer was received, people repeated the operation, and this time they got a reply: since the problem depended on organs of higher level – the Greater London Council –, nothing could be done.

After a while, neighbors restarted the conversation, being retail stores, the pub, and the front of the school the places in which another idea finally appeared: they needed to get the attention of the Greater London Council and suddenly, without any specific decision-taking process or committee, a small street which was one of the most affected by traffic during the morning was blocked. This action, which would be repeated later, was also accompanied by a literally "never ending" mailing to the Engineer-in-chief, which, as the first sender happily discovered, was forced by law to answer every single letter. There were different moments and different persons. They had neither a committee nor a plan.

When the Greater London Council finally reacted, attempts were made to convince neighbors to constitute a formal association so they could be represented in the Council Chamber. People declined the offer several times; an offer they thought was time-consuming and conflict-generating. They preferred to keep doing things their way: different actions, different people and different fronts. Finally, after some inhabitants received formal invitations to discuss the problem in the Council Chamber, people decided that one of them should go. The chosen one was finally presented as one of the residents of the neighborhood and expressed his personal opinions on the subject emphasizing that he was not representing the others. Almost two years later, the street was closed.

In his article, Spink stresses the need for questioning some basic distinctions that are widely used in organizational research. The author considers this an

outstanding example because it challenges traditional assumptions on the ways people should get together and solve their problems, which, in general terms, is what participations is about. Neither the canonical size of a group nor the supposedly technical need for formal arrangements, seem to be essential.

1.2.2. Procedures for being democratic

In a somewhat similar domain, but from a different perspective, Rebollo (2002), whose work in citizen participation is well known in Spain, offers some advice on how to avoid unintended negative effects or misguided uses of participation. The author sustains that poor or negative results are obtained and problems arise when participation is based on improvisations or techniques and procedures applied are not adequate. Against improvisation, Rebollo says, a political project is needed. A project of this kind has to define which spaces of power are going to be handled by people and at what extent. As can be advanced, if a careful planning is conducted and if techniques are selected according to the objectives, and are congruent with the conditions in which they are going to be applied, then the success of the participative process should be assured. Thus the nature of Rebollo's work is procedural: he is offering a set of guidelines that lead to an effective participatory process.

First thing to note is that the contents and purposes of the political project is not included in the spaces in which people can exert influence. Nevertheless, the same spaces are intended to offer to the people the possibility of proposing adjustments and changes to the political agenda. Here, the use of the word 'people' entails a distinction between those that are 'users' of the opportunities offered by participatory arrangements and those that act as providers of those participatory arrangements – decision makers, designers, managers, etcetera. While this can be regarded as a subtlety of language in use, in our point of view, it underlines the relevance of the systems of roles in any attempt of understanding how participation is achieved in specific settings.

In Rebollo's approach, there is a strong confidence in methodology as the domain in which participation can get what it takes to succeed. Whether or not a technically informed, well planned approach defines good participatory practices is of course an important question. Nevertheless, such a question can hardly be answered in the absence of a clear image of what 'good participatory practices'

are. And since 'check box' approaches to evaluate participatory practices include among its criteria strong doses of technical and procedural features, we are likely to enter into a circular argument.

1.2.3. An instrument for adaptation

Another perspective, rooted in a different world of practice, conceives participation as a mean for the achievement of ‘greater connectivity’ in the organization (Ashmos, Duchon, McDaniel, & Huonker, 2002). The authors’ thesis is that traditional attempts to deal with complexity are misguided. These attempts are misguided because they rely on procedures and rules that are intended to make organizational life simpler but finally limit the capability of the organization for productively dealing with changes in the environment. In order to reverse the effect of decades of organizational processes designed according to a machine model, managers can use participation while dealing with the making of decisions. Participative decision making is thus presented by the authors as a simple rule – let everybody take a part in decision making – that leads to complex effects – nobody knows how decisions are going to be made and which outcomes are going to be produced. The rule is that managers have to increase the numbers of decision makers, informants, interpretations and types of information, in order to facilitate collective sense making processes. While

> such a meaning creation effort will seem somewhat ‘messy’ and disorganized when viewed through the lens of the machine model; it in fact allows the organization to consider and experiment with a much larger pool of adaptive behaviors than would be possible if only a few agents (e.g. the top of the hierarchy) where involved (Ashmos et al, 2002, p. 193).

Here, the authors make a plea for what might be called de-procedurization, as a mean for fostering responses that are creative and effective at the same time. Under such conditions, there is always the possibility that conflicts arise. A greater connectivity among internal agents makes conflict more probable than in ‘traditional’ conditions. It is one of the managerial functions, Ashmos et al (2002) say, to make conflicts visible whenever they arise, so that they can be constructively managed. This can be done by taking care of interpersonal relationships and by providing the conditions for dealing with controversies through dialog and arguments. An important limit of this view is that the way of

solving conflicts it provides is barely a good intention. Taking care of relationships and providing conditions for dialog are not things that can just be magically invoked. But there is a more problematic limitation. An approach like this can hardly function when the contents of decisions and conflicts – the objects that are being discussed – are out of the range of issues that individuals involved are responsible for.

1.2.4. A path toward self-provision

The exclusion of civic society from the scenarios in which crucial decisions are made is almost a topic. Concerned with responses to this exclusion regarding the scientific and technological fields, Callon and Rabeharisoa (2008) offer a refreshing look by means of a specific case. The authors present the history of the *Association Française contre les Myopathies, an* association of patients with muscular dystrophy. The importance of the association lies, among other things, in the changes it has led with regard to the way people with muscular dystrophy are seen. While in the 1950's people with muscular dystrophy were seen as things that families had to bear, in the 1980's they were thought of as unfortunate, yet active human beings.

> Considered for a very long time as freaks of nature, MD patients became human beings in their own right. Their disabilities and problems are now explained in terms of genetic faults that research has made it possible to characterize. It is the recognition of this new identity, constructed around genes and prostheses, that the association has fought for in the public sphere through intense political mobilization (Callon & Rabeharisoa, 2008, p. 231).

The way in which the shared concerns of people with muscular dystrophy and their families was unfolded into a growing body with capabilities for putting pressures on the political and research agendas is what makes of this case a relevant one. While the spaces for research provided by the Public Sector were conservative in their approaches, the association not only pushed toward innovative research, but also created their own spaces for producing that needed knowledge.

The way the association maintained its particular functioning in spite of its considerable growth is crucial. Once that expectations and lines of action were

established and deployed through organizational arrangements, networks and communities, concerned agents gained access to spaces in which they were recognized. Moreover, the members of the association resisted pressures that sought to locate the experts as the ones that were naturally qualified for making the relevant decisions. By keeping control of those decisions, the members of a progressively more influential entity enabled structures and activities for the self-provision of the kind of attention they needed.

By pointing out the limits of certain dichotomous assumptions (public sphere – private sphere, experts - lay people, and ordinary citizens – professional decision makers) with regard to the engagement of that civic society in the development of technosciences, Callon and Rabeharisoa's account underlines how a concerned group, as a social agent, can configure innovative articulations of public issues. In the case of the French association, the innovative articulations are produced with regard to technosciences and politics. Under certain conditions, emergent concerned groups can raise and reinforce unseen forms of linking political debate and scientific research. In the case of the *Association Française contre les Myopathies,* the innovative configuration that the association imposed relocated the aims and objects of research into the place of the collective concerns.

The account provided by Callon and Rabeharisoa shows how a concern, once it is put in common, can give place to the unfolding of a series of activities that seek to solve the needs or provide the elements around which concerns arise. With regard to participation, it is not that the term has an outstanding role in the account. In fact, the word participation is barely mentioned. But the important thing – and here we are speaking as readers – is that the way the association was formed and developed, along with its functioning and its influent role, evokes the idea of participation. It is as if some wide, diffuse, not necessarily declarative conception of participation circulated across different, even incompatible concrete enactments of participation.

1.2.5. Comparing approaches

Several issues emerge if we contrast the four approaches briefly described above. Regarding Rebollo's procedural view of participation, if posing doubts about the claims made by methodologists is not an unreasonable thing to do, one has to ask why the niche market for receipts is a well established one. The answer cannot be

simple, because it should take many aspects into account, as well as their complex interrelations. Some of such aspects are strongly related to mechanisms of social reproduction. In fact, despite its technical claims, guidelines-as-requisites on how to deal with neighborhood situations usually work as standardizing devices. Neighbors of Red Lion Street were asked to form an association, so that they could be attended by authorities. If you want to talk with the administration, you have to dress yourself like the administration, and show behaviors that are congruent or similar to those of the administration. When this happens, the organizational form, the form of the institution, is copied. Nevertheless, something different occurs in the other three versions of participation.

According to Spink's account, neighbors from Red Lion Lane were reluctant to adopt the form of an institutional instrument for pursuing their goal, so they sought to put pressure by means other than those provided by the administrations. Since that pressure proved to be effective, the administration had to listen to the neighbors in the neighbors' terms. We find Spink's account very interesting because of the challenge it poses to other accounts that give preeminence to the method and the institutional channels. But the capability of the informal to enable participation and exerting influence is not immune to attempts of using participation as an instrument. As seen in the Ashmos and collaborators' 'greater connectivity' approach, participation, enabled by the dissolution or attenuation of structures and procedures, is presented as a mean for enhancing the adaptive capabilities of organizations by taking advantage of disordered, non prescribed situations.

In Callon and Rabeharisoa's account, the association of patients with muscular dystrophy follows an institutional path in order to provide their members and, in general, those that have similar concerns, the kind of attention they required. The aspects of the idea of participation that can be emphasized when considering this case are (1) the active engagement in the configuration of the frames through which the problems and their solutions are defined; (2) the progressive attainment of a position in which the association cannot be ignored during debates related with their concerns; (3) the collective acquisition of knowledge and skills required for being able to talk with authorities and experts; and (4) the preservation of control of internal arenas of decision as a function of the member of the association, that is, those directly concerned agents.

The goals of participatory processes are quite different in each version. Ashmos and collaborators think of participation as a way of increasing and improving decision making, which in turn will lead to adaptive behaviors. Rebollo's presents participation as a method for improving old representative democracy and, eventually, constructing a brand new participative democracy. Callon and Rabeharisoa, and Spink do not offer an explicit objective for participation; instead, they stress the fact that those involved around a common concern find a way to collectively cope with a troubling situation in a satisfactory manner. There is something else entailed in perspectives like that of Rebollo: something paradoxical in the dual conception of participation both as a goal and as a mean. In fact, in some cases, participation is somehow paradoxically presented as an end and the mean to achieve that end (e.g. UNICEF and the right to participation).

In terms of practical concretions, there are also differences: while Ashmos and cols. offer generic advice on how to deal with complexities generated by participative decision making, Rebollo describes a set of guidelines that are intended to raise, sustain and respond to people's right to have a say on public matters. Spink clearly breaks with this approach and argues in favor of what at first sight could be considered as an anti-procedural position but through a more careful review can be regarded as an open, emerging concretion of participation. The paths of action included in Callon and Rabeharisoa's account are to some extent similar to those described by Spink in that the development of the *Association Française contre les Myopathies* follows a line without precedents. Nevertheless, the case of the association highlights the role of institutionalized forms of action as instruments for exerting influence.

Finally, but most important, we have the conceptions of participation. In Rebollo's work, as in many others, participation is presented as requisite for democratic life that consists mainly of spaces in which people can exercise power. For Ashmos and collaborators, participation is a managerial tool in which hierarchical orders are attenuated in order to let the people of the organization take a part in the process of mapping situations and making decisions. While keeping some similarities with Rebollo's proposal, Peter Spink's idea of participation points towards a different direction, one in which participatory spaces arise every time common concerns are introduced into conversations or give place to activities that seek to fulfill them. These spaces can have different shapes and come into being

in the local, no planned, encounters that cannot be disregarded from the specific times and places in which they are produced. Albeit similar in some aspects, the conception of participation entailed in the analysis of the association of patients with muscular dystrophy goes in a different direction. The work of the association allows agents involved to create and unfold paths for action in which their common concerns can get a place in the middle of the institutional world.

As a whole, the value of these dissimilar, contrasting approaches lies in their capability for underlying some crucial aspects of participation. Aims, practical attainment, and conceptions are the key features of approaches to participation. As such, they can serve as an axis for making sense of the multilayer, diverse character of participation as a social phenomenon.

1.3. Multiple phenomena

Research on participation, as said above, is far away from a unified concept of its object. Indeed, despite several warnings, the way this object of study is defined is still problematic, even in specific areas. In fact, in the literature on the subject, definitions of participation in specific areas (*participation* in "X" or participatory "X") easily outnumber those that deal with the notion of participation in its wider sense, which is to say, as a phenomenon that occurs in most areas of social life. Thus, the term participation seems to stand for different things.

Though the ways in which the term is used have some kind of family resemblance, the different things that the term stands for point out the complex character of participation as an area of inquiry. On one hand, such differences are not just cases or particular configurations of a clearly defined set of dimensions in an uncontroversial single phenomenon. The differences are crucial because they configure a plurality of phenomena. On the other hand, considering that family resemblance, that plurality of phenomena that falls under the label of *participation* cannot be entirely separated into independent pieces, because something important would be lost in the process. Participation thus has to be treated as problematic idea linked to a variety of specific achievements – whether as outcomes of academic research or as practical deployments in diverse areas of social life – in some sort of disperse conversation in which those almost shattered groups of specific achievements find their commonalities and add new elements to the family resemblance.

1.3.1. Axes of variation

As for the aspects in which the specific achievements of participation vary, we can recover the three axes that have been used when contrasting the four aforementioned examples. According to this, variations of participation, which belong to different layers, can be found in:

(1) Its conception. If we tried to offer an answer to the question “What is participation?” based on the literature review, we would have to include a wide collection of elements. Participation is referred to as a social process, as a value held by some people, as a dimension of organizational climate, as an instrument of management, as the ongoing convergence of concerns, as a right that stems from the law, and as a form of government.

(2) Its aims or direction. Participation is intended to be the way of embodying democracy in everyday life, a source of legitimacy for authority, a space for rendering high level decision making accountable, a technique for improving performance and rising efficiency, and a requisite for human development.

(3) Its practical attainment. In terms of practice, participation takes forms that range from the spontaneous and so-called 'informal' encounters to more standardized and mediated forms that require of institutional, well organized spaces for their deployment.

1.3.2. The problems of hidden differences

This diversity in conceptions entailed in specific achievements of participation, implies that, sometimes, when talking about participation, people can be talking of different things without even noticing it. The implications of this lead us to stress the necessity of carefully considering the versions of participation that are implied in the conversation. In the world of academic research, for instance, results and conclusions drawn from different studies are likely to be compared. If such comparison does not include a careful review of the assumptions that have informed the research process in each case, the results of the comparison can be misleading.

Ledford and Lawler (1994) offer a good example of this danger. Given the conclusion, based on rigorous measures, that employee participation has insignificant effects on satisfaction and performance; one can expect managers to

stop trying to apply participative programs. The problem arises when a careful review of the studies on which that conclusion is based reveals that the participatory experiences analyzed in those studies were very restrictive in their nature, excluding those aspects that are more controversial and receive more attention in public life. So if the scope of participation is narrow the effects of participation are likely to be narrow as well. This is a good reason for trying to identify the things that research studies or practical experiences, neglect, ignore, or obscure.

1.3.3. Assuming the complexities of participation

But there is more to consider, specially the way research is linked to wider social debates. As Gregory (2000) noted, participation is a term that is applied to a wide and sometimes contradictory variety of practices. Unlike her, we think that it is not the role of the researcher to solve those differences. In our view, a most productive approach would try to depict that diversity of achievements and their complex links with the diffuse notion of participation that connects them. This alternative way, which consists in getting in touch with different kinds of productions, with different looks and practices around the notion of participation, may prove effective as a basic orientation toward the study of the role that participation plays in more specific settings, because it would allow the observer to take into account the particular character of the achievements of participation he or she is dealing with, as well as the more subtle connections with other achievements, through that cloud-like understanding of participation that crosses different domains.

1.3.4. Participation across different domains

In order to establish a general view on the complexities of participation – its variations and its diffuse, wide conception - we first underline what, in our view, constitute major differences among disciplines, traditions and contexts on the basis of the literature review. It is not hard to recognize that participation has gained a major role in fields such as education, politics and law (Flores, 2004). The disciplines that belong to each field develop achievements of participation, partial concretions according to its priorities, views, and traditions.

As for the nowadays well settled triad of Public, Private, and Third Sector, there is a wide range of practices and proposals intended to deal with participation in the

organizations of each sector. Despite some similarities or transversal features, every sector has its own priorities, and even in the same sector, these priorities vary according to the role or position of agents involved.

The world of companies and corporations – the Private Sector *par excellence* – has popularized terms as teamwork (Bandow, 2001) or quality circles. Those terms are related to managerial practices intended to involve employees in decisions regarding the quality or costs of goods or services that the company offers. The Public Sector, in turn, has some tradition in promoting practices such as forums, deliberative workshops, local councils, and other spaces aimed to give voice to citizens. As for the Third Sector, participation is a crucial element for its organizations, in as much as their functioning is expected to occur on the basis of internal participative practices.

1.3.5. The corporate world

There are several things to emphasize about participation in the corporate world. The ways in which participation is used by most managers of private, lucrative organizations, for instance, entail a conception of participation as another tool than can be used to increase efficiency or generate innovation. Nevertheless, other approaches to participation in the Private Sector have also appeared. Though it seems to be in decline, there is a tradition that is linked to the idea that democracy should gain spaces in every sphere of society. In the view of this tradition, participation is about employees' having influence in organization's relevant areas of decisions. In the opposite side of this tradition, there are managerial perspectives on participation, which are rooted in the human relations school and, lately, in the human resource management approach. Those perspectives deploy an instrumental achievement of participation that provides employees with well delimited areas for displaying their initiative. This approach relies on schemes such as quality circles, job-enrichment, employee empowerment and team work. While employees are expected to offer ideas and share enthusiasm on improving performance, their power of decision does not reach fundamental issues like those regarding the direction of the company.

Thought in decline, the tradition that seeks to bring democracy to the private organization has had some results. Workers participation has gained certain rights. Sanctioned by public institutions, those rights are intended to offer the labor

force the opportunity of being represented in some decision organs. Workers participation might have seen its greatest moment when industrial democracy reached its peak, back in the 1970's. Nevertheless nowadays participation is a term

> with little currency in contemporary market-driven economies where any worker or activist concern for industrial control has been fragmented and displaced by defensive struggles to retain individual employment and to protect employment rights. Unions [...] are in numerical membership decline and along with other pressure groups are facing new, highly complex agendas [...] The ignominious collapse of so many Eastern European 'worker democratic states' has exacerbated the lack of definitional and operational clarity to industrial democracy" (Hyman & Mason, 1995, p. 8).

What seems more relevant to us is that different ways of defining participation are not just an academic area of debate, but confronted positions that are closely related to wider social issues such as public policies and legislation. Beyond this, from a psychosocial point of view, there is a link among these perspectives and fluctuations in the social imaginary. This is an example of how some degree of mobility among analytic levels is always needed, and, moreover of the inevitable ideological backgrounds that any supposedly 'neutral' definition has (Acuña, Núñez y Radrigán, 2003). In fact, the "value bases underlying topic labels like industrial democracy and power equalization are not usually made explicit and are therefore rarely systematically questioned" (Dachler & Wilpert, 1978, p. 1).

Another area of the Private Sector in which participation seems to be acquiring an outstanding role is that of the costumer-business relationships. As market approaches to participation become more and more common, they seek for ways of involving costumers in organizational processes, as sources of ideas for quality and innovation.

1.3.6. The public administration

Regarding the Public Sector, public administrations' relation with participation is quite different to that of enterprises. In terms of declared intentions, participation is said to be intended to foster citizens' involvement in policy making and decision making processes, especially those of local base. Although participation is thought

of as a space for political transformation towards a more egalitarian and co-responsible society, it is not always clear the extent to which procedures can be conducted in ways that make it just a way of legitimating decisions already taken behind closed doors. Citizen participation has evolved in many specific projects such as youth participation as a value acquiring activity (Camino & Shepherd, 2002; Kerr, 1999) or participation in the government of schools (Farrell, 2000; Gittell, 1977; MacKinnon, 2000; Ranson, Arnott, McKeown, Martin & Smith, 2005) to mention a few.

1.3.7. The Third Sector

The Third Sector[1], as another area in which participation is deployed, maintains a close – and sometimes tense – relation with the public administration. Furthermore, we would like to advance the idea that the Third Sector, or a least some part of it, emerges as the extension of collective undertakings that, through the unfolding of a non formalized modality of participation, grow and acquire some institutional features.

Participative practices in the Third Sector are mostly related to activism (Hemment, 2004; Kurczewski & Kurczewska, 2001), understood as collective activities intended to change social conditions or its effects. The target of those collective activities might include something as overwhelming as a dictatorial regime or global warming, or something as apparently well delimited as the conquering of father's maternity leave rights or a group of people that periodically visit old people just to talk to them. It is this context in which some of the most interesting examples of participation are likely to be found. Outside the boundaries of the private and the government organizations, these examples of participation remain connected to what happens in the other two sectors in ideological, territorial and economical ways. Despite of conveying ambitious projects intended to build horizontal, anti-hierarchical, spaces for action, they still have to face oligarchic practices and double agendas. There are, as can be seen, many reasons to think that it is the Third Sector, the transformations to which it is being

[1] A mention on the name of this sector should be made. The term 'Third Sector' is used to design those areas of activity and organizational forms that can be classified neither as capitalist enterprise nor as public administration. The term is anything but satisfactory, since it is applied to a complex, diverse area of social life in which different forms of organization, purposes, and philosophies are at stake.

subjected, and its close links with the Public and Private Sectors, a privileged place for studying participation.

For a more detailed elaboration on the specificities of participation in each sector, it might be useful to think of it in terms of who is likely to gain something. Since participation implies that people involved have a say in what is done, a good starting point is to work with a typology of organizations that is built around a key question: Who is the main beneficiary? This is the *cui bono* criterion, developed by Blau and Scott in 1963 (in Albalate, 2001). According to it, there are four types of beneficiaries: (1) ordinary members; (1) owners – a role which, in a non-well adjusted manner, usually includes top managers –; (3) customers and people related to the organization on a regular basis; and finally, (4) public in general.

When the main beneficiaries are the ordinary members, organizations can be classified as mutuals (e.g. unions or professional associations). In the case of owners as the main beneficiaries, for-profit enterprises are the paradigmatic type, ranging from a small retail store to a multinational holding. If costumers or users are the priority, then organizations are likely to function as means for service provision (e.g. hospitals, universities and recreational centers). Finally, when public in general is the focus of the organization, public administration is the most adjusted type (e.g. police or urban planning).

This scheme can be challenged by pointing out the many cases in which classification tasks would be uncertain. The case of co-operatives, which depending on their specific characteristics are likely to be placed between mutual and for-profit organization, is one example. Furthermore, there are cases in which distinguishing between service providing, and public organizations is not easy. But this is not posed in order to reject the typology. Nevertheless, this scheme still proves to be useful for highlighting the role of participation in different organizations. Attending to its limits can sensitize us of the importance of elements such as ownership, membership, and the continuum specific-general public.

As can be advanced, organizations from the Third Sector are likely to be covered by two of the four types: mutual organizations and service organizations. Mutual organizations, those that look for the benefit of ordinary members, are likely to invest great efforts in assuring the implication of all of its members in the

government of the entity. Participation is, in this case, focused in what happens 'inside', and its object is as general as the direction of an organization can be. Service providing organizations in turn are expected to get from participatory approaches the necessary inputs for a high quality service providing. Participation thus puts its attention 'outside' the organization, and pressures for horizontality in the management are not necessarily expected.

In the case of for-profit enterprises, which are excluded from the Third Sector, participation is only an instrument for higher efficiency and its implications in terms of decision making are very restrictive and conditioned by quality demands. A different thing occurs with public administration. In public agencies and governmental organizations, participation is thought of as a set of procedures that allows citizens to watch its functioning and count with some spaces for expressing their concerns. A considerable number of organizations from the Third Sector are devoted to create pressures for this kind of procedures to be developed and applied.

1.4. Reconfiguration of objects

Compared to the reaches and specific contents of the variety of activities that are regarded as participative, the idea that participation is about sharing power, though interesting and crucial for understanding it, seems to have important limitations. First of all, the undefined nature of power, a complex, controversial theme in the social sciences, especially since Foucault advanced a whole new approach (Ibáñez, 1983), leads us to question the idea that power is something that can be shared. Indeed, power issues are central to participation, but, in order to avoid a naive approach in what seems to require a major conceptual work, we will offer a prior and general notion of participation that is based on our interpretation of the family resemblance that links, as elements of a wide conversation, the multiple, diverse deployments of participation. This general notion is based on the idea that participation is about how objects are configured as belonging to the spheres of the public or the private. In order to make this point, let us start by discarding conceptions that reduce participation to one of the ways in which it is deployed.

A typical image associated to participation is that of an assembly, in which everybody can have a say. This can be, in fact, a form of participation. But

problems appear when our only way of thinking on participative processes is that of the assembly. The same happens when we think of it only as having some influence in decision making, when, in fact, for practical purposes, the idea of decision making is far from being clear.

1.4.1. The spheres of the public and the private

Participation is better understood as a form of relation with social objects, as phenomena in which one gets involved in current issues. As can be advanced, this can happen in several ways, because there are many forms in which people can be part of something. That is why, paraphrasing the view of Pablo Fernández (2004) on politics and the life of the city, it is by means of participation that certain aspects of social life that are located in the private sphere are reconfigured in a way that locates them into the public sphere. The displacement of objects entails changes in the ways in which those objects are rendered intelligible.

The public and the private, Fernández says, are opposed as categories and as features of social life. Public things do not need boundaries; private things exist for them. Public things include all those things – ideas, sensations, colors, clothes, rules, etcetera – that can be brought into conversations, things that can be understood in a given moment and place, but not later. Private things are those that are not located – that are dislocated –, that are out-placed, and obscured. Private things are, figuratively speaking, shadows.

According to this, the links that connect the multiple phenomena regarded as participation can be understood in a fractal manner. The reconfiguration of an object and its displacement from nowhere and silence to places and voices can be traced at different scales. In a large scale, a nation-wide decentralization process gives entity to objects in places in which they were nothing but a shadow, a distant reference. But this can also happen when a group of students decide to get involved in a home-made film, an idea that once was just a silent wish of one of them. At first sight, this view of participation can seem somehow romantic. But we believe that it should be judged from the point of view of the aspects of participative phenomena it underscores.

1.4.2. Participation in a matrix

This way of thinking of participation as phenomena related in a subtle manner can be expanded when considered as produced in a matrix, in the sense that Hacking (1999) gives to the term. If we think of participation as an idea, then we cannot expect that idea to exist out of social life. On the contrary, participation as a notion is produced, reproduced and eventually transformed as a part of a social network in which institutions, architecture, laws, technology and practices take place. There are different components of this matrix, located at different layers and linked to other aspects of social life. It is worth to think of participation through the idea of a matrix because it makes possible to locate participative phenomena in those social spaces in which they are being produced.

An important implication of thinking of participation as something produced in a matrix is that it allows for the localization of the subtle links that connect the different practical concretions of participation. Another implication that goes in the same line is that the way the objects are reconfigured and displaced can be followed in a detailed manner. A final implication, one that is relevant because of the place from which this work has being carried out, is that of the impossibility of having an exterior position with regard to that matrix. Academic research on participatory phenomena cannot be located out of the matrix. When dealing with participation as scholars, we get inside:

> the polyphony of multiple conversations, that are continuously forming and reforming the theme-field happen in places, in spaces and at times. Some can be more central than others, more accessible than others or more widely known that others. Some conversations happen in bus queues, others in the bakery, in university corridors, in bars and other are mediated by journals, magazines, newspapers, radio and television. Others are present in artifacts and objects, parts of previous conversations that happened a long time ago. The social, to use the arguments of the actor network theorists is neither independent nor dependent on materials; on the contrary, materiality and sociality are two sides of the same coin (Spink, 2005, p. 4)

Once we recognize that, as researchers, we are also part of the network in which the phenomena is produced, we cannot expect to conduct our activity as if this

was detached from those phenomena. In fact, this leads us to explicitly think about our own work in a reflective manner.

1.5. A wide scope

Once that the notion of participation as a reconfiguration and displacement of objects that occurs in a matrix has been exposed, we can briefly describe a basic scheme that can serve as an aid when situating, describing, and exploring the different practical concretions of participation. This schema has two levels. One level is that of the constituents whose interrelations define the form of an enactment or practical concretion of participation. The other level includes a series of *continua* that are intended to serve as a frame for locating the specific variations of those practical concretions.

1.5.1. Constituents of participation

Constituents of participation include settings, agents, objects, meanings, and organization. These constituents are by no means presented in the form of closed definition. Instead, they are included as descriptive resources that are helpful when characterizing participation in each particular case. The isolation of these constituents is but a device intended to shed light on those particular cases.

(1) *Settings* are referred to the places in which the practical concretions of participation are unfolded. These places are not conceived as physical spaces by themselves; they are understood as the socially defined, situated moments in which those activities by which participation is enacted are performed.

(2) *Agents* can be conceived at least in two ways. First, they can be referred to in terms of the system of roles that are working in each participatory activity, including the way this system changes or is maintained, and its effects in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Second, agents can be addressed in terms of the particular individuals or groups involved in those activities. How individuals change during these activities in terms of the things they learn and abilities they acquire, but also in terms of the relations among them is an example of the kind of questions that can be posed according to this complementary conception of agents.

(3) *Objects* are another necessary constituent of participation, because participation is always about something. Considering that objects of participation

are configured and reconfigured through the encounters in which agents make sense of them (Weick, 1995), it is necessary to pay careful attention to the way in which the configuration is produced and its effects on the whole enactment of participation.

(4) *Meanings* include that cloud of interpretations by which agents involved make the situation intelligible. They can be thought of as composing the narrative thread by which the situations in which participation is achieved are turned into something significant.

(5) *Organization* includes the arrangements and premises by which activities of participation are enabled. How patterned or spontaneous the processes are and how they affect people involvement are some of the questions that, from the point of view of this constituent, require a careful look in each case.

1.5.2. Continua of participation

Note that the constituents of participation cannot be described without establishing explicit links among them. Establishing relations of this kind requires dense descriptions and more subtle categories. This is why the series of *continua* is relevant. The key dimensions that are shown in Figure 2 are presented as the extremes of those *continua*.

Each *continuum* highlights an aspect of specific participatory activities that is crucial in their unfolding, because each is crossed by one or more of the constituents of participation (e.g. objects of participation and the peripheral-central, or the delimited-wide *continua*). Besides of being a resource for producing accurate descriptions of participatory practices, these *continua* are also useful in that they provide a frame for visualizing the scope of variations that participation can have.

1.6. Social orders and participation: neglected issues

A consequence of the development of this basic scheme and the basis upon which it has been built is the identification of some issues that, while seeming crucial for the reaches and consequences of the ways in which participation is achieved, remain somehow unattended.

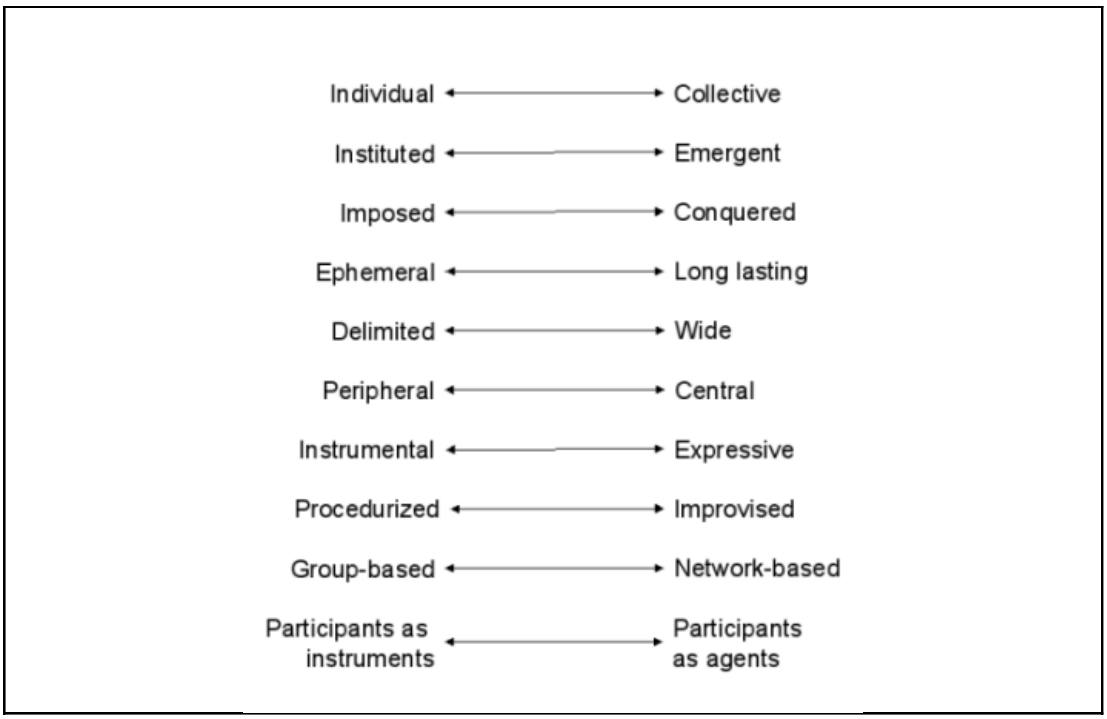

Figure 2.
Continua of participation

1.6.1. The moment of application

First of all, as a result of technocratic claims, little attention has been put on interpretive tasks. Even in the most procedurized participative activities, rules and guidelines cannot deal with every possible situation. Moreover, since social situations are hardly predictable, actions taken are rarely of a technical nature. Whether agents involved recognize it or not, these situations are always likely to bring in issues that can be discussed in terms of ethics. That is why it is crucial for research on participation, to carefully address, from the point of view of day-to-day activities, the application of guidelines and the ways dilemmas are faced. This can be seen as an attempt of taking into account what Gadamer (1993) calls “the moment of application”.

1.6.2. Local knowledge

In line with the role of guidelines, there are some issues about knowledge production on participation that require careful attention. An important part of academic activity is devoted to create guidelines for practice (e.g. features of adequate participative processes identified through benchmarking and then described as 'good practices'). This is a good reason for paying attention to the ways academic activity is related with the phenomenon. In other words, we, as

scholars, are not merely describing and explaining participation; we are in fact contributing to the process of configuring its limits and characteristics.

Until recent times, local knowledge, as opposed to that of the authorized sources, has barely been considered by mainstream research. Common sense, which is tacit, plural and embedded, has a major role in participatory processes, for it is the basis from which people make sense of their life. This normally hidden knowledge, which at first sight can seem to be apparently obvious, is “a socio-technical rather than social phenomenon, in that it is rooted in products, artifacts, traces, instruments and events. Once recovered, it provided a basis for exploring new patterns" (Spink, 2001, p. 224). Instead of arguing that people cannot participate in some decisions because they lack of some specialized knowledge, is better to try to understand the role of tacit knowledge in participatory processes.

1.6.3. Power

A final comment on issues of power should be made. Even in participation experiences that are considered successful, issues of power are likely to exist. This has to be said because it seems to be a tacit assumption that successful participatory practices always manage to create horizontal spaces in which relations of domination are put aside. This tacit assumption can be challenged in different ways. For instance, as criteria for determining whether a participative process has been successful or not are established by those in a dominant position, the idea of success does not necessarily indicate an environment in which relationships are domination-free. As a matter of fact, even in spaces in which explicit rules are posed to assure that everyone can exercise some doses of power, the strategic use of these rules, the ways of thinking about one’s self, and the differences in terms of social position, knowledge and skills, are sources of asymmetries that can have important effects in the processes.

1.7. Openings and questions

After this brief journey on participation, we would like to offer some concluding remarks. There are many uses of participation, which is to say that there are different sorts of activities, of sayings and doings, through which participation, as a collection of plural, diverse phenomena, is achieved. This chapter has provided a wide picture of the different ways in which participation is understood stressing the variety of practices deployed around those understandings. In the process,

emphasis has been made in the idea that neglected issues in theoretical and empirical research are a key for a better comprehension of the subject. Because of this, our strategy consisted mainly in exploring how participation is treated in different areas of social life. On the basis of this exploration, we offered an approximation to the notion of participation that conceives it as a displacement. In such displacement, objects are moved from the private to the public sphere. Based on this notion, we built a set of characteristics that help to define the areas and ranges of variations that appear in the different conceptions and practical approaches to participation.

The most outstanding findings of this review include some frequently neglected issues such as (1) the absence of an elaboration on the relations between participation and organizational arrangements; (2) the major role tacit assumptions play when trying to put participation into practice; (3) the unequal presence and uses of participation in different areas of social life, particularly the Public, Private, and Third Sectors; (4) the growing presence of an instrumental approach to participation that matches the interest of the Public and the Private Sectors; (5) the effects in terms of regulation and control that systematic, well implemented participatory activities have; (6) the key role of power relations in every participatory process, particularly the successful ones; and (7) the need to reconsider the role of tacit, local knowledge.

The idea that participation is the diverse, temporary product of a network of practices, institutions, stories, guidelines, and places in which the different meanings of the term are deployed is also an important result. A premise that was progressively recognized in the elaboration of the aforementioned issues is that a unified concept of participation is not required for rendering participation intelligible as a social phenomenon. Instead of building another conceptual definition, we intended to elaborate on a problematizing look of participation, one which allows us to break down the limits imposed by the way participation has been addressed in different domains, so that we can raise new lines of inquiry regarding those neglected issues. The purpose here is to reconnect in a productive dialog what is separated, fragmented and dispersed in the world of academic disciplines and local practices, these multiple, incomplete forms, that range from community development, with its political and ethical concerns, to quality circles, with their instrumental view and their emphasis on efficacy and efficiency.

Issues like this are important in order to gain a deeper comprehension of what is included and excluded when people say and do things that fall under the term participation. The way people manage to enact participation in any of its multiple faces, the interplay between guidelines and uncertainties, the interrelated pressures that cross those enactments, and the constraining effects they exert over agents involved lead us to ask for the ways in which participation enables or disables power phenomena. The Third Sector, as an area of social life in which participation seems to have an outstanding presence, appears as a good territory for this kind of inquiry.

2. Third Sector: a space for instituted action

This chapter is aimed at offering an overview of the Third Sector as a social phenomenon located at the margins of the Market and the State. The Third Sector, a “buzzword for both research and public debate” (Evers and Laville, 2004, p. 1), is a well established and value-growing manner of making reference to an also growing space of social activity. As such, it has received great attention in academic research and social theory. An increasing number of institutions, policies, politicians’ speeches, public debates, scholar productions, training courses, international conferences and postgraduate degrees are the best proof of the importance given to a term that was relatively unknown twenty years ago.

What makes of this area something worth-thinking is that, among other things, it entails a space in which diverse forms of organized activity have gain a major place as social agents. The fact that policy making on the subject has become crucial at the level of the European Union (Kendall, 2001; Anheier, 2002) is a good indicator of the relevance of this area. Though the use of term 'Third Sector' has not been generalized, the kind of organizations and forms of activity it encompasses are familiar for practically everyone in the Western World and for many people all over the world.

The firs section of the chapter describes and discusses the phenomenon of the Third Sector and the forms in which it has been conceived. The second section is focused on its most characteristic features. The third section offers a brief account of the origins, trends, and regional characteristics of the Third Sector. The fourth section deals with some features on academic productions on the subject and point outs some relevant issues. As a preliminary outcome of this study, the fifth section elaborates on the relation of the Third Sector with the everyday life. The sixth and final section includes some concluding remarks and stresses the relevance of the links among participation and the Third Sector.

2.1. What the term stands for

The Third Sector is usually defined as a social space that is located among the Market and the State (De la Torre, 2005). Other definitions also make reference to the household or the family as another area of social activity from which the Third Sector has to be distinguished (e.g. Lewis, 2006). Nevertheless, the Market and the State remain as the primary points of reference for defining the Third Sector because they locate the Third Sector in an area of institutional, organized activity. As a space, the Third Sector is said to have a liminal quality that connects individual to collective motivations. Organizations located in this space are born from the encounter of common, similar, or compatible interests and concerns. In this sense, these organizations serve as instruments for pursuing those interests in a collective manner. Besides, once they have been created, Third Sector entities (from now on TS entities) allow for the incorporation of other persons on the basis of those interests that, rooted in the individuality, get to be engaged, conformed, and expressed in the collectivity.

2.1.1. Ambiguities, polysemy, and diversity

Prior to any description of the kind of activities, undertakings, and forms of organizations included in what has been progressively known as Third Sector, a mention has to be made of the variety of names that are used when referring to this space of social life. As seen in Table 1, the terms, which are used interchangeably in everyday life and, to a lesser extent, in some academic writings, are only partially linked to the phenomenon that they are supposed to stand for.

Table 1
The ambiguity of the Third Sector: diversity of denominations

Associative sector	Philanthropic organizations
Charitable sector	Shadow government
Civil society	Social economy sector
Community-based organizations	Solidarity organizations
Independent sector	Tax-exempt organizations
Non-governmental organizations	Third system
Non-profit organizations	Voluntary organizations

Each term emphasizes some of the Third Sector characteristics while others are not taken into account (e.g. *Tax-exempt organizations* with regard to fiscal issues; *Voluntary organizations*, regarding the specificity of the link among the people that perform the activities and the organizations in which the activities are performed; and *Shadow government*, regarding issues of power and politics). This terminological diversity is related to the growing importance of a field of activity that cannot be properly grasped by categories developed around public administration and private for-profit enterprises. Since different disciplines took interest in this phenomenon, an array of terms has been elaborated to deal with it, the content of which consists of different ways of mapping the Third Sector. This is, undoubtedly, a difficult task, given the lack of precision of the term (Piñar, 2005). Nevertheless, in our view, when those maps are put together, one over another, most of their surfaces overlap, thus making reference to approximately the same territory, though emphasizing different aspects at different layers. Each name can be seen as standing for a distinctive and specific attempt to make sense of a phenomenon which has generated authentic ‘”semantic contortions” (Etzioni, 1973, p. 316) from scholars’ attempts to clearly define it.

2.1.2. Neither governmental nor for-profit

The Third Sector is thus conceived as the zone in which the activity of entities that are neither governmental nor for-profit is performed. Normally, entities like this adopt the form of non-governmental organizations, development organizations, foundations, associations, mutual aid societies, and co-operatives. The specific form of these organizations depends on the kind of regulations in force in their own places. Though this early delimitation of the scope of the Third Sector will be elaborated later, it is worth to mention it in the first place in order to provide a basic reference for situating the specificity of this area of social life. Regarding the relation of the category with the government and the private, corporate world, TS organizations are conceived as those that, in terms of origin and ownership are private, and in terms of mission and goals are public.

This kind of organizations cannot be considered as ‘regular’ or ordinary private organizations because their reasons for being are others than raising as much profits as possible for their owners and/or top managers. Besides, they cannot be considered as public organizations in the traditional sense, because they are not

invested with the right to directly administer issues that are public and their origin is not founded in the authority for making or administering the law.

So far, it seems that the Third Sector is, to a large extent, defined by what it is not and simultaneously by being a mixture of already existing things. Given the growing importance, the origins, and the practical consequences of this negative-hybrid definition, it seems to require special attention. The way in which the Third Sector, both as a conception and as a distinctive area of activity, is crossed by a series of oppositions like *Public–Private*, *Market–State*, and *Government–Enterprise* is one of its most peculiar features. As such, it seems interesting to try to locate its implications. The introduction of the term and the further transformations of its meanings are one way of dealing with this question.

2.1.3. Meanings and displacements

The term 'Third Sector' was coined as a form of making reference to joint ventures between private corporations and the government. This formula, exploited since the 60's as an alternative to the choice between the raw privatization of public services and the development of more bureaucratic units, is crucial because it has been responsible, to a large extent, of the way in which Third Sector is conceived. Amitai Etzioni played a major role in the growth of the Third Sector as an area of organized activity that required academic attention and, simultaneously, as a form of conceiving that area. Etzioni (1973) took joint ventures between private corporations and the government form of organization as the most representative case of Third Sector entity in as much as efforts of this kind allowed for preserving and combining the advantages of both government and enterprise, while diminishing their disadvantages. Since its transformation in 1971, an example of public corporation that operates with a high degree of decisional and financial autonomy is the Postal Service in the United States.

Despite of the clearly influential character of the origin of the term, nowadays, its depiction of the Third Sector is widely debated in a attempt to give preeminence to organizations that, being raised by the grassroots, represent the so-called 'organized civic society' (Itriago and Itriago, 2004).

2.1.4. Two models of Third Sector entities

Organizations that are neither private nor public can be born out in several ways but in terms of the space of social life from which they are raised we can find two wide distinctive origins. On one hand, there are organizations that appear as extensions of the Public or the Private Sector. Joint ventures between private corporations and the government, as well as the creation of foundations or associations by initiative of governmental agencies or private enterprises can be included in this group. When we say that these TS entities function as extensions of the Public and the Private Sectors, we are saying that they represent an attempt of taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the space of action that characterizes the Third Sector. In other words, from the point of view of the government or the corporate world, the rules of operation of the Third Sector, offer the chance of pursuing the same goals – governance and profits – through different, mediated means.

The *European Business Ethics Network* (EBEN), an international network devoted to the promotion of business ethics in European private industry, Public Sector, voluntary organizations, and academia, is an outstanding example of a TS entity raised through the initiative of corporate world. The activities of the association, supported by some of European's leading companies, consist mainly in the organizations of spaces for diffusion and interchange of knowledge on business ethics.

On the other hand, we can find initiatives that are born out of the worries or desires that some groups of people share. Those worries and desires are related to needs or interests that are not properly attended or not attended at all by current public services and facilities. These initiatives can lead to temporal forms of activity or can get consolidated in the form of legally recognized entities that are stable in time, which is to say, TS entities. The most important feature of TS entities rooted in the convergence of concerns is that they are not created as a result of decisions made – overtly or not – by those in higher positions within the government or business organizations. Many of these TS entities operate under scarcity of resources and have a small area of influence because their work is basically local, but at that level the kind of activity they carry out is likely to address issues that are crucial for the life of those involved and people around. Mutual aid

societies are one of the earliest and most outstanding examples of this side of the Third Sector. A more recent example can be found in the non-governmental associations.

A case that is worth-mentioning as an example of this second model is that of the neighborhood movement in Barcelona and its role regarding the administrative division of the City (Alabart, Naya y Plujá, 1999). At the beginnings of the 1980's, representatives of different neighborhood associations and other entities fought in order to prevent the local government for implementing a new administrative division that would have broken down the existing neighborhood units. Through the coordinative function of a federation, many citizens, individually and collectively, took a part in the development of an administrative map in which the boundaries of each districts could preserve the history, experiences, and dynamics that defined each area in the territory. Their work was intended to put the relationships among neighbors and their knowledge of the territory above technical imperatives.

A whole area of inquiry is raised while thinking of TS entities in terms of their origins, because, in general terms, that origins lead us to think in two different models of the Third Sector. On one hand, TS entities can be seen as the product of business driven activities, governmental initiatives, or a hybrid between them. On the other, they can be conceived as the outcome of initiatives rooted in spaces other than private enterprises and the public administration. How many of the entities, groups or activities that are regarded as Third Sector can be undoubtedly and exclusively placed in one of the two models? Not the majority may be an appropriate answer. Both sides, as models, can be considered as the limits of a wide range in which different Third Sector beings, as Etzioni calls them, can be placed.

Most TS entities are likely to be found somewhere in the middle, not in a fixed manner but fluctuating according to its own history, organizational arrangements, alliances, struggles, and resources available. It is important to emphasize the mobile diversity of the Third Sector, precisely because it shows that the Market–State divide is somehow narrow and that significant social activity outside government and capitalist enterprise has an important role too. Being other than the Market and the State is thus not a definition but a question, and there may be

different answers. In other words, this *addo tertium* breaks with a well established modern dichotomy and reveals the complexity that different forms of social organization and activity have. In our view, this kind of complexity is one that requires to be addressed in its own terms.

2.1.5. An approach and a phenomenon

Why then to choose Third Sector as the preferred way to make reference to a phenomenon that has been designed in so many forms? A reason that is frequently given is that the term is neutral in that it is not strongly engaged with any particular approach, ideology or political project. In fact, some authors conceive Third Sector as the phenomenon, as the thing that occurs in the world, and terms like *social economy* and *non-profit sector* are used as clearly distinguishable approaches to that phenomenon. Each of these approaches has different criteria for classification, outlines some specific features, and is linked to different practices (e.g. Defourny and Develtere, 2001).

In spite of the claims that the term 'Third Sector' is politically and conceptually neutral, it has to be mentioned that since its origins, the notion has been posited as standing for an approach that is different and yet a synthesis of socialism and capitalism, with their reliance on state administration and market system respectively. Etzioni, which is frequently quoted as the one that coined the term ‘Third Sector’, made clear his position by the early 70`s by saying that:

> the capitalist and socialist systems, contrary to their avowed intentions, are actually moving toward each other –or, as I see it, they are moving toward a third system, one in which both profit making and administrative principles of organization, production and distribution are widely used. This is not to suggest that the differences will disappear […] but the two systems are becoming ever less “pure,” more “mixed,” and hence closer to a third type (Etzioni, 1973, p. 314).

In those days, Etzioni stated that enough was known then to consider that TS entities would be more effective in providing public goods than the expansion of the bureaucratic, stagnant structures of government or the abandonment of them in the hands of for-profit enterprises and free, raw market. In consequence, the term appeared neither as a reality nor as a project, but as something in-between;

something that is descriptive and normative at the same time. Of course, his perspective on the Third Sector is clearly rooted in the model of the Third Sector as an extension of the public administration and the business world.

But Etzioni is not the only one quoted as one of the pioneers in the use of the term. Widely considered as the one that popularized – if not coined – the word 'globalization', Theodore Levitt is also referred as one of the authors of the term 'Third Sector' (De la Torre, 2005; Piñar, 2005). His book *Third sector: new tactics for a responsive society* was published in 1973, the same year the article of Etzioni appeared. Levitt offered a different picture of the Third Sector, one that includes activist social change organizations that where doing what government and business were not doing or not doing well. This perspective is closer to the model of the Third Sector as the outcome of initiatives rooted in spaces other than private enterprises and the public administration.

The meaning of the Third Sector has evolved since, including its links to specific and at some extent divergent ways of making sense of the phenomenon it is supposed to stand for (e.g. *social economy, civil society* or *non-profit sector*). Nevertheless, the ambiguous location of the Third Sector as something between and beyond the government and for-profit organizations remains. Moreover, it establishes a framework in which activities and debates on the phenomenon can be recognizable as such. Consequently, while neutrality in political, conceptual, and practical terms is not a feature of the term 'Third Sector' and its uses, recognizing this does not imply that it is necessary to find yet another name.

It is our position that a good starting point consists of using the term as a debatable approach to a complex area of social life. By making explicit the debatable character of this approach, we are also admitting that the area of social life it intends to grasp is one in which definitions can be easily questioned. The debatable character of the idea of Third Sector is crucial because (1) it underlines the strong influence of the Public and the Private Sectors as well settled categories for thinking of more or less organized forms of activity; (2) it leads us to take into account the effects of criteria derived from its definition in terms of inclusion and exclusion; (3) it stresses that, in spite of the existence of clear examples that match the idea of what a TS entity is, there are many cases that are located in the boundaries of the category; (4) it puts the area of activities designed

as Third Sector as a territory that, explicitly or tacitly, is in dispute, because its concept, including its practical effects, is, at least potentially, a debatable area.

To sum up, the apparent neutrality and the supposedly descriptive character of the idea of Third Sector is said to be based on its adequacy regarding the kind of object it designs. In as much as the adoption and use of the term seem to have important consequences, it might be necessary to question why this apparently non problematical match functions relatively well. The Third Sector, as a class that is built over some forms of activity that cannot be exclusively regarded to those of the State or the Market, has to be addressed as a question. The issue at stake is not whether some types of organization have to be included in the class or not. The issue is which forms of activity are considered as something different, why are they considered so, and what is done with these classifications. Thinking of the Third Sector both as an approach and as a wide phenomenon leads us to pay attention to its relations with the government and the corporate world, and with those hegemonic trends in general. A line of inquiry like this might be crucial for shedding some light on, for instance, the processes of privatization and the advance of neo-liberal ideologies all over the world (Lewis, 2006), but, in the same direction, it also might prove to be fruitful for understanding how alternative forms of organizations are raised and the degree of impact they can have (Arribas and Vergara, 2001).

2.1.6. Being other than the Market and the State

In order to understand the place the Third Sector occupies it is important to describe how its relations with the Public and the Private Sectors have been posed. There are some common assumptions about the multiple and changing links between the Third Sector and the Market-State complex that are worth to review as a starting point:

(1) The development of the Third Sector is said to be positively correlated with the development of a more democratic society. In fact, some studies use the amount of associations and participants as a synthetic indicator of welfare and civic maturity (e.g. De la Torre, 2005; Pujol, 2004).

(2) TS entities work within the spaces in which the Market and the State are absent or simply incapable of fulfilling their functions. They cover a wide range of unsatisfied social necessities. When the Market and the State cannot provide the

resources a community needs, TS entities develop capabilities for coping with issues such as unemployment and poverty.

(3) Many TS entities request the support of private enterprises and the government in order to maintain their functioning. From their formal constitution – which is a preliminary condition for them to be recognized as competent interlocutors in many settings – to their financial resources needed, TS entities are constantly trying to maintain an unstable balance between autonomy and dependency.

(4) In an unintended manner, TS entities carry out tasks of political representation and control when public administration cannot provide adequate mechanisms of representation (Smulovitz; 1996).

Instead of adopting an specific position around these assumptions – which might be considered as the basis for elaborating hypotheses – what is more interesting is to note how they expose the tensions, alliances, parallelisms and divergences between what is done in the space of the Third Sector and what is considered as a duty or prerogative of the public administration and private enterprises. Furthermore, it would be naive to think that the public services provided by TS entities would be the same if they were provided by the government or private enterprises. What is most interesting of the Third Sector is precisely how old functions change and new ones can appear as a result of its activity. In other words, some of the most interesting lines of inquiry regarding the Third Sector have necessarily to deal with the role it plays in different fields of social life, be it in terms of preserving the *status quo* or putting pressures toward the configuration of different scenarios.

There are many examples of new functions performed by some TS entities regarded to its potential for transformation. The public watchdog function, intended to raise transparency, openness, legitimacy and credibility in the way issues that affect the public life are conducted (Jenei & Kuti, 2006), is one of them. Some non-governmental organizations have had a leading role in spreading new practices in the relation with government agencies, especially in places in which democratic order still had many challenges to face. In these places, the Third Sector has functioned as an agent of political change. In Mexico, for instance, non-governmental organizations have had a key role in avoiding or reducing

electoral fraud during the 1990's. The massive involvement of community people in task of electoral observation made this possible.

But the unavoidable presence of the Market and the State when thinking about the Third Sector should lead us to discuss its implications. On one hand, it seems that thinking of the Third Sector as nothing but some sort of synthesis between the Market and the State is a narrow point of departure. Such point of departure ignores a wide area of the territory occupied by activities that are easily distinguishable from the domestic domain but cannot be regarded as governmental or entrepreneurial. On the other hand, considering the growing generalization of the conception of the Third Sector in terms of organized activities that are raised outside of the Market and the State, it seems necessary to look for the consequences of this negative definition, particularly in terms of frames of references and identity. The way in which agents involved in forms of organizations categorized as TS entities collectively think of themselves and the referents they look at when trying to make sense of their functioning are likely to be affected by the wide circulation of this negative definition.

By making these points, we hope to make clear that the area of activity included in the Third Sector can hardly be thought outside certain distinctions as *Public–Private spheres*, *Market–State*, *Government–Enterprise* (which can also be referred to as *Public-Private sectors),* and *individual-collective*. In doing so, it is important to not to treat those series of oppositions as if they were the same thing, because each is located in a different layer and the relations among these layers cannot be simplified in terms of coincidence or complete transposition.

What is worth to look for when dealing with the Third Sector is the collection of peculiarities that define it by its own right, those features that, in spite of being influenced, cannot be entirely explained as a result of that mix between government and private enterprise: collective aims and projects, organizational arrangements, use of resources and technology, links with other social phenomena, and the ways in which these elements are related to aspirations and wishes that are thinkable – that is, that exist as possibilities in a collective imaginary – in their own places and times.

2.2. Salient features

There is a wide, ongoing debate on how to fix the main characteristics, distinctive features, and boundaries of the Third Sector. The counterpart of this debate is that a well-defined dividing line that separates TS entities from non Third Sector beings is far from being achieved. The idea of Third Sector – even its specific names – varies from one country to another and it is highly influenced by the political orientation of those who occupy high positions in the government. The complexity of this debate is partially due to the heterogeneity of the phenomenon, the nebulous character of its definition as a place between the public and the private, and the lack of common indicators (Pujol, 2004). A good place to start with is that of the characteristics of the Third Sector as a whole. In order to do so, the following paragraphs describe (1) the general aims that TS entities are said to pursue; (2) the functioning of TS entities as a network; (3) the definitional criteria by which TS entities are depicted; (4) the place of typologies for distinguishing among different kinds of TS entities; and (5) some comprehensive approaches to the area of activity that TS sector is said to encompass.

2.2.1. General purposes

Broadly mentioned, the aims traditionally attached to the Third Sector include: (1) offering public goods and services; (2) improving the quality of life of population and specific groups, which in many cases are their own members; (3) fostering social cohesion through cooperation and dialog as democratic values; and (4) providing opportunities for exercising citizenship through participation in public policy making, decision making and service provision.

As can be seen, issues regarded to citizenship and participation are certainly crucial when thinking of the Third Sector. Along with the introduction of objectives traditionally granted to the government – which is a form to assert that TS entities are extensions of the government –, the centrality of participation lead us to underscore how important it has become. As a guaranty of the right functioning of a democratic system, participation is positioned as a necessity. TS entities are expected to take an active, outstanding role in the satisfaction of that need. This is but a sample of the partial character of this presentation. Besides of playing down the diversity of those formally organized initiatives regarded as Third Sector, it is as if this presentation of what TS entities intend to do were a consequence of that

normative-descriptive mixture pointed out by Etzioni (1973). The normative side would be the selective expression of what TS entities look for in terms compatible with those of the *status quo*.

TS activities are often described as *pro bono publico*, in the strict sense of the expression, not only because most of them are performed, to a large extent, on the basis of a voluntary work, but because they are intended to work for the public good. According to Jenei and Kuti (2006), there are two main branches of Third Sector activities. On one hand, the Third Sector works an expression of the 'civil society' – a notion that will be discussed later. Enabling citizenship participation, building capabilities for institutional dialog and fostering social cohesion are maybe the most important functions of the Third Sector as the expression of collective motivations. This branch is crucial, De la Torre (2004) states, because it makes possible the construction of a civic identity. Thus, TS entities and activities offer spaces in which individuals and groups can shape themselves as citizens and exercise that role. On the other hand, a high percentage of the activity of TS entities is devoted to the provision of services that meet certain needs of the population. In this branch, the Third Sector can be distinguished from the government and for-profit enterprises because of their methods and procedures (De la Torre, 2004). TS entities usually carry out functions from both branches, but since the line and concerns of each branch are different, agents involved might be forced to define their preferences and priorities in one way or the other (Jenei & Kuti, 2006). Nevertheless, both branches are equal in that they stand for the common interest, a usually taken for granted notion that can hardly be rejected when used as a justification. This taken-for-granted quality of common interest results surprisingly hard to avoid when talking about the domain of the public.

2.2.2. The Third Sector as a network

When dealing with the Third Sector, it is usual to include as a relevant element the relationships among organizations. In fact the term 'associative tissue' is common in some regions of Europe as an attempt of underlining that Third Sector initiatives are better carried out through a network of organizations, a feature that is considered one of their strengths[2]. According to this, the Third Sector should

[2] For instance, Isabel de la Torre (2005, p. 11) defines the Third Sector as an associative tissue that is composed by a set of associations that come from private initiative, are not-profit and are oriented towards the common well-being.

include some forms of organizations and also the relationships among them, as an equally important component. In fact, as De la Torre (2005) exposes, the Third Sector is built in a space between political power and proximity networks.

The *Festa Major de Gràcia*[3], in Barcelona, is a good example of the role that the links among entities play. With more than one and a half century at its back, these festivities are organized by a federation of associations and volunteers in coordination with the local government and with the support of some private corporations. Having a role to play in the preparation and celebration of the festivities, which is itself a way to built citizenship (Flores, 2004), is only possible through that complex, multilayer, relational universe in which the festivities are made. The cyclical and ephemeral character of its activity – something that is similar to project-based work –, together with the ways in which it has changed over time and the diversity of collective agents that are involved, including those of the Public and Private Sectors, make the *Festa Major de Gràcia* something that resembles a miniature Third Sector: (1) formal organizations along with informal ones; (2) continuity and changes; (3) political commitment and 'neutrality'; (4) deep and superficial forms of involvement; (5) tradition and ruptures; (6) religiosity and laicism; (7) youths and elders; (8) conservative and radical ideologies; (9) different capabilities of influence in each organization; (10) an unequal distribution of links with the government and private enterprises; and (11) different specific aims, along with a similar obligation of observing certain rules.

After this brief depiction of the Third Sector as an imbalanced, dynamic, interconnected diversity, it is necessary to see how the nodes of this network have been characterized.

2.2.3. Definitional criteria

Any kind of governmental institution as well as any enterprise mainly devoted to raise profits for its owners should be excluded as a starting point. But there is a great diversity in what is not State or Market, hence the necessity of clearly depicting those characteristics that made the Third Sector recognizable as such. Prior to any description, a warning should be made: TS entities can be understood in a wide or in a restricted sense (De la Torre, 2005). A wide approach to the Third Sector includes the aforementioned denomination: associations, foundations, non-

3 Gracia's Annual Neighborhood Festivities.

governmental organizations, development organizations, co-operatives and mutual aid societies. At least in Spain, a restricted approach should only include those entities legally registered as associations or foundations, both types that have different juridical forms depending on the country to which they belong. Different arguments can be posed to justify one approach or the other for specific uses. In terms of research, decisions taken depend on the disciplinary look, the scope and aims of the study and the set of criteria applied. What is worth-mentioning here is that the regulations – and the assumptions they entail regarding their objects – often play a crucial role in the way organizational criteria are developed.

One of the most popular set of criteria for deciding whether a given organization belongs to the Third Sector or not, is that of the *Center for Civil Society Studies* at the *Johns Hopkins University.* As the product of comparative studies conducted at an international level, this set of criteria has been widely applied for empirical purposes in many countries. It also has changed through time, and, a least partially, due to critical comments of scholars all over the world.

In a recent work, (Salamon, Sokolowski & List, 2003) researchers of the *Center for Civil Society Studies* included in the class of what they call 'non-profit organizations' a great variety of entities that share a few key characteristics: (1) they are basically private since they neither depend nor are linked to governmental structures; (2) they exist for goals other than obtaining profits for their directors or founders, and those goals are usually regarded to issues of welfare; (3) if they have commercial activity, it is only as a complement and not as a primary function; (4) they are run by their own members through different forms of self-government; (5) membership and collaboration in their activities have a voluntary character.

According to these criteria, the diversity of entities encompassed by the Third Sector has enormous proportions: (1) religious as well as secular entities; (2) entities that mainly depend on volunteer work as well as those that depend more on paid staff; and (3) registered organizations – those that have adopted a defined juridical form – as well as non registered ones – those that are usually called 'informal'. This last aspect, the one that refers to the legal status of a TS entity is one of the most debated and it depends, to a large extent, on regulations in force

in each country. Early versions of the criteria applied by Salamon and company included the formal character or legal recognition as a requisite (Salamon & Anheier, 1997), but it was ruled out later. It is true that there are many collectives that meet all the criteria, exception made of this.

Despite of the difficulties one may find when dealing with liminal cases – which are worth to be studied precisely because they are so – a usual approach is to look for organizations that present a reasonable mix of the aforementioned characteristics and can be placed in a wide typological range (Pujol, 2004). Of course, this stance lets the 'reasonable mix' open, but it still seems a useful perspective. Instead of drawing a line that separates what should and what should not be included in the Third Sector, a better strategy would be depicting the center, or more precisely, as will be discussed later, the centers of the category and pay special attention to entities located in its boundaries. Those centers would be composed by those cases that clearly fulfill one of the different sets of criteria. As an observer gets far from the center, cases that present characteristics of TS entities, but also of business organization, government agencies, or others not clearly attached to any sector – provided the observer is able to grasp them – are likely to appear.

2.2.4. Typologies

Typologies are a relevant component of the Third Sector, whether in terms of practice or research. The assumption that organizations are clustered in recognizable groups is a widespread one (Sánchez, 1993). But since any system of classification is rooted in a specific point of view, it seems that its reaches and limitations are confined to that point of view. This is crucial, because the diversity of forms, aims, dimensions, and areas of interest of TS entities has enormous proportions. Table 2 intends to illustrate the variety of organizations that are included into the area of the Third Sector.

With regard to its areas of interests, the diversity is overwhelming: health, development, sport, culture, education, leisure, environment, philanthropy, politics, economy, aid, religion, community, and so on. It is as if the forms of organized activity that cannot be included in the categories of Private or Public Sector were pushed into the category of Third Sector and later required of some form of internal order.

Table 2
Variety of TS entities: examples

Environmental organizations	Co-operative enterprises
Feminist groups	Consumer organizations
Human rights organizations	Development Organizations
Non Governmental Organizations	Mutual Aid Societies
Parent-teacher associations	Neighborhood associations
Political parties	Professional associations
Social assistance groups	Religious groups
Sport associations	Self-help groups
Unions	Youth clubs

In terms of practical effects, typologies become particularly crucial in the legal field. In Spain, the *Act 1/2002 of the Right of Association* regulates all aspects regarding the creation, functioning, and dissolution of association. What is worth to mention with regard to this law is that certain forms of organization are excluded from the scope of the Act (e.g. cooperatives, mutual aid societies, labor societies, temporary entrepreneurship unions, chambers of commerce, and professional colleges). Other cases, regarded as 'Special Associations' (Cabra and de Lorenzo, 2005) are also kept aside (e.g. political parties, unions, consumer associations, and sports federations). These forms of organization, along with foundations, have their own regulations. The example, though briefly described, serves to illustrate how the ways of creating distinctions get to be settled in fields as important as the law. What was presented as a whole – the Third Sector – has been previously subjected to different classificatory schemes that, in spite of being interrelated in different ways, are raised from different points of view and are located in different layers.

As a result, several typologies have been developed to bring order to the diversity of TS entities (see for instance Brown, Kenny and Turner, 2002; Donnelly-Cox and O'Regan, 1999; and Kelly, 1991). Each typology depends in the first place on the definitional criteria of TS entities that is being used and, in the second place, on the focus of interest of the typology. Differences can be considered in terms of the area of activity (e.g. production, health, education, art, sport or religion), the kind of link among those involved (e.g. based on collective or individual interests), the position of the project in front of the Market and the State (e.g. reinforcing, complementary, palliative, reformist, or alternative), the legal situation of the entity or project (e.g. with or without a juridical form), the levels at which it operates (e.g.

local, regional, international), the type of belief system upon which the group builds its projects (e.g. religious-secular, left-right) or their organizational arrangements (e.g. semi-autonomous teams and project-based work, or hierarchical, bureaucratic organization).

It is not our intention to describe such varied typologies. Instead, it seems more interesting to make some commentaries about the basis upon which these typologies are made and the aspects they have in common. In the first place, as in the case of definitional criteria, such typologies entail a normative-descriptive mixture, in that they are partially rooted in some observed distributions of characteristics, but they also can play a part in the way those distributions are produced. Of course, not every typology gets to exert direct normative effects but, in general terms, many of them, as variations around some basic forms, get to shape the way we think of this area of social life. An outstanding example of this is the work conducted for Lester Salamon, at the *Center for Civil Society Studies*, which has become a common reference for both researchers and practitioners (Salamon and Anheier, 1997). In the second place, with regard to the influence of the regions in which they are produced, typologies convey the ways in which those basic divides under which the idea of Third Sector is configured are thought. By being rooted to the places in which they are developed or used, typologies are concretions of the forms of thinking about the *Public–Private*, *Government–Enterprise*, and *Collective–Individual* divides in each country or region (Anheier and Seibel, 1990). Typologies are relevant in that they lead us to the presence of the Third Sector all over the world as a heterogeneous phenomenon whose peculiarities and diversity are intelligible in terms of the places in which it is located. As can be seen, the heterogeneity of this phenomenon is also present in the ways in which it is thought.

2.2.5. Comprehensive views

Non-Profit Sector, Social Economy, Civil Society, and, to a lesser extent, Solidarity Economy can be seen as outstanding holistic perspectives on the phenomenon of the Third Sector or as contesting approaches regarding the Third Sector perspective. Given the relative lack of specificity of the Third Sector as a perspective, and its wide use as a term for referring a phenomenon, the first way of posing its relation to other perspectives seems to be more productive.

Each of the afore mentioned perspectives implies a distinct way of making sense of the kind of activity that characterizes the Third Sector, including (1) its place in relation to the Market and the State; (2) criteria for deciding if a form of organized activity can be considered as belonging or not to the class; (3) the direction or purposes of its activities as a whole; (4) some typologies for ordering the variety of activities included; (5) recommendations and guidelines for practice; and (6) some paradigmatic examples. As can be seen, each perspective is associated to different kinds of practices, whether in terms of knowing or doing. The orientations for practice entailed in these perspectives can be located at a given point in a three-dimensional space (Figure 3).

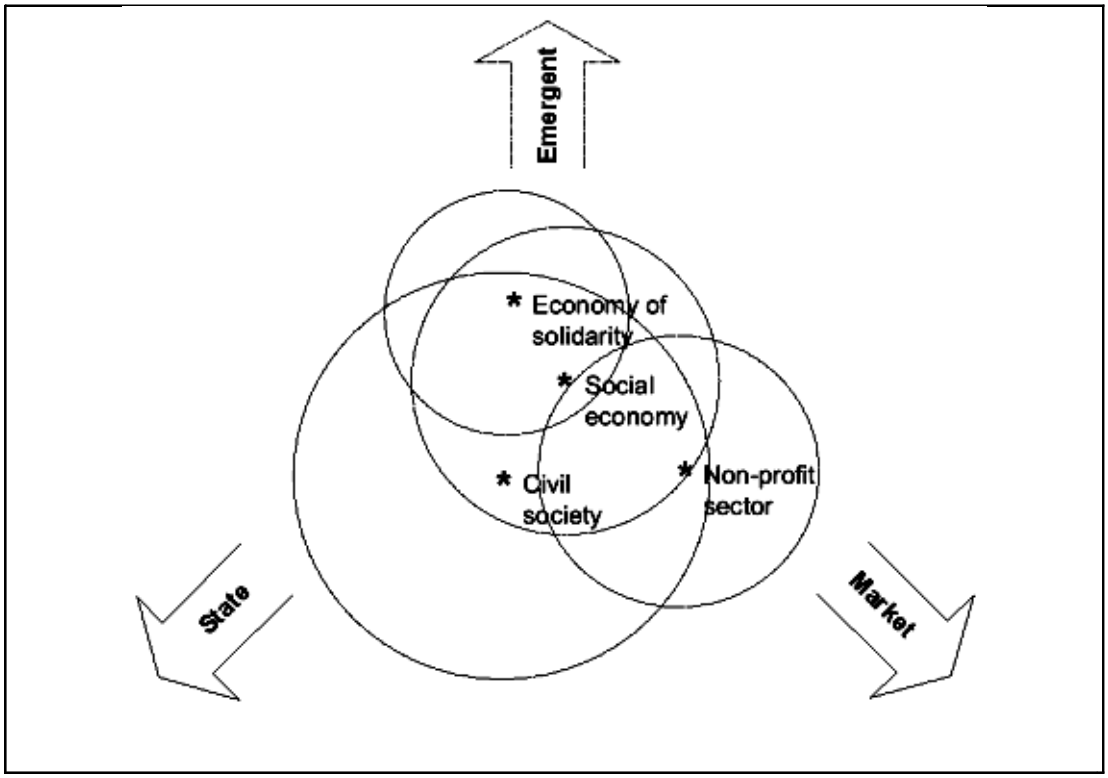

Figure 3.
Approaches to the Third Sector

The axes of this space are conformed by the Market, the State, and the Emergent. The Market and the State provide already known models that each perspective can propose as the right direction for TS entities. The axis of the Emergent is that of the insistence in the need for new, alternative patterns.

The Non-Profit Sector perspective can be considered as the liberal version of the Third Sector. It is centered in the absence of profit distributions to the owners or

members of the organization. This approach is associated to the 'non-governmentalism' movement that went stronger at the beginning of the 1980's in the United States and the United Kingdom, as neo-liberal ideologies proclaimed that the insufficiencies of the State could only be covered by market-based forms of social activity (Lewis, 2005). In this perspective, the Third Sector is expected to have a palliative influence in order to diminish the disadvantages of the system.

As for the kind of organizational forms it seeks to promote, the Non-Profit Sector perspective can be defined by its great emphasis in the professionalization of the Third Sector by means of taking successful business enterprises as a model to imitate. In many spaces, it is taken for granted that being professional is having procedures clearly established, setting goals, defining quality indicators, and so on. Disregarding their logics and functioning, forms of organization that do not take the path of professionalization are not considered well suited for facing the challenges of the Third Sector. The practical consequence of this is that, under the perspective of the Non-Profit Sector, organizations have, somehow, to prove that their activities generate value.

Social Economy, which is considered as the European counterpart of the non-profit sector approach (Defourny and Develtere, 2001), is rooted in the French tradition. It emphasizes the socioeconomic aspects of the Third Sector, which is considered as a set of participatory and socially responsible forms of production. The term 'Social Economy' was coined in France, at the beginning of the XIX century, but it was not until the 1980's that the wide and diffuse meaning the term originally had was considerably delimited. A key event in the delimitation of the term is that the French co-operative, mutual, and associative movements of the 1970's took it to name themselves. Currently, it makes reference to collective initiatives or projects that are undertaken by local communities in which shared values are the main driving force. Again, it can be seen both as a project and as a lens for making sense of economic activity.

Raised in the middle of an ideological pluralism, the types of associations that better fit to the category of Social Economy are producer co-operatives, credit and saving unions, and mutual aid societies. According to Defourny and Develtere (2001), the most influencing ideologies were associationist socialism, social Christianity and liberalism. These ideologies are important – the authors say –

because contemporary Third Sector was born out of their interplay. The general orientation and purpose and the adopted organizational forms depended at some extent on the kind of beliefs held. Although not in an exclusive sense, there are some correspondences between ideology and type of organization. Producer co-operatives, for instance, were strongly linked to the associationist socialism of middle XIX century. Marxism would change the role of this form of association from an area in which social transformation was actually produced to an instrument for educating proletarians and acquiring resources for the fight. Another case is that of credit and saving unions. These unions were rooted in the social Christianity tradition and marked by the concept of subsidiarity, which may be considered as an antecedent for the idea of empowerment. The principle of subsidiarity sustains that any issue should be managed by the lowest level competent authority. The Québec co-operative movement, highly influenced by Catholicism, is an outstanding example because of its long standing presence and its relation with government and for-profit organizations (Doyon, 2002). Finally, mutual aid societies were easily seen as the embodiment of the principle of self-help, which was held by classical liberalism.

A recent development strongly related to social Christianity is the Solidarity Economy, which is also known as Popular Economy or Proximity Economy. This perspective, which entails an approach to socioeconomic development, has some tradition in Latin American countries. Its most important characteristic is that it includes ethical claims and principles as a fundamental element of the economy (Razeto, 1997). The roots of solidarity economy can be found in ancient practices of reciprocity held by indigenous people all over the world and in the principles of co-operative work developed in XIX Century England (PACS, 2003). The approach was born out of a tradition in catholic social teaching (Aguilar y Castillo, 2000; Da Ros, 2001) and though by no means it excludes the involvement of secular groups, religious institutions still play an important part in promoting the approach and offering tools and support for those who want to start a project.

The aims of Solidarity Economy are to articulate the production, commercialization, consumption and financing on a local basis in order to assure that the needs of every citizen are covered. This articulation process should make possible an authentic sustainable development. As for the forms of organizations prescribed, the most important recommendations are to be found in the insistence

in ruling the organizations through participation and self-management. Environmental issues, local traditions and knowledge, and issues of gender are given a prominent place in the economic field (Da Ross, 2001; Reintjes, 2003).

The Civil Society perspective might be the most known perspective on the Third Sector. It is characterized for pointing out the capability of citizens for actively fostering social change towards more democratic, developed systems. The term Civil Society has been used as an attempt to

> explain both the active role of people in changing the regimes in Eastern Europe at the end of 1980's and, in a more recent use of the term, the attempt to bring people into the development process in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. In the former case it is usually used to explain the active part people played in the creation of social change in a society whereby it denotes a space as well as an action taking place in that space. In other words, it maps an experience observed for our understanding. In the latter it denotes an aspirational formation to enable people to act for themselves by attempting to build civil society or strengthen it. (Seckinelgin, 2002)

Again, when thinking of Civil Society, we find the descriptive-normative mixture. What once was a term for describing certain movements becomes a form of fostering some attitudes and activities. Nevertheless, in this case, there is an inclusion of direct links with political action. The emphasis made on social change as something that results from the active role of organized citizens becomes preeminent, as a distinctive feature. As for the forms or organizations included in this perspective, the wide use of the term creates an encompassing category whose boundaries depend on the position of those that use the term (e.g. the World Bank or a Watchdog Network).

By making reference to these approaches to the Third Sector, we want to stress the controversial, debatable positions of this area of social life. As a territory in dispute, even the forms in which it is described imply some directions that, actually or potentially, shape the objects they describe.

2.3. Third Sector across time and space

So far, we have described and discussed in general terms the conception, definition, typologies, and perspectives on the Third Sector. In order to complement that description, which is more related to the ways in which the Third Sector is thought of, this section intends to locate the phenomenon into the coordinates in which it has been unfolded.

2.3.1. New idea, old precedents

While the Third Sector, as an idea, is relatively recent, the distinctive character of the area of activity it is supposed to stand for has old precedents. Authors like Defourny and Develtere insisted on this by arguing for the need of reconstructing the development of the different forms of organization that are nowadays recognized as Third Sector, because these forms are "buried in the history of human society" (2001, p. 17). It seems that associative activity has been accompanying human kind through all its history and practically everywhere. Religious brotherhoods in the classic Greece, monastic associations and craft guilds in the medieval Europe, and friendly societies in the XVIII century England are just a few examples of associative activity in the Western World. England's friendly societies, which were financed with dues regularly paid by its members, were dedicated to offer allowance in case of illness or death. This is why Mutual aid societies, most of then built around religious principles, are one of the earliest cases in which tradition is linked to a form of activity that would eventually be included into the Third Sector.

Since the middle ages, the relation of these early associative forms with institutional powers such as the State or the church was, nevertheless, restrictive. Voluntary associations had to function according to specific rules of operation and membership, leading in many cases to its transformation into corporations of the feudal order. In front of these extensions of the state, "many forms of association survived or came into being on the fringes of this corporate monopoly with its rigid and hierarchical structures. Such associations worried the authorities, which continually tried to repress, subdue or ban them" (Defourny and Develtere, 2001, p. 22).

The French revolution was not going to change that state of things. Considering that forms of volunteer association would only stand for special individual interests

– as opposed to national interest –, the State conceived itself as the guardian in charge of repressing the privilege keeping or subversive activity that associations would sustain. As can be seen, the control mechanisms of institutional powers are, from the beginning, a key element to understand the origins of the Third Sector. Besides, the duality national interest–special interest appeared as the basis for many arguments against freedom of association.

So far, it has been told that associative activity mainly appeared as a collective way for people to cope with their own needs. But there was more than what eventually would become mutual aid societies. Secret societies, literary circles, and charitable institutions spread through western countries. From political interests to spare time, the range of activities around which associations emerged grew fast. In time, freedom of association would gain terrain. In countries such as the United States, England and Germany, the last decade of the XIX century would witness the appearance of the juridical forms adopted by modern associations: co-operatives, mutual aid societies and non-profit associations. This movement offered legal recognition to a *de facto* reality and, at the same time, a regulative attempt that would preserve and extend – although in a different form – the primacy of the State.

This brief overview of some antecedents of the forms of activity encompassed by the Third Sector is useful to put things in perspective and highlight the conformation of differentiated areas of activity as the product of history. But admitting that the forms of activity and organization regarded as Third Sector are rooted in old traditions cannot lead to neglect the specificity of the phenomenon in its current moment. The state of these organizations and its place in society has mutated rapidly, so much that it is possible to think of this as a new phenomenon[4], in the same historical sense that the Market and the State are, as precedents, relatively new (Donati, 1997). In this line, participation, as a key feature of the Third Sector seems to be the product of the conversion of the involvement of people in forms of action intended to solve their own need into a requisite for guaranteeing that things are done according to certain desirable arrangements.

[4] This is why the rise of the Third Sector is said to be “as significant a development of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as the rise of the nation-state was of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Salamon, Sokolowski and List, 2003).

2.3.2. The Third Sector in the world

Despite of the fact that the term Third Sector appeared in the 1970's, it was not until the late 1990's that the Western World rediscovered the term, partially due to a spectacular growth of associative activity (De la Torre, 2005; Pujol, 2004). In the following lines, there is a brief description of some characteristics of the Third Sector in terms of the places in which it is located.

As for Europe, the Third Sector, which in terms of occupation is larger in the more developed countries of Western Europe (Salamon, Anheier, and Cols., 1999), has to be understood as a part of the so-called shift from government to governance. According to the *United Nations Development Programme* (1997), governance makes reference to a kind of exercise of authority that implies citizens that, individually and in groups, participate in the different levels and areas of the management of their country through processes and institutions that allow them to meet their rights and obligations, articulate their interests, and mediate their differences. This means that the role of TS entities is not only conceived in terms of providing services but also as a mean for the relocation of responsibilities between State and Society (Anheier, 2002).

In Spain, the estimated number of non-profit organizations goes around 250,000, with Catalonia at the head of all the autonomous communities (Cabra y de Lorenzo, 2005). An outstanding example of a relatively new form of TS entity is that of work integration social enterprises. These entities, which appeared first in France, during the 80's, offer temporary structures in which people who suffer from social exclusion work in the provision of goods and services. The purpose of these organizations is to advance social integration (Pérez Llorca, 2002). In spite of the wide presence of these forms of organizations, the population has a blurry image of the links among them and their belonging to the Third Sector: there is no perception of these organizations as having many features in common and being part of the same greater class (De la Torre, 2005).

In Latin American countries, the growth of the Third Sector has been accelerated during the past decade. Latin America associations tend to be highly engaged in political activities. In relation to democratic life, most organizations accomplish watchdog functions of government, while others direct their efforts towards providing access to justice and assuring fair electoral process (Smulovitz, 1996).

As in the cases of Africa and Asia, Latin American entities face great challenges: (1) exclusion and poverty, especially in the case of women; (2) environmental deterioration; (3) unfair commercial competition; (4) great segments of the population without access to basic services; and (5) indigenous people whose rights and traditions are not treated with respect. It is not that some of this challenges are absent in the scope of the Third Sector in the Western World. What occurs instead is that their severity is greater.

This brief overview of the Third Sector in the world would not be complete without mentioning some of its current trends. These trends, which include the enactment of citizenship, the central place of participation, and the introduction of pressures toward professionalization, are relevant in as much as the Third Sector is regarded as a world-wide phenomenon.

2.3.3. Enacting citizenship

TS entities are crucial for citizenship. Great expectations have been raised on their role as spaces of organized activities through which members of a community can find the means necessary for getting involved in ongoing debates and decision making on public issues. More over, these spaces are said to provide the opportunity for learning what it means to take responsibility as a citizen. In this sense, TS entities

> embody two seemingly contradictory impulses: first, a commitment to freedom and personal initiative, to the idea that people have the right to act on their own authority to improve the quality of their own lives or the lives of persons they care about; and second, an emphasis on solidarity, on the idea that people have responsibilities not only to themselves but also to the communities of which they are a part (Salamon, Sokolowski & List, 2003, p. 4).

By embodying those apparently contradictory principles, TS entities serve as the space in which the individual and the collective are connected in the form of concern, commitment, and action. In order to take responsibility over public issues, citizens have to be informed and have a say in decisions taken on public interests. Moreover, might go a little further and play a part in the provision of public services, at least in those areas in which the activity of the Market and the State has proved to be unsatisfactory. By incorporating voluntary action to the

notion of citizenship (Kendall, 2003), TS entities serve as a catalyst for this assumption of responsibilities.

2.3.4. Participation at the core

Participation has a central place in the Third Sector. The very idea of Third Sector can hardly be described without mentioning participation as an element of its definition or a classificatory criterion. The links between participation and TS entities can be located at different levels:

(1) TS entities are expected to function according to participatory principles, being the arguments for such request related to democratic values on one side and to effectiveness requirements on the other. In terms of outcomes, participation is though of both as a guaranty and as an instrument in the achievement of legitimacy (Pujol, 2004), but also to a better performance of the organization. Participation is thus related to the government of the organizations by its own members and users. The idea of the stakeholders appears as a widely used one as it emphasizes that those who play a part in the activity of an organization have to be involved in decision making.

(2) The Third Sector is said to have as one of its functions the responsibility of working as a vehicle for citizen participation, one of the most important characteristics of good governance. Citizen involvement in public affairs at all levels and areas should be fostered as much as possible (Brillante, 1999). Consequently, TS entities, as expressions of civil society, should widen the space for citizens to get involved in public issues, including the ways they are understood and valued. In this sense, TS entities are expected to put pressures on the government for more and better accountability through monitoring activities and provide opportunities for citizens to engage in institutional dialog and decision making processes (Jenei & Kuti, 2006).

(3) Many TS entities are the product of encounters among people that share interests or concerns in an active way. This convergence of interests opens participatory spaces that later can get formalized as registered organizations. Collective action, understood as the intervention of groups that share interests and try to influence decision making on public issues, finds in the Third Sector one of its most influential vehicles. Hence, it can be said that some forms of participations, specially those that are more unstructured and emergent, are a

prior condition for some form of collective action to 'blossom' and succeed. Participation has a mediating role throughout the process of identity-building of a social group.

2.3.5. Professionalizing the Third Sector

Professionalization appears as current relevant trend in the phenomenon of the Third Sector. In fact, there is something in the idea of Third Sector that tacitly leads to consider the need of overcoming the amateurism or good will as adjectives by which many TS entities are described. Indeed, in order to be positioned as rightful interlocutors or providers of quality services, TS entities have to speak the language of the Market and the State and adopt their forms, at least to some extent. These exigencies work as an assimilating force in as much as they force TS entities to be structured and operate in a manner similar to that of bureaucracies or enterprises. Such constraints are made of a set of procedures, legal requirements, social norms, and specialized knowledge that works as a regulatory system. According to López Rey (2008, p. 128), the need for funds and the complex environments in which TS entities operate require of more specialized personnel. Such professionals are able to do tasks that volunteers cannot perform. The presence of many NGO's in the media and the relationships they have to establish with great corporation in order to raise funds, lead us to think that the logic of the Third Sector is competing with alien logics.

The introduction of constraints is particularly visible in the registration of the entity, which offers a limited number of options depending on the current legislation of a given territory, and it continues with the conditions that an entity has to prove in order to be able to receive economic support (e.g. not to promote political or religious creeds, having more than a year under operations or receiving training on how to run the entity).

Moreover, the movement towards a Third Sector that is capable of offering professional services, even in competition with for-profit enterprises, implies pressures for a greater effectiveness – with an emphasis on efficiency – and transparency. Performance-based management, the purchaser-provider split and the use of quantifiable indicators have given the Third Sector a new role in front of the State, while the latter has diminished in importance (Lewis, 2006). This trend

of development for Third Sector has been stronger in countries with governments in which neo-liberal ideologies have been put into practice.

When seen together, these current trends in the Third Sector serve to identify the directions that seek to shape its development. It is not that these directions are contradictory or congruent in an absolute manner. What occurs instead is that they represent different forces the combination of which leads to particular results in each case. On one hand, we can find TS entities devoted to the creation of economic – tangible – value as a result of professional paid work in well structured organizations. On the other, there are entities whose activity is intended to generate social – not tangible – value through voluntary unqualified work under temporary and loosely structured conditions. Relationships among social actors and the ways in which they play their roles have to be attended in order to understand the resulting differences. In consequence, the ways these directions, conceived as forces, are deployed and the forms of resistance and opposition they raise, seem to be an inexcusable area of inquiry.

2.4. Key issues for research

Though in recent years there has been a movement towards the production of comparative studies based on wide descriptive frameworks, most of the research on the Third Sector consists of the description of particular cases. This has giving place to a scientific literature that has been criticized by its 'parochialism' (Najam, 1996). This abundance of descriptive studies can be explained as a response to the spectacular growth of associative activity but also as a necessary step for a new area of inquiry. According to Smulovitz (1996), the emphasis on individual organizations was a necessary mean for the construction of a corpus of data on the subject, one that, at that time, had to be advanced with a more reflective work. As the author said, researchers had generated a corpus in search of theory, a task that is complex given the inevitable political weight that knowledge generation has in this area of social life. This is one of the reasons that explain why conceptual developments are usually a mixture of normative and descriptive accounts.

As for the terms under which research has been conducted, the field is defined by some recurrent confusions resulting from the use of different vocabularies and practices. The complexity of this confusion is particularly accentuated by the apparent homogeneity that the globalization of the term Third Sector entails. The

use of a variety of conceptual frameworks that belong to different disciplines and traditions also contributes to this confusion. Of course it is out of the reaches of this work to propose a solution to these confusions. What is worth-mentioning in any case is that the plurality of the phenomenon is corresponded by the plurality of the ways in which it has been addressed. In front of this plurality, the symbolic dimension of the phenomenon and the struggles through which it is shaped provide axes or openings for addressing its specificity. Together, the symbolic dimension and the struggles make reference to aspects of the Third Sector that are relevant in any attempt to understanding it.

2.4.1. Symbolic dimension

When trying to make sense of the development of the Third Sector as a whole, and of the differences among countries' associations, researchers have turned its look towards symbolic life. Thus, paying attention to the symbolic dimension of this phenomenon becomes necessary. Taking into account this dimension is crucial for a better understanding of the role of political, religious, and cultural traditions, since they seem to have great influence in the forms that TS entities and activities of a given place adopt. Besides, the symbolic dimension becomes indispensable for any approach that takes into consideration the basis upon which the relationships among agents involved in a given entity are built. By integrating collective and individual forms of action, Third Sector is necessarily organized around social identities (De la Torre, 2005). The relevance of nationalist claims, which are more present at the local level (Defourny and Develtere, 2001), and the strong links with social movements and local communities are but a sample of this.

2.4.2. Autonomy, organization and struggles

Autonomy is at the center of the Third Sector. It appears as a key part of arguments and even as a criterion that any organization has to meet in order to be considered as belonging to the Third Sector. But the notion of autonomy, with its many layers, can have different expressions and is highly dependent on the context. At an intra-institutional level, it has to be clarified whose autonomy is at stake: that of the members of an association, collectively speaking? That of the core group that is most involved in the life of the association? That of the citizens in general terms? Equally important, but located at an inter-institutional level, is

the need for specificity on the kind of external influences – in terms of content and form – that are and are not to be allowed. In order words, there is much more on autonomy than just the well-established dichotomy between pressures from political elites and projects that are raised in the convergence of concerns from the grassroots.

Autonomy, as something that the organizational properties of TS entities are intended to enable, appears thus as an ambiguous, yet ineluctable exigency around which struggles are likely to appear. Attempts of substituting political debates for technocratic recipes (Coraggio, 2001) make visible the pressures towards professionalization and the opposition they raise as expressions of these struggles. The same happens with regard to the heterogeneity of concretions by which requests of transparency and participation are put into practice.

In order to frame the account of the Third Sector offered throughout the chapter, we have developed a two-layer representation. This representation, which is result of a reflection on the issues described above, intends to serve as a device for locating the activities of TS entities, including its trends, struggles, and relations with the other sectors, in the wider space of everyday life.

2.5. The Third Sector and everyday life

It can be assumed that there are three major blocks – Public, Private, and Third Sector – in which social activity is institutionally organized. Far from having clear boundaries among them, these three blocks have several overlapping points that conform mobile strips of interchange and struggle as well as uncharted areas in which any of them operates or exerts direct influence.

2.5.1. Daily life and under-sectorial activity

The territory in which the aforementioned blocks operate is that of daily life, in the sense that what these blocks or sectors do, the resources with which they operate and the objects upon which they have deliberated or unintended effects, are not located out of the blocks themselves. Instead, these sectors are sustained as undertakings that are well-rooted in daily life, that take advantage of resources available and current conditions. The differentiation and thus the possibility for establishing distinctions come out from a process through which some properties of daily life are converted into something else (e.g. formal organizational

arrangements or specialized professional knowledge). In this view, it has to be stressed that non-daily life properties are always an extension of daily life and their existence and functioning depends on the properties of daily life (e.g. 'spontaneous' or 'non formal' ways of organizing, common sense and tacit knowledge).

An important implication of this view of the relation of daily life and sectorial activity is that sectors cannot be conceived only as groups, categories or types of organizations. This is no to say that organizations, as units whose variations are, to some extent, understandable in their relation to a specific sector, are not relevant in their own terms. While organizations remain as a distinctive feature of each sector, the processes by which these sectors come into being as a whole, their relations inside and across sectors, and their links with every day life underline the relevance of taking into account aspects that go beyond a cross-sectional approach of supposedly well delimited groups of organizations.

The assumption that the Public, Private, and Third Sectors, as institutionalized forms of activity, are the result of an extension and transformation of daily life opens the door for yet another question. Indeed, it is necessary to think about the possibility of some other areas of activity that could be distinguished from daily life and, at the same time, from the aforementioned sectors. One major gain of posing that question is that it demands an effort of identification and definition of those aspects or properties that are similar in the Public, Private and Third Sectors, for they are likely to be the basis upon which any possible localization of those other areas of activity could be conducted. In this sense, when trying to depict those forms that cannot be clearly recognized as belonging to one of the well-defined three sectors, it is practically unavoidable to establish the continuities, constants and mutual reinforcements among these sectors.

Furthermore, one of the most interesting openings of dealing with the possibility of other areas of activity is that of proto-sectorial, pre-sectorial or even under-sectorial or non-sectorial areas[5]. This idea should be carefully considered since many efforts that emerge from day-to-day, non-formalized activity establish the basis or conditions necessary for raising an initiative towards a more

[5] See, for example, Williams' (2002) attempts to define a fourth sector that would include those forms voluntary work that operate in an informal manner, without the mediation of groups or organizations.

institutionalized functioning – that is, a legally acknowledged, registered entity –, be it the creation of a business organization, the foundation of a civic association or the successful attempt of reaching a position in government. The potential of the idea comes from the recognition that many of these efforts do not necessarily result into formal organizations that are clearly ascribable to one sector or another. Some of these efforts might keep functioning indefinitely at that same pre-sectorial level, while others might get dissolved and yet others might advance through ways other than that of legally conformed entities. Finally, there is one more thing to add. Besides of the relevance that these pre-sectorial areas of activity have in their own right, it is worth taking into account the roles they could play in relation to each of the well-defined sectors. Figure 4 shows the graphical representation of the territory of the Third Sector.

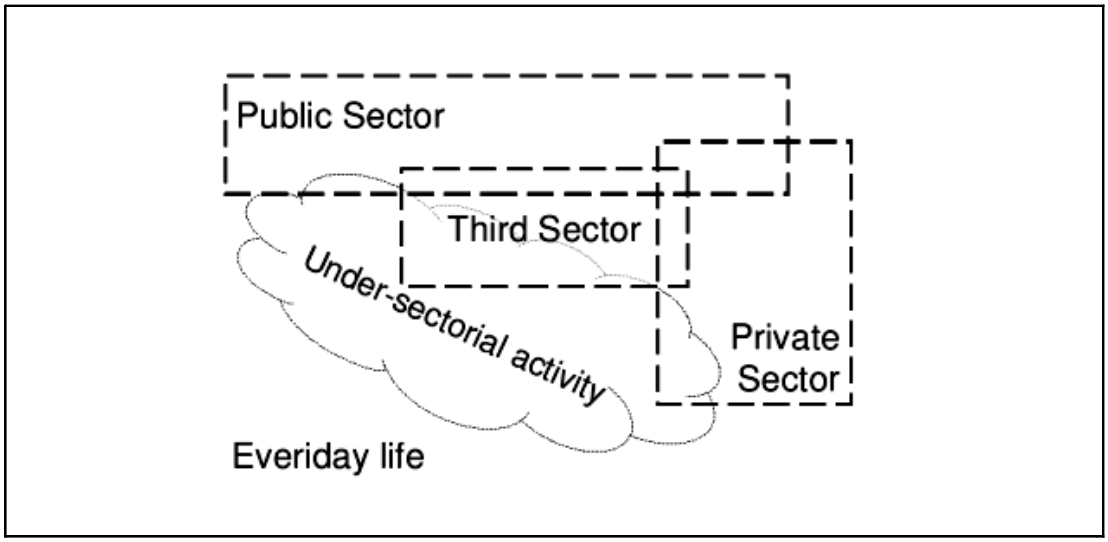

Figure 4.
Sectorial and under-sectorial activity, and their embeddedness in daily life

As can be seen, the major blocks are obviously those of the Public, Private, and Third Sectors as distinctive areas of activity. All of them are embedded in daily life. Moreover, between daily life and sectors there is an area of activity which cannot be properly addressed as sectorial and neither as daily life activity. This last area is referred to as under-sectorial. What is at stake in this representation is the interplay among the effects that the well-differentiated activities of each sector exert over (1) the relative undifferentiated pool of daily activities; (2) the well

differentiated activities of other sectors; and (3) the moderately differentiated pre-sectorial activities.

2.6. A platform for participation

Throughout the chapter, emphasis has been made on the great variety of conceptions of the Third Sector, including their origins, their links with the phenomenon they intend to describe, and their practical consequences. Instead of offering a focused description of the distribution of attributes of TS entities in a given context, we have chosen to follow the path of the meanings of the Third Sector in use because such path seemed to offer a basis for developing a framework of the place of TS entities regarding daily life and other spaces of social activity. To sum up, the Third Sector:

(1) Can be regarded as a category and as a phenomenon, because both sides of the term get to be closely linked in what functions as a descriptive yet normative ambiguous idea whose heterogeneity results overwhelming.

(2) Is defined in a negative way in that it is said to be something different to the State or the Market, or a mixture of both, something that locates the Market and the State as unavoidable frames of reference when thinking of the Third Sector;

(3) As a result of its negative definition, functions as an exclusive category because the institutionalized character of the forms of action regarded as Third Sector is a taken for granted feature.

(4) Is grasped through sets of definitional criteria and typologies that, besides of being limited in their reaches, have practical implications, particularly at the level of policy making.

(5) Entails two different missions, one based in the idea of the common good and the provision of public services, and the other based in the idea of citizenship and the creation of spaces and actions for social change.

(6) Is notoriously defined by the close links among its organizations in the form of dynamic, imbalanced networks, most of which are well rooted in the local;

(7) Is understood and approached from different perspectives (Non-Profit Sector, Social Economy, Civil Society, and Solidarity Economy), each of which entails prescriptions that lead TS entities toward the instituted spaces of the Market or the State, or toward the uncertain space of the emergent.

(8) Cannot be understood without making reference to participation and vice versa, because, at different levels, one seems to be an instrument for achieving the other.

(9) Is currently under strong pressures toward its professionalization, which is both a proof of the importance of its links with the Public and the Private Sectors and an expression of the struggles to which it is subjected.

The Third Sector has to be addressed without breaking or hiding the tensions between the different ways in which the phenomenon is understood. Participation as a cornerstone of the Third Sector and the Third Sector as a cornerstone of participation are thus one of the most interesting areas of inquiry. Participative requirements can be met through different systems and organizational arrangements. Besides, the same kind of system usually has variations and particular developments depending on the place and people involved. Attempts of TS entities to put participation into practice are thus of great relevance, because they are in the middle of the struggles that take place in the territory of the Third Sector. The heterogeneity of the Third Sector as a field that is crossed by other fields can be better understood if it is thought of as a function of differentiating and assimilating forces. This puts power phenomena at the core of the Third Sector-Participation symbiosis.

3. A wide approach to power

The purpose of this chapter is to depict a perspective of power in which inquiries on the imbrications between participation and the Third Sector can find a useful conceptual formulation. The reaches of conceptions and theories of power become relevant in as much as an area as complex and multi-layered as the articulation between the Third Sector and participation seems to be linked to subtle, diffuse networks of pressures that, jointly, are responsible for the distinctiveness of that articulation. In order to be able to grasp these opaque zones, which are the focus of our interests, we have to find a conceptual language in which that subtleties and their not necessarily subtle consequences can be rendered intelligible. The purpose of the exposition is thus not to argue for or against different approaches, but to make clear the path and the reasons that lead us to assume the conception of power that has informed the research process.

The first section of the chapter includes an overview of different conceptions of power and their places with regard to some disciplines. The second section describes the issues around which debates on the conception of power take place, underlining the implications of the positions around such issues. The third section discusses the similarities, uses, and limitations of taxonomies of power. The fourth section points out the place of power in theoretical developments in the social sciences and in social psychology in particular. The fifth section offers a brief presentation of Foucault's conception of power by contrasting it to other conceptions that have a more limited scope. The sixth section introduces some elements for a more relative view of the differences among conceptions and specific approaches to power phenomena. The seventh and final section highlights the advantages of Foucault's conception of power as a starting point for dealing with the complex, opaque articulation between participation and the Third Sector, and introduces the need for a suitable analytical language.

3.1. Power and its conceptualization

Power is a subject on which practically all of the social sciences have important research efforts, whether they are theoretical or empirical. These efforts can be traced back to the times in which philosophy was giving birth to the first scientific disciplines, with some thinkers devoted to define the nature of power and others more interested in the strategies through which power operates. Machiavelli, with *The Prince* (1513), can be considered as a precursor of this last trend while Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) can be located in the first one (Jiménez Burillo, 2006).

3.1.1. Common grounds, different buildings

As usual with controversial subjects, the study of power has been characterized by different positions about the scope and nature of the phenomena the term refers to. The levels, scopes, and lines of inquiry through which research efforts are organized vary across disciplines – philosophy, political sciences, sociology and psychology – and traditions. Nevertheless, these positions tend to share some basic assumptions that set the ground for any discussion among them. In other words, there are some identifiable continuities in the representations of power on which those studies are based. Haugaard (2002) describes the relation among different conceptions of power in terms of similar characteristics that change according to the contexts in which the concept is used. This 'family resemblance' which is the result of reading the aforementioned conceptual differences through the lens of Wittgenstein's 'language games' has as its most important implication the recognition that

> There will never be a single concept of either political or social power because each usage takes place within local, tacit or explicit, theoretical systems. Any theory which we construct (or take for granted) is almost like a sub-language within the greater language (Haugaard, 2002, p. 2).

Different conceptions are not only a consequence of the specificities of each discipline. They are the result of the interests that lead any research trajectory and are largely based upon what is taken for granted by the community or group involved. This is why continuities, similarities, and differences among conceptions can be located at different levels. There is an interdisciplinary level in which the objects that every discipline define as their area of study is likely to be the most

important determinant, but there is also an intra-disciplinary level at which schools or traditions play a capital role. Also, a third level can be added, one in which the interests of different disciplines on some areas of social life open the door to multidisciplinary approaches. The complexity of this last level is often assumed as an obvious consequence of interbreeding approaches. Such approaches are more likely to enable contexts in which potential misunderstandings can be prevented or solved through the discussion of assumptions that otherwise would remain tacit.

3.1.2. Power in social and organizational psychology

As in other social sciences, conceptions of power in social psychology and organizational psychology are also familiar and diverse simultaneously. There is no doubt that social psychologists are far from a common approach to power, with a large debate on the scope of power as the most relevant area over dispute. As Jiménez Burillo (2006) explains, while for one side power is conceived as an specific form of social influence – Le Bon, Tarde, Ross and Allport being some of its early exponents –, for the other side, social power is thought of as a broader phenomenon in which social influence is only one of its forms – Cartwright, French and Raven, Asch, Milgram, and McClelland, for instance.

The underlying vision of power or influence in many works is based on the notion of power as a property that allows the one that posses it, to get the compliance of others. Researchers sought to understand that property through formalist, operationalizable definitions and empirical approaches in which the social contexts of power phenomena were disregarded. In consonance with this assumption, obedience and persuasion have been two of the subjects on which most studies have been produced. But beyond the premise of power as a property, there is a more important feature on power as a subject of social psychology. Until the 1970's the political, in any of its meanings, had not been taken into in any conceptualization of power. By keeping power phenomena as something politically and socially out of context, such conceptualizations end up locating power in the domain of individual qualities. In this perspectives power is thus an individual characteristic the possession of which is good, exception made of excesses.

Organizational psychology – which in our view and in spite of its peculiarities represents a sub-area of social psychology –, has followed a similar path, though with some important differences. On one hand, those differences lie in the place of

organizational psychology among different disciplines that, jointly, integrate what nowadays is known as 'organization studies'. On the other hand, the emphasis of organizational psychology in offering applicable knowledge as a response to demands on the production of management tools also creates a different context.

For scholars of organizational behavior, to whom Pfeffer describes with accuracy, "coordination and control are necessary, and how to achieve these ends efficiently and, in some formulations, humanely, are fundamental organizational issues" (Pfeffer, 1997, p. 100). Until recent times, mainstream organizational psychology has treated power as a minor topic, being frequently confined to the study of authority or leadership[6] (Jiménez Burillo, 2006). Contrary to what happens in political sciences or, to a lesser but still important degree, in sociology, anthropology or social psychology, power has been traditionally considered as the last dirty word in organizational theory (Robbins, 1998). It is with the turn to post-modern organizational science and its critics to modernity that the study of power in organizations is gaining a major place (Gergen and Joseph, 1996), with an important emphasis on how issues of power are historically related to the birth and further development of the discipline and its object of study (Grey, 2005).

3.1.3. Relatively new conceptions

In recent years – maybe during the past three decades –, social sciences have integrated new ways of understanding power. The integration of such understandings has led scholars to the configuration of approaches that, in contrast with their predecessors, are wider in scope and conception. The interest in widening the scope was a reaction to the limited area of phenomena to which the study of power was circumscribed before. As for the conception of power, those new understandings sought to overcome what their exponent depicted as a narrow conception of power. In this view, previous approaches conceived power

[6] The organization of one of the books of Pfeffer, *New directions for organization theory* (1997) is a good example of how some issues are included in the category of power while others are excluded. In this book, mechanisms of social control (which work by means of rewards and sanctions, commitment and socialization processes or authority) and issues of power and influence (which are located at an interactional level, often in terms of negotiation or politics) are treated in different chapters. This distinction is based on the assumption that power is basically referred to the exercise of informal influence to achieve individual goals, as the opposite of rational, formal authority directed to the achievement of organizational goals. In this view, power and control, although related, are different in terms of the ways in which they are perceived (control tends to be perceived as legitimate) and their effects (power is likely to generate more resistances).

phenomena as monotonous in their mechanisms. In consequence, the new approaches were aimed at grasping the variety, multiplicity and sophistication of the ways in which power operates.

Since its introduction, the conception in which these wider approaches to power are based has been gaining place among scholar productions. In this conception, power is not only exercised exclusively by exerting influence over the ways an election is made. It can also be exerted by establishing the scope of available alternatives and, even more, by operating over the definition of the criteria that are the basis of the election (Ibáñez, 1982) and their conditions of possibility. Streams of recent emergence such as critical social psychology (e.g. Ibáñez and Íñiguez, 1997) and critical management studies (e.g. Alvesson and Willmott, 1992), which arose in the fields of social psychology and organization studies respectively, are good examples of the places toward these wider approaches to power have led academic work.

3.2. Debates on the conception of power

Discussions about the concept of power take the form of a long conversation in which the search for a minimum agreement on the meaning of the term has defined the most important differences among perspectives. There are a few key questions that seem to be crucial in this long conversation. These questions, as conversational threads, are helpful when trying to depict the scope of such differences: (1) is power an attribute or a relation? (2) is it a capability, an attribute, or something that can be possessed? (3) is it a specific form of influence? (4) does it work exclusively through the use of threatens; (5) does it operate through other forms such as force or authority? (6) is there a relation between power and autonomy?

3.2.1. Key issues

A conception of power is defined by its assumptions on these questions. Such assumptions can be organized in terms of key issues around which debates are articulated. Each conception of power assumes a specific position regarding those key issues. According to our own compositions of the axes of debate that Ibáñez (1982) and Jiménez Burillo (2006) mention, these issues include: (1) the necessary or unnecessary presence of effective action from the part of the source; (2) the dispensable or indispensable place of causality as a criterion that reduces

the scope of power to observable events that can be circumscribed in time and space; (3) intentionality as a necessary or unnecessary element in the exercise of power, which includes or excludes any impersonal form of power; (4) power as act or as potency, that is, as a verifiable event or as capability that does not require effective action to be considered as such; (5) the inclusion or not of any form of relation that produces effects; (6) the possibility of those in the dominated position to make a decision or the absence of such possibility; (7) the necessary or unnecessary presence of conflict in any power relation; (8) the heterogeneity or homogeneity in the mechanisms through which power operates; and (9) the nature of what is modified by the exercise of power, which may include only behaviors or also attitudes and beliefs. For a brief overview of these issues, see Table 3. The positions around these issues define the scope of phenomena that any conception of power includes.

3.2.2. Reading power in specific situations

In order to shed some light over the implications of any position around these issues it is enough to think on some daily life frequent event such as the following: what happens when a middle manager, queuing for ordering a coffee in a bar outside his office, sees a top manager of the same organization arriving at the end of the queue? He might offer himself to order what the top manager wants once his turn comes. He might not. He might consider the possibility or he might just experience a little discomfort. Or maybe he would not notice the situation at all and remain in the queue as if the top manager had just never appeared. At a first look, his reaction would have probably depended on what the top manager had done when arriving, but beyond what is accessible for an observer of the situation, the relationship among the middle manager and the top manager as well as some customs that characterize the way things are done in their work place might have a part in the whole development of the situation, including the behaviors of both the middle and the top manager.

Table 3
Key issues in debates on the conception of power

Issues	Examples of positions
Nature of power	*Power is always exercised through actual behavior* *Power is a capability, a potential, whether it is expressed through actions or not*
Effective action of the source	*The source has to do something with regard to the target* *Power can be exercised by means other than the action of the source*
Scope of relations included	*A specific type of relationship* *Any form of relationship that produces effects*
Causality	*Power and its effects have always a causal relation* *Power and its effects are not always clearly linked*
conscious intentionality	*The exercise of power is always purposely carried out by the source* *There are key forms of power that go beyond consciousness*
Decision making by the target	*The target must evaluate the alternatives to make a decision* *Power does not requires from the target to make a decision*
Conflict	*Any power relationship implies some degree of conflict* *There is no need for conflict in a power relationship*
Material upon which power is exercised	*Power produces only behavioral modification* *Power acts upon behaviors, attitudes and beliefs*

The ramifications could go further, but the point here is that whether the situation is considered as one in which a power relation is operating or not depends on the view of power through which the observer is making sense of what is going on. Yet, there are more implications on the view of power held by the observer. Is the reaction of the middle manager the result of what the top managers does? Is it the result of some implicit rules that define what is done in a given context? Is it the product of the transference of such rules from one context to another? Again, the answer depends on the ways power is understood and its consequences are not only theoretical; it implies strong epistemological and methodological assumptions that cannot be taken for granted. If we translate our example to another context like, for instance, the moments after the end of an assembly in a federation of associations of persons with rare diseases, with the representative of an association in the place of the middle manager and the president of the federation

in the place of the top manager, the similarities and differences between both situations will also depend on the conception of power assumed by the observer.

3.2.3. An approach and its reaches

In other words, the way in which any research effort takes a position on the key issues that Ibáñez and Jiménez Burillo point out is of uttermost importance because it defines, in the first place, the scope of phenomena to take into account and, in the second place, the way in which researchers make sense of those phenomena. If we take, for instance, the approach to power that Bachrach and Baratz – whose work will be discussed in Chapter 5 – developed during the 1960's, it is easy to find how, at some point, the criteria they use to identify power issues entails a delimited approach that addresses only a part of the diversity and high degree of sophistication of the ways in which power is exercised. For these authors, power is always a form of relationship in which those involved maintain a clear communication among them. This relationship is defined by a conflict of interests in which one side gets the compliance of the other by means of threatens. The side whose compliance is required – often referred as B in most of the literature on the subject – has necessarily to perceive threatens as a deprivation that the side that is seeking for compliance – which is usually referred as A – can effectively administer. In other words, B understands the alternatives of compliance and not-compliance, and has to make a decision (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963). Compliance and threatens are thus the elements that allow to make a distinction among power and other related concepts such as (1) force, which is based on the administration of sanctions and do not require compliance; (2) influence, which works based upon the identification of B – the target – with A – the source –; (3) authority, which works by means of potential justifications in which compliance appears as reasonable; and (4) manipulation, which does not require any decision at all and functions by means of deception.

There are many approaches to power like the one described above. Almost every approach includes some definition of the nature of power, which is rooted in a set of assumptions – some of them not always explicitly addressed – about the nature of social organization and human behavior. In many cases, there are attempts to build an operative definition that fits the – local – area of interest of the researchers and, based upon that definition, the elaboration of some sort of

taxonomy. The framework of Bachrach and Baratz was developed according to the logic of their disciplines at that time. Despite of including some interesting innovations like the concept of nondecision, which has a central place in Chapter 5, there are important limitations in its conception of power. One of the most crucial limitations is the implicit assumption that, if not of the nature of power, agents involved in a power relation are at least aware of its effects.

3.3. Taxonomies of power

With regard to taxonomies, it is out of the reaches of this work to develop a full description, let alone an analysis, of them. But since some typologies have had a significant role in the development of power as a legitimate area of study, it is worth to make a few observations on their nature, limitations and possibilities.

3.3.1. Diversity, recurrences, and uses

Taxonomies of power abound. They have had different degrees of impact in research practice and, in spite of the differences among them, they share many features. Whether we are dealing with classic typologies like those of Weber (1921), Russell (1938) or Mills (1956); or more recent ones, like those of French and Raven (1959), Lukes (1974) or Galbraith (1983), there are some recurrent forms of power despite the different names they receive. Ibáñez (1982) presents those recurrent forms as: (1) coercion, which works by means of threatens or force; (2) deception or manipulation, which includes hiding or distorting information; (3) law or authority, which is based on claims of legitimacy; and (4) influence, which is based on persuasion.

In any case, it can be said that many typologies of power are, at some extent, justified by means of its empirical usefulness. There is no doubt that taxonomies play an important role in that they enable researchers to recognize different forms of power. In this sense, it is important to learn how they can be used and the constraints they impose to academic work. Problems arise when any taxonomy is used as if it was inscribed in the phenomena under scrutiny, and not just a device 'on paper', in the sense of Bourdieu.

3.3.2. Limitations

As Ibáñez (1982) points out, at a more specific level, typologies of power face three important limitations:

(1) It is highly improbable that any power relation can be exclusively classified into one type.

(2) Assuming that phenomena related to power have a multidimensional character, any attempt to make sense of these phenomena through only one dimension imposes a reduction that might keep out of sight potentially relevant aspects.

(3) Many taxonomies are based upon a mixture of criteria – type of resource, kind of material subjected to manipulation, form of manipulation, type of effect, etcetera – without any explicit attempt to clarify the nature of that mixture.

(4) In spite of their relevance, ecological and disciplinary forms of power, as well the processes of naturalization or legitimation of some impositions are usually not taken into account by the categories of existing taxonomies.

According to these observations, existing taxonomies reveal a considerable gap between the ways in which power is exercised and the ways in which it has been represented in most scientific literature.

3.4. Theoretical developments

In some cases, approaches to power give place to explicit theories that claim to explain power phenomena. Theories of power can be considered at different levels. One the one hand, it is not unreasonable to make the assumption that behind any approach to power, even those that are intended to address power phenomena at a purely descriptive level, a tacit theory of power can be found, no matter how vague or naive it could be. One the other hand, there are efforts explicitly intended to offer a formal theory – in the usual sense of the expression – of power, one in which an abstract body of interrelated concepts serves, among other things, as a deductive system on the basis of which hypotheses that lead to specific research programs can be developed. A third case that can also be included is that of long-range theories in which the concept of power has a key role. This is the case of grand systems of thought in which power is a crucial element in the comprehension of wide social phenomena.

3.4.1. Theories of power and power in theories

Looking across disciplines, theoretical developments on power in the sense of the second and third cases can be situated in relation to four different groups or, as Haugaard (2002) understands them, language games.

The first two groups belong to the field of political theory. Both of them are normative in its nature, but while the more recent one is characterized by the construction of analytical concepts, the older disregards any conceptual development. Normative analytical political theories are the result of efforts intended to produce and clarify logically consistent sets of concepts that lead to an accurate analysis of action in political arenas. This type of theories are, in general terms, developed as means to find out the extent to which a given political decision making context functions in a democratic manner. The works of Dahl, Bachrach and Baratz, and Lukes, are maybe the most representative examples of this group.

Rooted in a tradition that can be traced back to Aristotle's reflections on the *polis*, non-analytical political theories consist of detailed, well-argued, models of ideal societies. Arendt's thought on power, freedom and authority, and her interest in local-based forms of government – the 'council system' – as an alternative to the State, belong to this group.

The other two groups are included in the field of social theory, which is referred to models that allow for an empirical account of the functioning of society. While one of these groups is founded upon the assumptions that define modern thought, in a tradition which is mostly represented by the Enlightenment[7], the other is based on strong critics to those assumptions. Followed by Mills and Parsons, the most classic exponents of modern social theory are Marx and Weber, whose theoretical developments imply a vision of power in terms of conflict or consensus. In postmodern social theory, with Foucault as its most influencing figure, power is

[7] According to Ibáñez (2002), there are some premises that define modernity. The first of all is an overestimated Reason, which finds its higher expression in the scientific institution and the processes of rationalization of social life. Knowledge as a true representation of reality is another premise, which relies on the possibility and necessity of universal, fixated postulates. The last premise is a self-conscious subject, conceived as an individual, autonomous agent of his own history. Modern approaches may also rely on other premises, but the ones mentioned here are easily identifiable because they are the target of postmodern criticism.

conceived in terms of its constitutive capability; that is, its effects in terms of shaping social reality.

3.4.2. Democratic assumptions and normative effects

These four groups are not included here as to offer a typology of theories. In fact, there are many authors whose work can be understood only by its links to more than one group. The groups are worth to consider because they point out how theories on power or theories in which power plays a central role are built according to a vision of the social world that can be strongly influenced by the idea of democracy as it is conceived in the Western World. When taken for granted, the normative effects that the idea of democracy has over some theoretical approaches can lead to ethnocentric interpretations of alien or emergent practices. Moreover, approaches strongly guided by an uncontested, apparently obvious notion of democracy can tend to ignore how some democratic instances are constituted as spaces through which power operates. Besides, the degree at which the assumptions of an approach can be located at one side or the other in the modern-postmodern controversy – which also entails the presence or absence of a critical approach to the idea of democracy – can lead to findings that, in general, are not comparable or incommensurable.

3.4.3. Mid-range theories in social psychology

In a more delimited domain like that of psychosocial knowledge, there have been some attempts to elaborate a theory of power. In social psychology, there are three classical lines of theory about power (Ibáñez, 1982): (1) the force field theories developed by Lewin and his collaborators, which recover the concept of gestalt and applies it to the way a situation is faced by individuals immerse in it; (2) informed by a rationalist and economicist model of transactions, the social exchange theories with Homans, Blau, and Thibaut and Kelly as their most outstanding exponents; and (3) the decision theories, which can be focused on how the motivation to decide appears and unfolds or on the thinking process through which the decision is made.

These developments constituted important advances in the study of power because of their attempts of systematic explanation. Nevertheless, the kinds of power phenomena they address, and the aspects of those phenomena they are able to grasp do not include some of the more complex, subtle, mischievous

aspects in the functioning of power. Exception made to the concept of field, which had lead to interesting developments through some reformulations (e.g. Spink, 2005), the main limitation might be found in what these theories have in common: an approach that reduces power to a sort of interchange in which a rational calculus undertaken by those involved defines the outcomes of the process. For instance, the cases in which power is exercised through an uneven possession of instruments that allows for changing other people are clearly neglected[8]. While accepting that exchange constitutes a modality of power that deserves an important place, a focus on power in terms of technology has also to be seriously taken into account.

3.4.4. Power and freedom

In an attempt to conceptualize power in relation to freedom, Ibáñez (1982) proposes that the exercise of power always implies the imposition of constraints on the freedom of others, whether by means of limiting their scope of action or through the modification of the subjects themselves. A question arises with the assumption that power can also operate through impersonal constraints and through the modification of the subjects. If this is so, then we are likely to found that there are issues regarded to power in practically every area of social life. If power is more than an intentioned source that gets the compliance of a conscious target by means of persuasion, threatens or authority, how can we conceive power in a manner that allows for making sense of these issues?

3.4.5. Widening deepness and scope

In this general description and discussion of conceptions and theories on power, we have made strong emphasis on the ways in which they convey a look that, roughly speaking, includes some aspects of power phenomena while excluding others. The point here is that since every sphere or area of social life has peculiarities that impose to individuals involved in them different possibilities in terms of what they can and should do, approaches that claim for a simple, universal models of power require to make the assumption that there is but a single rationality that takes into account the characteristics of different

[8] In other words, this form of power "does not depend upon the unequal possession of something that the other needs, but on the unequal possession of something that allows for making things to the other" (Ibáñez, 1982, p. 79).

environments for its calculus. Situations, in this view, are sets of stimulus that individuals perceived in the same way. How individuals acquire the skills to face that situation and how they develop that single rationality remains out of discussion. Moreover, it is hard to assume that the acquisition of the skills is equal for everyone. Whether they are due to an uneven distribution of resources or to a diverse, fragmented degree of implication in different areas of social life, the variety of processes through which people develop their competency as members of society should not be underestimated. At its minimum, this variety implies that those skills required by a given situation are not equally distributed and that this distribution is highly dependent on the area of social life in which the situation takes place. Besides, it seems reasonable to suppose that, since the acquisition of skills take place in the world, that is, through situations related to specific areas of social life, the uneven distribution of skills that characterize these situations may play a role in that acquisition. If this is so, then that what people become over time is at some extent a product of that uneven distribution. What if some individuals, in some areas, include as some of their skills the possibility of influencing the acquisition of skills of other individuals? What if some individuals attempt to apply skills that belong to one area to other areas? What if there are skills and areas of social life with more capacity of advancing over other areas?

A key assumption of this study is that these questions are regarded to power issues, and as such, require a conception of power and a set of analytical concepts that is capable of making sense of them. Counting with this kind of tools is crucial, because that apparently obvious indissociable character of the relation between the Third Sector and participation might be achieved at different levels and with different tendencies or pressures crossing each level. The approach to power developed by Foucault as an attempt to overcome the limits and consequences of more traditional views on power seems to offer part of those tools and a framework for a better definition of our lines of inquiry.

3.5. Foucault's approach to power

As opposed to the elaboration of a theory of power, Foucault's efforts during his last studies were intended to develop an analytical approach to power (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1979; Ibáñez, 1982). These efforts imply a renounce to any claims of universality and the avoidance of a de-contextualized, ahistorical account of

power. Foucault's late work attempts to define the specific domain of power relationships and to determine the instruments needed for their analysis (Foucault, 1976).

Foucault's conception of power has a nominalistic nature. The author conceives power as a name that is given to a complex strategic situation in a given society. The functioning of power gives place to disequilibriums and inequities induced by multiple, dynamic force relations that are local and unstable (Foucault, 1976). Power is omnipresent not because it precedes and determines every aspect of social life, but because it is constantly being produced in every relation, each time an action interferes with another action. The strategic conception that Foucault has on power can be better described in contrast to the juridical paradigm of power, as the author does in the first volume of *The history of sexuality*. In our view, the juridical paradigm should be seen as a device in that it entails some doses of simplification. Nevertheless, and keeping in mind that it should be seen as a device, it is helpful for underscoring the characteristics and potential of the strategic view on power. A schematic overview of the differences between the juridical and the strategical paradigms appears in Table 4.

Table 4
Juridical and strategical paradigms of power

Aspects	Juridical Paradigm	Strategical paradigm
Nature	*Property*	*Relation*
Location	*Center*	*Omnipresence*
Form	*Law (prohibited-permitted)*	*Norm (ordinal from right to wrong)*
Axis	*King*	*Subjects*
Domains	*Independent*	*Immanent*
Direction	*Descendant*	*Ascendant*
Relations	*Isomorphism*	*Diversity*
Knowledge	*Control, use*	*Production*
Mechanism	*Repression*	*Management*

3.5.1. The juridical paradigm

The juridical paradigm, which has been developed along with the Western Culture and has pervaded common sense understanding of power, can be briefly

described with the following list of characteristics: (1) power has the form of the law; it states what is prohibited and permitted; (2) the possibility of transgression is kept open, even though there may be penalizations; (3) power is presented as an exterior limit to freedom and this presentation makes it acceptable, at least in general terms; (4) power requires the figure of a king – even as an abstraction – and has a center that can be located beyond reasonable doubt; (5) the relationship between State and Society is the general form of any power relation; (6) this relationship is delegated and works through a series of relieves; (7) because of this series of relieves, power is descendant and (8) the different levels of delegation maintain the form of the relationship State-Society.

One of the most outstanding consequences of the juridical paradigm is that, given its legal nature, power is exterior to the different domains of social life. It is monotonous and restrictive because its only mechanism is the prohibition. Another consequence that is worth to mention can be found in the political arena. As power is, in general terms, a property that consists of enunciating the law, political fights are significant only in as much as they are directed to the control of the State and those efforts that take place in local settings or in terms of daily life are thus meaningless.

This brief description of the juridical paradigm has the risk of offering an oversimplified image of a more complex vision of power. Nevertheless, as long as it is taken as a device that clarifies the gaps between power and some well-established conceptions of it, this presentation still helps to stress how a well-settled vision of power systematically keeps out of sight some relevant forms of power like those that have an impersonal or a technological nature.

3.5.2. The strategical paradigm

The strategical paradigm of power can be understood as an alternative to the juridical paradigm. Far from being exerted through the delegation of a single form of relationship, power is immanent to every domain of social life. It comes into being in the specificity of each domain and its intelligibility depends on the understanding of the domains in which the relations of force are being produced. In this sense, every institution is organized around its own inherent power relationships.

There are many local centers of power and despite that these centers are unstable and changing from a micro-social point of view, when combined, they tend to preserve their global effects. If this is true, then the global effects are the result of a matrix in which local centers of power relate to each other. Power is thus ascendant and the State and its *apparata* are just a group of other local centers of power. Although the State has some specificities that make of it a special piece in the puzzle of power in modern society, it is not less true that its place is a result of the asymmetries that sustain the global effects of the aforementioned matrix.

3.5.3. Power and knowledge

A key difference between the juridical and the strategical paradigms can be found in the way each of them posits the relation between power and knowledge. The role of knowledge in the juridical paradigm is confined to the control of what is produced: the ones in a dominant position are able to access to knowledge and they can constraint its production, distribution and utilization. Nevertheless, in the strategical paradigm, knowledge occupies a privileged place in as much as it is produced by the exercise of power itself. Those in a dominant position are not only able to control knowledge; the can also produce it. In this view, knowledge is the result of the operations that allow a subject to create objects upon which he can act. This is widely known as the productive side of power: instead of establishing what is not permitted, productive power states how things are; it establishes the norm, a continuum towards which objects can be ordered. The degree of sophistication required by this task is high, so it is no surprise to find that power generates subtle technologies of knowledge that are at the same time technologies of control.

The relation power-knowledge produces what is called effects of truth. For each society, there is a general policy of truth. This policy specifies the mechanisms and instances that are authorized to distinguish true from false enunciations, the techniques and procedures required for obtaining the truth, and the status of those that can make the distinction. With the institutionalization of science and its claims of objectivity, Western Culture has developed its own regime of truth, one in which, for instance, some productions of the social sciences have a central role in the refinement and naturalization of the norms that regulate social processes,

mainly because of the avoidance of a problematizing approach to their objects, the depictions of which appear as natural or necessary. According to this view on the relation power-knowledge, Foucault devoted part of his efforts to the study of disciplines such as psychiatry and medicine in order to elaborate an account of specific forms in the exercise of power, including its techniques and tactics (Foucault, 1980).

3.5.4. Political action and innovations

There are important consequences that can be drawn from the Foucault's conception of power. Political action, for instance, does not necessarily have to limit its scope to the control of the State. Indeed, other forms of political action that take place in local settings, across specific sectors, or even in everyday life situations, have different meanings. If every institution has power relations of its own and includes regulation processes that are partially autonomous, it might be necessary to admit that those political proposals that are intended to build long-range transformations based on local actions deserve better attention (Ibáñez, 1982). In fact, the past three decades have witnessed the emergence of experiences and social movements in which these scenarios have been explored (Colectivo Política en Red, 2007).

But maybe the most important implication of Foucault's approach to power can be followed after the idea that power is productive and is inherent to every sphere of social life. The productive character of power implies that it brings out innovations, while its omnipresence implies that these innovations are present in every social domain. The innovations that power produces are guided. They make sense in terms of a kind of intentionality that does not require the awareness of the individuals whose actions embody it. Changes generated by power are means for its conservation. In other words, power creates the conditions for its own necessity; it changes the spaces in which it is exercised in a way that facilitates its own development. This is another way of saying that what is instituted, well established, is the main source of what is emergent (Ibáñez, 1982). Any attempt to address issues of social control requires dealing with the ways the social order is maintained, and, more important, this maintenance tasks include those changes that keep the integrity of the order as a whole.

3.6. Complexifying distinctions

In order to point out the kind of reading enabled by the differences between the juridical and the strategical approaches and, simultaneously, show their relative reaches when used as categories for classifying existing approaches, we are going to include a brief overview of an approach to power that has been widely used in the field of social psychology: the bases of power of French and Raven. More specifically, we are going to discuss how the relation power-knowledge is depicted in this approach.

3.6.1. The case of the bases of social power

In the work of French and Raven (1959), which is, to some extent, a derivation of the work of Lewin and his force field analysis, power phenomena always involve a dyadic enduring relation between two agents in which one of them can get to change the behaviors, attitudes or goals of the other. French and Raven made a key distinction between influence and power. While influence is referred to the force that one agent effectively exercises over another in order to get the desired change, power is defined as the potential amount of influence that a agent can exert over another agent. The potential influence that an agent can exert depends on his possession of different bases or resources: (1) coercion, (2) reward, (3) legitimacy, (4) reference, (5) expertise and, added later, (6) information. These bases of power are understood as the forms of relation between the target and the source in which the power of the former over the later is founded.

According to the expanded view of power entailed in Foucault's approach, the way French and Raven define power and its bases might seem narrow. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that the analytic purpose of these authors was to find out “what sorts of resources a person might have, devices which s/he could draw upon to exercise influence” (Raven, 1992, p. 4). French and Raven were interested in direct primary changes resulting from behavioral determinants in a given dyadic situation. Their attempt consisted in delimiting the power effects in the target and the bases of power in the source. These remarks are crucial in that they lead us to realize that different conceptions of power can hardly be assessed without a purpose or at least an incipient area of inquiry as the basis of the assessment. It is undeniable that well-delimited approaches to power carry with

them a more general perspective, but the general perspective alone is not directly usable for empirically addressing specific aspects of the phenomena of interest.

3.6.2. Power-knowledge and information power

As for the relation power-knowledge, the last basis of French and Raven, information power, resulted from the unfolding of the expert power. While expertise as a basis power relies on the recognition of the skills that an agent has in a given field, information power is referred to the potential ability of the source for persuading the target. In our view, the relation between power and knowledge entailed in the informational basis of power cannot be clearly located in one of the paradigms depicted by Foucault. Persuasion is far more than controlling information. Besides, the kind of contents that are at stake are relevant in as much as the different potential ability for persuading in dyadic situations depends, to a great extent of the mastery that the source and the target have of the domains and subjects that are relevant in each situation. Of course, we are not trying to say that the power-knowledge relation, as seen by Foucault's is somehow equivalent to the informational basis of power. Once more, the differences in terms of scope are crucial, because the objects of interest, the purposes, and the levels at which each approach is located are not the same. What is worth mentioning here, is that perspectives and specific approaches to power are more complex, fluid and flexible than they seem when presented by means of contrasts and contrapositions.

Besides of being a more complete way of making sense of their differences, complexifying the distinctions among perspectives and specific approaches is crucial in our task of building a language for addressing the phenomena in which this research is focused. The generative possibilities of this way of making sense of differences among perspectives are crucial in terms of empirical work. Dealing with different perspectives as conceptual tools that can be used in particular combinations allows us to configure a particular framework by means of borrowing from already existing conceptions. It is clear that Foucault's conception of power offers us a basic perspective for addressing an object as wide and diffuse as the interwoven character of participation and the Third Sector. Foucault's perspective provides a frame in which the specificities of that interwoven character, as well as their production reproduction are given shape and meaning.

3.7. Toward an analytical language

This chapter has been aimed at offering a general description and discussion of conceptions and theoretical developments on power. In doing so, key issues of debate have been highlighted: (1) the nature of power; (2) its actual or potential character; (3) the kinds of relations considered as power relations; (4) the place of causality, intentionality, conflict and decision making; and (5) the materials upon which it is exercised. These issues are a form of pointing out how the way in which conceptions of power are configured defines their scope and deepness. The place of power in theoretical developments has also occupied an important place, since it led us to think how perspectives on power are linked to greater issues, and how they can carry with them considerable normative effects.

In order to find a perspective in which an intelligible formulation of the interplay of different tendencies and pressures that cross those links between the Third Sector and participation can find a starting point, we have offered a general overview of Foucault's perspective on power. This perspective, the strategical paradigm, has been described by contrasting it with the juridical approach, which entails a more traditional conception on how power operates. The contrast made, which at some extent implies a simplification, is justified in as much as it makes possible to stress what a foucauldian conception can offer. In order to minimize the caricaturing effects of this contrast, we also have discussed a case in which the distinctions among perspectives and approaches become blurred - the informational basis of power in the work of French and Raven.

Power can thus be regarded as a phenomenon that occurs each time an action interferes with another action. As a starting point, a perspective on power as wide as this is pertinent for dealing with the specificity of the articulation between participation and the Third Sector because of their capability for (1) stressing the ineluctable immanence of power phenomena in each and every area of social life; (2) grasping and introducing some neglected or minimized forms of power; and (3) offering paths for making intelligible the relational and productive aspects of power phenomena. In such conception, power has to be regarded as a relational phenomenon in the sense that it includes two or more distinguishable entities and a content. The definition of a power relation requires of the researcher to take into account the context in which it takes place because of its relational character and

potentiality, and it does not necessarily require any decision to be made by those who are involved, either as the source or the target.

According to the subject this study intends to address, the value of Foucault's perspective on power lies in their potential for transforming that general delimitation of an area of inquiry as the strong association between Third Sector and participation into a series of questions that give direction to the inquiry: (1) Which are the local centers in which the articulation between participation and the Third Sector is produced?; (2) What kind of power relations are immanent to the local points in which that articulation is produced?; (3) What characterizes the instability of those local centers?; (4) Which is the place of those local centers with regard to the more stable global effects of the whole network of local centers?; (5) What are the effects of the power relations immanent to those local points? By helping us in the definition of a direction for the study of an area of inquiry that seems to be interesting, Foucault's conception of power provides us with a basic framework for posing questions that otherwise could not be posed. And yet, the framework is not complete. While some wide questions have been posed, the path for their analytical addressing has not been settled.

As a first step, this perspective allows for the appropriation, develop, and use of the operative formulations of other approaches. And the key here is that while counting on a wide perspective, we still need to find a path for unfolding that perspective into an analytical set of concepts. In other words, while this chapter has offered the characteristics and implications of a wide view on power, a framework for addressing the ways in which power functions across a domain as specific as the Third Sector and its enactments of participation is still required. The next chapter is intended to settle down a conceptual basis for an analytical approach to this functioning.

4. Reproduction and practices

> The truth is that I have never stopped being amused by what may be called the *paradox of the doxa*: the fact that the reality of world's order, with its exclusive senses and forbidden directions, literally or metaphorically, its obligations and sanctions, is, in general terms, respected, that there are not more transgressions or subversions, crimes and madness (it is enough to think about the extraordinary agreement among thousands of dispositions – or intentions – required by five minutes of car drive in the Bastille Square or the Concorde Square); or, still more surprising, that the established order, with its relations of domination, its rights and abuses, its privileges and injustices, is so easily perpetuated, excluding some historical incidents, and that the most intolerable conditions of existence can often appear as something acceptable or, even more, natural (Bourdieu, 1998)[9].

This chapter is aimed at offering a synthetic overview of Bourdieu's conceptual tools for addressing social practices as mean for understanding the links between social order and everyday life. The axes of this overview include key concepts such as *habitus*, field, and symbolic domination, as well as their relations in what constitutes a theoretical model. The main purpose of the chapter is to show how these concepts and the relations among them, as a necessary analytical path to the perspective on power discussed in Chapter 3, make possible to address in a detailed manner the ways in which different forms of power operate in a given setting and how they distinctively manage to reproduce the relations in which they are founded according to the logic of that setting.

The first section of the chapter offers a general description of Pierre Bourdieu's work, stressing the place that the notion of practice occupies in his production. The second section is focused on the concept of *habitus* or practical sense, understood as structured sets of dispositions in which practices and representations are generated. The third section addresses the concept of field as

[9] Translation is mine.

it its conceived by Bourdieu. Fields are depicted as distinguishable, yet interrelated areas or social life with objects, positions, and logics of their own. The fourth section discusses the notion of symbolic violence, a landmark in Bourdieu's *oeuvre* that offers an intelligible formulation of the imposition of some cultural systems. The fifth section explores the implications of Bourdieu's model of social practice when addressing issues as organizational life, politics, social change, and the relations between the State and the Market. The sixth and final section points out the analytical paths enabled by Bourdieu's framework as a set of tools for an empirical approach to participation in the Third Sector.

4.1. The reproduction of social order in everyday life

A question that is worth to answer when trying to address the ways through which the existing order is maintained is that of the kind of relation between social order and everyday life. It is easy to agree that social order is sustained by the day-to-day actions of people (Colectivo Política en Red, 2007). Nevertheless, trying to specify how these daily activities allow for the reproduction of a given order is a complex task. Bourdieu's framework, which he justifies as an attempt to break the well established opposition between objective and subjective accounts of social reality, offers a set of concepts that is well rooted in a dialectical movement between empirical and theoretical work. According to Jenkins, the work of Bourdieu is defined by

> the attempt to understand how 'objective', supra-individual social reality (cultural and institutional social structure) and the internalised 'subjective' mental worlds of individuals as cultural beings and social actors are inextricably bound up together, each being a contributor to - and, indeed, an aspect of - the other (Jenkins, 1992, p. 19 y 20).

Hence, the French sociologist attempt to go beyond the alternative between mechanical determinism and finalism or free will, a false dilemma which at early stages of his work were represented by the structuralism of Lèvi-Strauss and the existentialism of Sartre.

The approach that Bourdieu developed through more than four decades of work based in detailed studies of fields such as art, education or gender has been labeled by the author himself as constructionist or genetic structuralism. Based on

a critical review of the works of Marx, Durkheim and Weber, he addresses social phenomena as an historical production. For most scholars, Bourdieu's main concepts are those of *habitus*, field, symbolic capital, and practices. *Habitus* and field stand respectively for the subjective and objective aspects of social life, while practices are the product of their relation and a condition for their reproduction. Symbolic capital, along with economical capital and other non-economical forms, allows for developing an account for the multiplicity of contests and conflictive relations that take place in different fields.

4.1.1. A theoretical model of social practices

As Touraine said, sociology does not observe social reality; instead, it observes practices (1974, in Sánchez de Horcajos, 1979). According to Jenkins (1992), Bourdieu's oeuvre can be better described as a progressive movement towards a theoretical model of social practices. Practices, which in other traditions are addressed with labels such as social interaction, daily life, or social behavior, are conceived by Bourdieu as the product of partially conscious processes that depend on a continuous learning process through which agents know, without actually knowing, what to do in every situation. In order to give a full account of how practices are produced, they need to be problematized. In Bourdieu's perspective, what individuals say, for instance, is neither an expression of their thoughts nor a valid description of reality. Words are more than samples of knowledge, and in terms of day-to-day life, they constitute forms of action. People do things with their speaking and a model of practices is needed to understand which kind of things are done through that speaking as well as the conditions required for this to happen.

4.1.2. Language as a social practice

The study of language as a social practice exemplifies what a model of practices is supposed to do. Bourdieu conceives language not only as an instrument of communication, but also as an instrument of power and action that, in all cases, has to be understood regarding the situations in which it is used. According to Bourdieu's point of view, there are key elements of language that are not taken into account in traditions such as semiotics. Among these neglected elements, one of the most important is the delimitation of the social conditions in which enunciations are produced, conditions upon which those productions acquire their

legitimacy. Another key issue is that of the ways in which individuals acquire competence as speakers, which are also tightly attached to social conditions. In this view, the acquisition and development of the practical knowledge people need for doing things with their speaking, that is, for being able to know when to speak, how to speak, and what to say, can be seen as a product of a dialectical relation. The elements of this dialectical relation are the objective structures and the structured dispositions in which those objective structures tend to be reproduced. The practices that those structured dispositions generate in each situations are the means for the reproduction of the objective structures. As this brief reference to language as a social practice shows, there is a serious attempt of Bourdieu to go beyond Austin's approach and widen his framework in order to establish the social conditions of possibility of language as a form of action.

4.2. Habitus

The notion of *habitus* is conceived by Bourdieu as a mediating entity between the objective conditions of existence and the practices that agents carry on in specific situations. This notion makes reference to a set of schemes or dispositions that are the product of past experiences. These dispositions work as a matrix that structures perceptions, appreciations, and actions of agents in every situation. The material conditions of existence that defines social classes and sub-classes produce these

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively "regulated" and "regular" without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an expressed mastery of the operations necessary to attain them and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor (Bourdieu, 1972, p. 72).

The sets of practical dispositions that conform the *habitus* are transmitted at an implicit level. They are acquired through a learning process based mainly on postures and gestures that express adult forms or behavior. These apparently spontaneous forms of inculcation make possible the transmission of a practical

domain. Although these basic principles of generation and perception are more strongly determined by the first socialization processes – those that usually take place during early childhood in an environment in which the family is the dominant referent –, results and consequences of further experiences provoke constant readjustments of some of these principles. The reach of these readjustments can vary, because the *habitus* functions according to the principle of analogical transference, an issue that will require further development in the next sections.

4.2.1. Strategies

A least partially, the concept of *habitus*, which can also be referred to as practical sense, was developed as a reaction to the role that rules had in structuralism. As can be seen in the quotation above, Bourdieu rejects rules as a valid explanation of how structures determine action. In his view, the diversity of situations in which an agent can be involved is so great that it makes practically impossible for any set of rules to cover all of its aspects. According to this, social life is not conceivable without improvisation from the part of the agents. Improvising is thus not a matter of choice, because there are no other options. But each improvisation has an organizing principle, a cue or direction that results from the operation of the *habitus*. Around every social situation, people develop and pursue strategies.

The notion of strategy, that has an important although not always recognized placed in the work of Bourdieu (Wilkis, 2004), has not to be understood in terms of rational, deliberate lines of action. As Bourdieu conceives it, the concept of strategy allows for an account of the systematicity and consistency of social practices through time. The principle of intelligibility of these practices, which depends on their sistematicity and consistency, is to be found in an objective intentionality that is deployed in different situations. Strategies are those objective orientations that, in the encounter of *habitus* and situation, narrow down what is possible to what is probable. During their deployment, these objective intentionalities do not have to be coincident with the subjective motives of agents. It is the *habitus*, as practical sense, that leads agents to an immediate appreciation of the situation and also to an immediate response (Bourdieu, 1980).

4.2.2. Pre-reflexivity

The *habitus* is hidden for the agent in as much as the practices it produces are well-adjusted to other practices and structures. Usually, there is no deliberate

effort from the part of the agent in front of a given situation, to make sense of it and play his role. In other words, practices are not consciously organized and performed – at least not entirely, because of the level at which they are acquire –, but they are not a matter of chance nor they occur randomly. Practices respond to the practical sense that defines the *habitus*. A metaphor that Bourdieu uses to explain this pre-reflexive quality of the practical sense is that of the feel for the game, a sense that implies "the practical mastery of the logic or of the imminent necessity of a game – a mastery acquired by experience of the game, and one which works outside conscious control" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 59).

The concepts of *habitus* and strategy can thus be characterized by (1) the place of the *habitus* as mediator between the conditions of existence and the production of practices; (2) the strategical character that practices have; and (3) the pre-reflexive nature of their unfolding. A crucial implication of these characteristics is that they require for the study of social activity to abandon models such as that of the rational agent or that of the mechanical execution. On one hand, the model of the rational agent, it assumes that action is based on a rational calculus of probabilities of success. On the other hand, the model of mechanical execution is based in the idea that action is always prescribed by a set of rules in which improvisation is not conceivable. Both models are incapable of offering an accurate account of that link between social order and everyday life.

4.2.3. Corporeal nature

In a manner similar to that of Foucault, Bourdieu rejects an intellectualistic approach that conceives power only in terms of representation. Based on the assumption that the body is the main target of power, the place of the *habitus* as the generator of practices and representations implies that it is integrated by the "prelinguistic, embodied structures that give stability and intelligibility to human action" (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1992, p. 35). In this sense, it would be a mistake to think of this practical sense in terms of ideology or beliefs, when, in fact, beliefs are a product of the generative side of the *habitus*. Dispositions are located at a more basic level, one that includes postures and gestures that are acquired by means of a process of learning through the body, in which appearance, clothing, and spatial distributions are fundamental pieces. This is why the *habitus* can also be referred to as socialized bodies. It is not that the individual remembers his past

experience as a guide for action; it is the body that revives the social necessities that it has internalized in the form of corporal automatisms. The *habitus*, as socialized bodies, operates beyond the level of representations.

4.2.4. Cultural reproduction

The practical sense of the social world is an integral part of the production and reproduction of that world. In as much as the *habitus* determines what is recognizable and the form of the recognition, it defines the horizon of possibilities that an agent can grasp from the field of objective potentialities. In this sense, any situation is partially a product of the structuring activity of the *habitus*. But the productive side of the *habitus* goes beyond the confinement of the scope of possibilities. Practices, as well as interests and motivations are produced in the dialectic relation among structure, *habitus* and situation (Sánchez de Horcajos, 1979). A major consequence of this is that practices cannot be exclusively deduced from the solely situations in which they are produced nor from the determinations that defined their generating principle.

Similar conditions of existence produce similar systems of dispositions. This similarity among *habitus* that are produced in proximal environments generates a harmonization of the practices that those *habitus* generate. This is why practices of people that belong to the same group or share similar conditions of existence are perceived as obvious and evident for that people. This immediate intelligibility depends on a specific rationality, a pre-established sense, that transcends individual motivations and explicit goals. In as much as the *habitus* is the place in which the internalization of the exterior and the externalization of the interior take place simultaneously, the practices it produces tend to reproduce the regularities that define the objective conditions in which it was generated. The *habitus* is then the most important factor of cultural reproduction.

The *habitus* are exhaustive in their reproductive attempts, and this exhaustiveness, which is unconsciously routinized, tends to advance over areas of social life others than those in which the *habitus* have been generated. Symbolic actions, traditionally considered only in terms of its communicative function, become in this view a crucial dimension of the reproduction of the social order.

To understand how reproduction works, it is worth to put under the table the productive side of power. As said above, power innovates but only in directions

that creates the conditions for its own necessity. The maintenance of power relations requires from power the advance over different aspects of social life. Hence, the paradox of conservation through innovations is only apparent in the sense that reproduction generates changes in specific places but the joint effects, the matrix of social relations, remains basically the same.

Social reproduction does not take place at one level; it is carried out in the specificity of different social domains by means of cultural or symbolic reproduction. In order to understand this movement or transference of a *habitus* for its original domain to other domains, as well as the implications this transference has, the concept of field, as Bourdieu understands it, becomes indispensable.

4.3. Fields

As a mean of going beyond the limits of the concept of social class, Bourdieu offers his particular version of the concept of field. There are several areas or spheres of social life, each of them characterized by different practices. The concept of field makes sense of these areas in terms of the relational nature of the positions that agents and productions occupy in them. According to this, a field is conceived as a structured universe in which the position of each agent at a given time is defined by its opposition to rest of agents. A field, to be considered as such, requires the inclusion of certain objects at stake and people willing to play the particular game that defines it. To be involved in a field, people has to possess the *habitus* that makes possible the recognition or the rules and objects immanent to that game (Boudieu, 1984).

A field delimits the kind of interaction that can take place among agents involved in it, but it is more than the product of the interaction among those agents. In every field, there is a tacit agenda that includes some issues on which discussions are possible, and the principles of reasoning that are adequate to those issues. This implies that a whole region of issues is excluded from the field, not as a result of a prohibition, but because they cannot be thought of in that field. It has to be said, though, that fields are dynamic in that their limits are never clearly defined and its own 'rules of the game' are always included in that same game. Their diffuse frontiers and the possibility of redefining their principles make of fields malleable spaces in which fights over the delimitation of their rules are always present.

One major gain with Bourdieu's conception of field is that it takes into account not only the productions that define each field, but also the processes through which those productions come into being and are consumed, the institutions and individual agents that have a part in the process, and the acquired dispositions that are required in the process.

4.3.1. Relative autonomy

One of the most interesting properties of a field is that of its relative autonomy regarding other fields. In general terms, the variable degree of independence of each field can be seen as the result of its dependence on other fields. This relative autonomy can be better understood by making reference to a sort of incomplete homology among fields. Homology, in spite of being incomplete, allows the different fields to establish correspondences among them. The incompleteness of this homology implies the presence of twists or incongruities in which the specificity of the logic of each field is founded. In this view, incomplete homologies are the basis upon which cooperative as well as conflictive relations among fields can blossom.

Every field has explicit and implicit functions. Some of these functions have sense in their relation to other fields, while others belong to the logic of the field itself. These functions can be related but only through a process in which those demands that are external to the field are translated into the logic of the field, thus being obscured, covered by an appearance of neutrality. The degree of autonomy of a field depends on its capabilities for defining its own forms of production and for translating and reinterpreting external determinations in terms of its own logic. A field possesses a history and a pace of its own that cannot be reduced to those of the overarching social and economical structures. In their study of the French scholar system, Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) offer a detailed analysis of the implications of the relative autonomy of a specific field like that of the school.

4.3.2. Inwards and outwards reproduction

Being articulable with the notion of field, the image of power as a matrix resulting from the joint effect of different centers of power can find in the analytical language of Bourdieu a path for addressing power phenomena in empirical terms. A vision of the social system as an ongoing, never complete result of the struggles and alliances among the fields that are part of it focuses our attention toward the

role of the specificities of each field in its relations with the other fields. The form of the social system and its reproduction are regulated by the way fields are related to each other. The scholar system, for instance, while reproducing itself – its own power relations –, reproduces the elements of other fields with which it has an interdependent relation – external power relations that are a condition of possibility for the scholar system. The reproduction of relations of a given field includes the production of the resources and conditions it requires. Simultaneously, these resources and conditions make possible the function of external reproduction.

The reproductive function of a field has a legitimating effect. It translates into its own language or logic the hierarchical structure of relations that belongs to other fields. Whether or not the *habitus* produced by a given field are translated into others depends on the position of the field in relation to the global set of interwoven fields of a given society. When conflicts that emerge as a consequence of the differences produced by the partial autonomy among fields go beyond what the whole social system can tolerate, global pressures appear. Those global pressures force the adaptation of the challenging field to the main trends, or assimilate its innovations so that they can be compatible with the social system.

But the advances of the *habitus* of a field over other fields are not always fought back. When they are aligned with the directions of the joint effects of the fields as a whole, they can easily move forward in their transference. And there is also a third case in which the differences or specificities of a field, despite of being contrary to the main trends, do not go beyond the levels of tolerance. In this case, the objective structures of the field, as well as its symbolic structures can be reproduced in a sort of partial isolation.

4.3.3. Markets and competition

Fields function as markets in which different kinds of goods are at stake. The idea of fields functioning as markets entails a conflictive vision of society in which every social space is crossed by inequities in terms of property of resources, and each position is specified by its relations to other positions. According to this vision, there is a fight in every field, a competition in which the accumulation of different forms of capital is the main driving force. As Bourdieu said, in an interview with Terry Eagleton, the structure of almost every field is such that the quest for

domination is practically unavoidable and undistorted communication is always an exception (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1991).

The relevance of conflict in the dynamics of a field can be addressed through the lens of economical thought. In this view, fields are markets of different kinds of goods. These goods are controlled by hierarchies that produce the goods with the highest prices and, in the process, seek to assure its position in their specific fields. The types of goods that are valuable in any field are not only those that have a material, measurable nature; even the acquired dispositions that integrate the *habitus* can be translated into objectified capabilities with different prices. The accumulation of resources is referred here as capital.

4.3.4. Forms of capital

There are different forms of capital: (1) economic capital, which has been institutionalized as property rights and can be easily convertible into money; (2) cultural capital, which includes dispositions and skills, the product of the institutionalization of some of those skills in the form of academic credentials and titles, and, in his material form, diverse cultural goods; (3) social capital, which includes the social relationships that can be mobilized according to particular interests, and (4) symbolic capital, which consist of the representations of the other forms of capital, that are produced by the dispositions of perception, classification and appreciation of the *habitus*.

These forms of capital can be converted one into another, through processes that require a certain expenditure of resources. The way in which these forms are combined defines different structures of capital. Besides, the amount and structure of capital depend on the precedent social trajectory through which it has been acquired. The proximities and similarities among these dimensions – capital, amount, structure and trajectory – allows for the reconstruction of the classes and sub-classes that define a social space as a symbolic artifact that is helpful when trying to understand domination, conflict, and reproduction in that social space.

In as much as fields are structured depending on their specific forms of capital, they are hierarchically organized in terms of an uneven distribution of the kind of resources that are valued in each of them. In this distribution, there are orthodox groups that occupy a privileged position and develop strategies intended to

reproduce the current distribution and heterodox groups that seek to change that distribution for another in which they have a more privileged position.

4.3.5. Resistance

Reproduction, as the preservation of a field, but also as the transference of a *habitus* to fields other than its own, generates resistance. According to the view of fields as interrelated markets in which different kinds of goods and specific *habitus* are produced, resistance does not necessarily imply subversion. Any given social space can be an arena in which different agents in different positions fight over the legitimate definition of the principles that organize such space.

When resistances appear as subversive strategies, those in a dominated position deploy certain practices in order to invert the hierarchies of a given field. These strategies do not work against the principles in which the hierarchies are founded; they are based on those principles. This is why going back to the sources or founding principles of a field is one of the most common strategies. What is at stake here is the definitions of the boundaries of a field, what belongs to it and what does not belong. Orthodoxy exerts its conservative action by disqualifying the productions of the heterodox group as a mean of putting them out of the field in which the contest is taking place.

A key issue regarded to resistance under the scope of social practices as understood by Bourdieu is that of the awareness. As opposed to other ways of understanding resistance, it has to be said that it is not just a matter of awareness. Even in those cases in which someone gets to partially recognize his own practical sense, the recognition does not imply that aware agents can get rid of that practical sense. The primary *habitus*, acquired in the household, defines the fields that an agent immediately perceives as worth to get involved in. Later on, the process of socialization in different fields fosters the acquisition of some dispositions while inhibits others. The most important implication of this is that *habitus* change only as long as the conditions in which they are acquired and generate their practices change as well. Besides, in order to succeed, subversive strategies need to be supported by the scope of possibilities that are conceivable in the field in which they take place. Moreover, beyond the limits of the field itself, these kinds of strategies requires some degree of synchronization with events extern to the field. This combination of internal possibilities and external events is

what can settle the ground for an eventual change in the structure of prices of the kind of goods that define a field.

From the point of view of reproduction as the opposite to subversion, the functioning of the *habitus,* as the subjective correlates of the fields to which they belong, provides a key mechanism through which the order of things can be preserved. Assuring that the *habitus* remain basically unchanged is also assuring the perpetuation of the structure of their fields. This implies a careful and systematic effort of inculcation.

4.4. Symbolic violence

In a way similar to that of Foucault, Bourdieu insists in avoiding the term ideology because of the often diffuse and ambiguous ways in which it is used. Instead of talking about ideology, Bourdieu prefers to use the terms 'symbolic violence' or 'symbolic domination'. These terms make reference to the imposition of a cultural arbitrary, a system of life styles – representations and practices – that is considered legitimate in a given society. There are many forms of symbolic violence. Some of them reach a high level of sophistication that allows the culture that is being imposed to defeat the resistance that antagonist cultures can offer. When successfully exercised, the legitimating effect of symbolic violence not only implies the victory of the dominant culture over the antagonist cultures, it also gets the submission of the bearers of those antagonist cultures. This submission is achieved as a result of the reproductive capacity of the *habitus*, which generates in different fields and environments practices and representations similar to those of the original field of the dominant culture.

4.4.1. Legitimation of cultural arbitraries

The arbitrariness of every cultural system comes from the fact that none of them can be ascribed to universal principles, and yet each claims to be founded on them. There are not biological or physical factors upon which the meanings that define a dominant culture can claim to find the basis for its universal character. This does not mean that the process through which a cultural form acquires its dominant position occurs in a randomly manner. Cultural arbitrary is the product of specific social conditions. In this view, dominant cultural forms appear as necessary, as naturally suitable, in as much as they serve as a principle for the intelligibility of the relations and functions they bind. A cultural arbitrariness that

occupies a dominant position in a given society owes its position to the force relations among the groups or classes of that society. This is why the dominant cultural arbitrariness is the one that better expresses the objective interests of the dominant groups or classes of that society.

Symbolic domination legitimates certain cultural forms, specific constellations of meanings, concealing the relations of force in which those meanings are founded. The symbolic power that results of the legitimation process is then added to the power of the social relations in which it is originated. The imposition of the arbitrariness is then double: through the legitimation of a culture, the relations of power are legitimated too (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970).

4.4.2. Pedagogical action

Symbolic violence is exercised through what Bourdieu calls pedagogical action (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). Whether diffuse and exercised by the elite members of a group, or formalized through institutions as the school, symbolic violence exerts its symbolic effect by means of communication. This communicative exercise is, at the same time, an imposition of the arbitrariness in which it is founded, that is, of the social conditions that make the inculcation possible. These social conditions are no other than the power relations among the groups of a social formation.

The relative success of pedagogical action requires of these power relations to be kept out of any formal definition of the process of inculcations, which only considers its communicative side. The degree of efficacy of pedagogical action depends on the distance between the *habitus* that is going to be transferred and the *habitus* that the target has acquired during his first years or by his involvement in other fields.

4.4.3. Doxic experience

In terms of its effects, symbolic domination is linked with a widely known concept of the French sociologist: the *doxa*. The concept of *doxa* emphasizes the results of the processes of naturalization and universalization of some ideas. The *doxa* can be distinguished from the concept of ideology because the *doxa* does not need to draw a dividing line between conscience and false conscience, as occurs within the Marxist tradition. As the product of the naturalization of certain cultural

arbitraries, the *doxic* experience conveys the illusion of immediate comprehension of the familiar universe. This experience, which renders the world unproblematic for the agent, results from the processes of socialization through which individuals acquire the practical cultural competencies needed in the same familiar universe. Among other things, these competencies include a sense of social identity that specifies the position occupied by agents in the social space. Thus, the *doxic* experience is the result of the coincidence between symbolic and objective structures and, simultaneously, the unproblematic assumption of that coincidence.

Discomfort and unrest are a noticeable consequence of symbolic violence. The *doxic* experience that results of a symbolic imposition implies a hidden suffering behind an apparently unproblematic functioning of the *habitus* (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994). *Doxic* attitude does not imply 'happiness'; it implies submission, and this submission is somehow experienced, even if it is at corporal and unconscious level only.

The relevance of the concept of *doxa* and its implications can be better understood in relation to that of false consciousness. In the marxist tradition, false consciousness is thought of as the result of ideological control from the dominant class over the proletariat. The marxist approach to this inculcated incapacity of the members of a dominated class to recognize their objective situation finds continuity in some recent efforts like that of Lukes' radical approach to power. In an attempt to include in the analysis of power relations those situations in which there is an apparent coincidence of interests among those involved, Lukes (1974) proposes to seriously consider the possibility that behind that apparent coincidence of interests, an objective conflict of interests might be found. Albeit the idea of an objective conflict of interests offers an interesting way of looking to the unfolding of collective undertakings in particular settings, the limits of Lukes' approach lie in the implications of the marxist tradition in which it is based. The limits are to be founded in the necessity of recurring to a form of consciousness that is opposed to the false consciousness in order to bring that objective conflict of interest to the surface. Instead of a contraposition between consciousness and false consciousness, what we might find is a more complex, imbalanced confrontation of different forms of making conflicts intelligible.

4.4.4. Compliance

Contrary to what seems obvious, the legitimating processes through which dominant forces attempt to maintain their status does not imply a passive role from those whose consent is required. Paradoxically, those that are situated in the dominated side of any social field need to exert some effort in order to apprehend and, thus, accept the dominant power. This effort demands the development of specific capabilities and, most important, the definition of one's own place in front of those in a dominant position (Bourdieu and Eagleton, 1994). No doubt this work of social production is not even and equally distributed. There is a *de facto* division of work in the social production, and this division gives place to different forms of experience. It is through power relations that those in a dominated position acquire the skills needed to make sense of their own position in a manner compatible with the legitimate definition of the field. This is the basis that sustains the complicity between both sides of the power relation, and, in general terms, it consists of a practical compliance that is settled in the body.

4.5. Using Bourdieu's approach

The previous sections of this chapter have offered a brief description of some key analytical concepts regarded to the reproduction of relations of power. These concepts are crucial in that the wide conception of power discussed in Chapter 3 can find in them a path toward an empirical approach to power phenomena in the articulation participation-Third Sector. In order to highlight this path, we are going to discuss some of the implications of Bourdieu's theory of social practice regarding organizations and politics as objects of study.

4.5.1. Organizations as fields

According to Vázquez García (2002), different forms of organizations, along with the spheres of production related to them, function as fields. Far from a conception of organizations as monolithic blocks, when approached as fields, the limits of these social formations become blurred. Organizations as fields appear more as spaces in which agents whose positions as dominating or dominated can be identified struggle against each other in order to keep the legitimate definition of the field or to change it, respectively. From the point of view of symbolic domination, it is worth to pay attention to the ways in which the functioning of organizations assures the conditions of possibility for pedagogical action or its

equivalents to happen. This is particularly crucial with regard to (1) the roles that agents play, (2) the ways in which they acquire the practical senses that lead their roles, and (3) the skills needed for the performance of those roles. Again, this cannot be conceived as a deliberated process. Symbolic imposition, which turns power relations into accepted and natural representations, operates beyond the conscience of both the dominated and the dominant groups.

Organizations, as any field, have their own corps of specialists, authorized for the exercise of its functions, and equipped with the competencies and resources their work requires. The *habitus* of agents that are able to exert the functions of a given field have necessarily to be modeled by the logic of the field itself. Moreover, the functioning of the *habitus* needs to assure the exclusion of practices that are not compatible with their reproductive tasks. The degree at which the authorized exercise of the functions is monopolized can vary from field to field, as well as the capacity of the field for producing its own agents. When this capacity is high, an observer is likely to find rigorous, standardized procedures for the selection, training and control of agents. When this capacity is low, the field requires the importation of agents formed in other fields. In these cases, the dependence of the field will be higher.

4.5.2. Politics

As can be advanced, some of the most relevant implications of Foucault's conception of power and Bourdieu's approach to social reality can be found with regard to politics. According to Ibáñez (1982) politics, as the result of the relations of force among positions characterized by its preference for different alternatives of action, include those mechanisms, institutions and practices through which collective decisions and its implementation are carried out. These processes imply a permanent tension between unity and diversity, one in which everyone pushes for its option to be the one that is chosen. Decision making procedures, as a crucial mean for dealing with this diversity, are developed as a mean of avoiding or minimize the potential conflict that these collective decisions imply. Since these procedures appear as a result of the relations of force that they intend to solve, they tend to keep the inequities in which they are founded.

4.5.3. Social change

Considering the expansive nature of power or, at a more specific level, the way the different fields manage to reproduce themselves, it is not futile to ask how change is possible, and what kind of links exists between the organizations of those decision making processes and the conservation or eventual change of the power relations in a given field. A change in the order of a field cannot take place only in terms of a modification of current representations. This kind of change necessarily implies changes at the level of the dispositions that generate practices and representations, and at the level of the social conditions in which those dispositions are generated.

A good example of the links among conditions, dispositions, and practices is that of Vázquez García (2002), who says that in order to have an opinion on political affairs, people require a kind of competencies and skills traditionally linked to an individualistic life style. While this kind of skills appears frequently in the so-called 'middle class', it can be difficult to find among members of the working class. From a wider perspective, thinkers like Castoriadis (1996) have consistently underlined that any political order requires from its institutions to produce the kind of subjects that are suitable to it. In this sense, there is an array of questions that make sense only in a conception that is capable of dealing, at a detailed level, with the ways in which practices in specific domains of social life take part in that production and the power relations inherent to those practices.

In consonance with Foucault's view on power, Bourdieu argues for a pluralist approach to relations of domination. Domination, in his view, is not the direct result of the activity of the dominant class, but an effect of a network of changing, conflictive interactions among different fields. The processes of specialization and division of work that characterize modern societies and give place to differentiated and partially autonomous fields do not come alone. It carries with it a process of gradual division in the work of domination that leads to a dispersion of power and increases the possibilities of crisis and conflict as well as the simultaneous formation of alliances – not necessarily in a deliberated way – among fields.

This approach makes sense in front of a complex political scenario which, according to the Colectivo Politica en Red (2007), is characterized by (1) the decline of traditional democratic institutions; (2) the rise of locally-based resistance

initiatives; (3) the growing importance of daily life as a territory in which common values are expressed without explicit links to social movements; and (4) the search for new forms of political action.

4.5.4. The Market and the State

As discussed by Bourdieu (2000), the relation between Market and State is a good example of this complex, pluralist and mobile network upon which power effects rely. Instead of thinking in the Public and Private Sectors as opposites, an historical analysis reveals the role of the State in the process of autonomization of the Market, which in turn results in a growing lost of autonomy of the State. The progressive privatization of political decision making that results from the long-range effects of trade agreements is but a sample of how a field can grow over another.

The space between the Public and Private Sectors is, in this view, a privileged place to deal with the complex encounters among fields and their effects, because of (1) the diversity of agents involved, (2) their multiple forms of experience, (3) the search for understanding among different experiences of political fight, and (4) the problems and possibilities that arise with emergent movements and forms of organization. On one hand, hierarchical forms of organization in which some institutional constraints assure minimal mechanisms of accountability for those in which power is delegated are still the most numerous. On the other, there is growth of horizontal and decentralized forms of organization in which power is less visible because of their diffuse character.

In this space, in which blurred forms of collective action appear as different to those of the State or the Market – though, by no means independent of them –, conflicting visions on how decisions have to be made coexist. Moreover, efforts to control or influence key issues out or beyond the spaces in which decisions are supposed to be made are likely to be founded. The concept of micro-politics, understood as a hidden organizational world which include “those strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests” (Hoyle, 1982, p. 87) puts under the scope the relevance of processes that operate out of the public spheres and still define what happens in them. In some cases, these hidden processes can render the public decision making pointless.

4.6. Third Sector and participation through practices

Throughout this chapter, we have offered a synthetic but – we hope – meaningful overview of Bourdieu's main concepts, the relations among them, and the kind of look they enable. Foucault's perspective on power has been useful in stressing that power phenomena is present in every social phenomenon and, more accurately, that the specificity of power phenomena is always regarded to the specificity of the social phenomena to which those power phenomena are inherent. Bourdieu's in turn has provided us with a set of analytical concepts that can help us to empirically address that inherent character in the participation–Third Sector articulation.

The varying correspondence between the *habitus*, in their double role of structured structures and structuring structures, and the fields, as relatively autonomous systems of interrelated positions, with objects and logics of their own, allows us to address specific situations in a way that puts those situations within greater trends. The key characteristic of the *habitus* is that they lead agents involved in those situations to configure them as belonging to specific fields by means of an immediate apprehension of what is at stake in those situations. In doing so, the *habitus* serve as the basis for the never fully conscious strategies in which the intelligibility of practices deployed by those agents can be found.

This conception of the relation between social order and everyday life opens the door for an analytical approach to that articulation between participation and the Third Sector. Such articulation has thus to be addressed as an ongoing achievement that is sustained by certain practices deployed by agents with certain positions, according to a specific logic or sense. A focus on practices, as the always situated generative expression of the *habitus*, appears as an effective way for reconstructing the intentionalities to which those practices are attached and the specificity of the areas of social life to which they belong.

The fields, as historical products that result of internal and external struggles and, simultaneously, define the spaces and directions of those struggles, are crucial in that reconstruction. By underscoring the objective structures in which the unbalances and asymmetries that characterize those struggles are rooted, the concept of field offers us a framework for identifying and understanding the relations of power that are inherent to the articulation between participation and

Third Sector as a crucial element of a distinctive area of social life. Besides, Bourdieu's perspective on struggles among fields provides a basis for understanding the connections between the asymmetries that characterize the area of social life in which we are interested and the areas of social life that seem to be closely related to it. Struggles among fields are conceived as the outcome of the attempts of each field to expand itself over others fields by introducing its own logics and redefining its boundaries. According to this conception, it might be important to seek for the advances of logics that belong to other fields over the articulation between the Third Sector and participation and their effects regarding the degree of autonomy of the field in which this articulation is produced. In this sense, the roles of the Market and the State as conflictive, yet somehow collaborative fields seem of uttermost importance regarding the relative autonomy of the Third Sector. Hence, inquiring about the degree of autonomy of the Third Sector, the conflictive relations through which it is sustained, and the role that participation plays becomes a crucial task.

As for the preservation of a given social order, the notion of symbolic violence occupies a central place regarding the reproduction of that order. In reproducing their own objective and subjective structures, fields and *habitus* tend to reproduce the relations of power in which they are founded. The necessary character of the links between *habitus* and fields in this reproductive task is particularly crucial in the legitimating function by which an arbitrary cultural system is inculcated. This highlights the role of the articulation between participation and Third Sector regarding efforts of preservation and change, the ways in which they are produced, and their effects. In this view, the activities through which that articulation is achieved – activities that take place in specific settings – have to be addressed in terms of their own characteristics and their connections with distant places and wider tendencies.

As for more delimited issues that seem to occupy an important place regarding the Third Sector, Bourdieu's perspective allows us to underline the place of language and decision making. Language, as an instrument of communication, action, and power, appears as the basis upon which situations are given shape and direction, including the struggles unfolded in those situations. A careful analysis of the uses of language in those situations in which participation in the Third Sector is enacted is thus a requisite for rendering intelligible the tacit aspects in the configuration of

these situations and in the unfolding of the struggles that take place in them. As for decision making, its outstanding role in practically every conception of participation as well as its links with organizational arrangements and political issues makes of this a key issue. The interplay between what specific practices of decision making facilitate and constraint seems to be at the core of the enactments of participation in the Third Sector. Both issues, language in use in participative activities, and decision making, will be addressed in the following chapter as areas of inquiry of particular interest.

Bourdieu's main concepts offer us a path for addressing that tight tissue of practices and situations, in terms of the specific fields and practical senses in which they are rooted. It is our work to find out which practices, in which conditions, and with which effects are at the core of the apparently obvious necessity of being participative that characterize the Third Sector, and the power relations they entail.

5. Nondecisions and framing activities

Chapter 5 is the last of the three chapters in which the theoretical framework of this study is presented and discussed. With the purpose of underscoring specific issues regarding the articulation Third Sector-participation, this chapter presents Bachrach and Baratz's idea of nondecision and Goffman's frame analysis. While Goffman's approach, specially his concept of footing, has been included as a mean for the study of nondecision processes in activities explicitly devoted to decision making, the scope of its applicability includes most participatory activities undertaken by TS organizations, particularly those that constitute non-ordinary events.

The first section of the chapter describes the idea of nondecision and the context in which it was proposed, highlighting its necessary role with regard to the study of collective decision making. The second section discusses the applicability of nondecision when addressing specifics phenomena, stressing the limits of the idea as it was proposed in the first time and proposing its reinterpretation so that it can be used in a more analytical manner. The third section continues with the task of providing specific analytical paths by presenting Goffman's set of concepts for analyzing how social encounters are given a frame. The fourth and final section underlines the look that both the idea of nondecision and Goffman's frame analysis enable, and the relevance of the phenomena they address as specific features of the articulation between participation and the Third Sector. The chapter concludes with some commentaries regarding the links between the contents of the three chapters that compose our theoretical framework, and the specific lines of inquiry that are based on them.

5.1. Beyond decision making

During the decade of 1960 in the United States, Peter Bachrach, a political scientist, and Morton S. Baratz, an economist, directed their research efforts to address issues of power that were out of the scope of precedent approaches. As Lukes (1974) clearly describes, the work of the aforementioned authors can be located in the middle of discussions about the nature and dimensions of political power and community participation in decision making in which sociologists and political scientists were involved from the late 1950's to the 1970's. The confronted approaches in such debates are usually referred to as (1) elitist, (2) pluralist, (3) neo-elitist, and (4) radical. Bachrach and Baratz are considered the authors of the neo-elitist approach.

Assuming that a decision always implies activity directed to the choice among alternatives (Rossi, 1958, in Bachrach and Baratz, 1970), these authors affirmed that the exercise of power could take place in spaces other than the political arenas in which decisions are made. The shift regarding previous approaches was crucial, because it added complexity to a subject that had been addressed as if it was transparent and evident. The pluralist approach is clearly characterized by this assumption of transparency. In the view of Robert A. Dahl (1961), its most outstanding exponent, democracy in policy making was practically verified in the wide variety of settings in which community decision making took place and attempts to find a ruling elite behind those spaces had no empirical support. While recognizing the advances that the pluralist approach offered to the study of power, Bachrach and Baratz found that there were some aspects of power that the pluralist approach was incapable to deal with. It is true that

> power is exerted when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. To the extent that A succeeds in doing this, B is prevented, for all practical purposes, from bringing to the fore any issues that might in their resolution be seriously detrimental to A's set of preferences (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962, p. 948).

In order to offer an account of the ways in which power is exercised outside the decision making arenas and build a more accurate approach to political power, Bachrach and Baratz proposed to add the study of nondecisions to the study of decision making.

5.1.1. Nondecisions

The idea of nondecision has become familiar in the studies of community power as mean of dealing with what its authors saw as a misrepresentation of local politics in the United States (Debnam, 1975). A nondecision is “a decision that results in suppression or thwarting of a latent or manifest challenge to the values or interests of the decision-maker” (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970, p. 44). Nondecisions are made when demands for change in a given setting are silenced before they can be proposed. When this occurs, those demands for change never gain access to the decision making arena and thus never get a place in the political agenda. The process of making a nondecision consists of mobilizing values, norms, and procedures in a given institutional setting so that the scope of decision making can be restricted to issues that are not threatening for those in a dominant position. When a nondecision making process is successfully executed, people involved can never consider it as a decision or relate it to one.

In this sense, a group has power in as much as it is capable of creating or sustaining barriers to the public display of certain conflicts or demands. For Bachrach and Baratz (1962), a possibility that cannot be overestimated is that of a greater participation of some groups in supporting the nondecision processes than in supporting the making of effective decisions. If a silenced issue finally gets to be brought into the fore and gains a place in the political agenda, the decision making process occupies the field that the nondecision making process was previously occupying (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963).

5.1.2. Organizing nondecisions

Bachrach and Baratz constructed the notion of nondecision as particular case of the 'mobilization of bias', a term that makes reference to those processes that allow some conflicts to emerge and suppress others. The mobilization of bias is a crucial idea because it is not understood as a characteristic that a given political organization can or cannot have, but as the founding logic of any organization. In this sense, the very organization is the mobilization of bias (Schattschneider,

1960, in Bachrach and Baratz, 1962). The idea that nondecisions are a specific form of mobilization of bias is crucial for any empirical approach to nondecisions.

5.1.3. Decisionless decisions

A related notion that Bachrach and Baratz include in their book *Power and Poverty*, is that of decisionless decision, which refers to the incremental process through which a series of decisions are successively made. Many policy choices are

> made in the absence of a clear-cut once-for-all decision. The simply “happen,” in the sense that certain steps are taken that are necessary but preliminary to a decision, and the sequence of steps acquires (as the saying goes) a life of its own. [...] In any event, when incrementalism does produce a major policy change, the political analyst must take care not to assign full responsibility for the change to those who participated in the last few incremental choices (Bachrach and Baratz, 1970, p. 42-43)

As in the case of nondecisions, Bachrach and Baratz are underlining some constraints that determine, by their influence out of the scope of a specific decision making activities, the outcomes of the decision itself. The idea of decisionless decision is thus crucial in that it underlines the relevance of the events that precede any decision making activity.

5.2. Studying nondecisions

One of the major arguments that researchers on political power held against each other during the period in which the debate among elitist, pluralist, neo-elitist, and radical approaches took place is the accusation of using approaches in which the findings and possible conclusions of empirical research are previously determined by the concepts and methods applied. Dahl's critics to the elitist approach are a good example of this. By the late 1950's, sociological research in the U.S. had the assumption that power was highly centralized. In any political organization a power structure stable over time was likely to be found. In front of this assumption, the pluralist approach underlined the relatively unstable and diffuse character of power, and the role that the formation and breakup of coalitions and alliances played over time. According to the pluralists, instead of asking 'Who rules here?' researchers should ask 'Does any one at all rules here?'

In the same line, Bachrach and Baratz's criticize the pluralist approach because of its apparently convenient selection of the issues in which empirical research was conducted. This is one of the most important critics that Bachrach and Baratz made to the pluralist approach. In their view, Dahl's approach had no criteria for making distinctions between important and unimportant issues.

This form of critique was crucial because it allowed those involved in the debate to underline those features that the precedent approach was no able to take into account. Regarding the work of Bachrach and Baratz, Lukes (1974) pointed out the incapacity of the nondecisions framework for dealing with hidden conflict. According to Lukes, the interests of those affected by nondecision processes do not need to be evident for themselves. In these cases, nondecisions are made with the compliance of the dominated side of the relation, a situation that in Bachrach and Baratz approach is hard to identify. But Bachrach and Baratz also faced a different kind of critique. Since nondecisions imply an exclusion of certain issues of arenas of decision and thus make reference to an absence, the study of nondecision would necessarily imply the observation of a non-event. The authors tackled the critique by affirming that nondecisions are anything but non-events.

5.2.1. Nondecisions as processes

Nondecisions are not directly accessible; they come into being through a series of processes which include delays, anticipated renunciations, and the impossibility to put some issues under the table (Clegg, 1989). In other words, while a nondecision is not observable, the nondecision making process is, and it is so through the identification of latent issues and the mobilization of bias around those issues (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963). This is why any research effort that is intended to address the nondecision processes at an empirical level has to start with a step back from participation in specific decision making processes. First of all, researches need to analyze the values, rules, and procedures of the decisional context – their organizational arrangements – in order to give an account of the ways in which these aspects benefit some groups and constraint others. The next step consists of finding out the ways in which those that are benefited with the nondecision act upon the elements that make the nondecision possible. Once that these two steps are covered, researchers are in a position that allows them for

distinguishing key from routine issues, a last step that enables them to analyze decision making on specific issues.

5.2.2. Analytical potential

While the ideas of nondecision and decisionless decision seem to be useful because of their capacity of raising awareness on a more subtle side of the exercise of power, it is still necessary to point out some of their limitations. In general terms, these limitations can be found in the difficulty of using them for understanding how the phenomena they are referred to is unfolded. As Debnam (1975) points out, the idea of nondecision constitutes a valuable sensitizing resource but, at least in the formulation of Bachrach and Baratz, it can hardly be used as an analytical concept.

In our view, the lack of analytic usefulness of these ideas is derived to a large extent from the way in which Bachrach and Baratz understand power. At the basis of their conception of power, the authors have made what in our view constitutes a premature set of distinctions among power and other related concepts. According to these distinctions, power, force, influence, deception and authority are different things. In its specific sense, that is limited to the taxonomy the authors propose, if the term power is substituted with the term threatens, the framework of Bachrach and Baratz remains practically the same. As usual during those years, these distinctions were barely justified as a useful election for the analysis of empirical material, and discussions at the conceptual level were limited in their scope. Furthermore, Bachrach and Baratz use the term power both in its general and specific senses regarding defined issues and settings, in which agents involved are somehow close to each other and, as seen before, conflictive interests are evident. Anyway, what is at stake beyond never ending debates on how to name each type of power is the nature of power and how some assumptions that are implicit in the way that nature is understood can undermine the possibility of dealing with forms of power that are not so obvious. The analytical capacity of the concept of nondecision can be notably expanded if it is reinterpreted in a wider perspective of power, like the one that has been presented in Chapter 3.

5.2.3. A wider framework

Nondecisions and decisionless decisions can increase their scope by being reinterpreted according to an approach to power that does not require from those

involved to have a proximal relationship and an overt conflict of interests. The challenge here is to locate decision making, nondecision processes, and decisionless decisions in an area of the always changing local worlds in which alliances, tactics and deceptions make the day and, simultaneously, make clear their connections with the continuity and stability of the joint effects of all areas. The task is complex, because it requires of the researcher to offer an account of decisions and nondecisions in a way that reflects the specificity of the areas of social life in which they are inserted. Otherwise, the resulting account would be pointless because it would not be capable of contributing to a more intelligible formulation of the phenomena of interest.

Trying to raise awareness of impersonal forms of power is one line that is worth to be explored in relation to nondecisions. Even in traditional positions of power, many decisions are logically predetermined by the way information is processed and the growing need of experts that are supposed to translate complex data into specific pieces of advice. Besides, side effects are not easy to identify, let alone predict. The notion of field appears again as a key concept for understanding how impersonal forms power and nondecision processes might be intertwined. This is the case for those organized activities the results of which are predetermined from the beginning, because they cannot lead to different results unless they fail. There are many routines that, in spite of leading to obvious outcomes and making alternatives unthinkable or absurd, are still carried out in the form of debate, deliberation, and the making of agreements. If some of this organized activities are presented and performed as if they were decision making activities, one has to ask for the role the play, why they have to be performed in that manner, and how that performance is made possible.

But there are more connections to explore in a reading of nondecision through the lens of diffuse, productive forms power and their relations cultural reproduction. The concept of *habitus*, for instance, is crucial to understand not only how those in a dominant position keep some issues out of the decision arenas, but also how those in the dominated side of the relation – the ones to whom those issues are relevant – contribute to the process of nondecision. The *habitus*, as the principle of an experience in which an expectation or desire is immediately perceived as reasonable or absurd, as feasible or unfeasible, determines whether a given trend of action based on an expectation has chances of being successfully pursued or

not. Moreover, it determines the scope and nature of the expectation itself. The idea that the subjective lack of hope contributes to the objective probability in which that lack of hope is partially founded, seems to open a door for a more analytical approach to the way in which nondecisions are produced and the role of those in a subordinated position in that production.

In a more general view, what is worth to look for is (1) the role that nondecisions play in a given field or area of social life; (2) their relative importance regarding the reproduction of the relations of domination that characterize that field; and (3) the set of conditions and practices through which nondecisions are made possible. In this view, the analysis of nondecision should not be disregarded from the characteristics of the fields that cross the spaces in which decisions are made, including the differences upon which the hierarchies are built and the practices that allow for the reproduction of these differences. This look allows for an account of the practices through which nondecisions are sustained in terms of their structural and interactional features.

5.2.4. Nondecisions in decision making

In spite of the analytical limits of the idea, it seems clear that the study of collective decision making needs to include the study of nondecisions. It is our point of view that a careful attention to decision arenas offers a good path for overcoming the analytical insufficiencies of the idea of nondecision as it was originally posed. According to this, arenas of decision, as spaces that carry their own power phenomena, should not be conceived as the outcome of what nondecision processes could not exclude. In terms of their organization and activities, arenas of decision might be a crucial scenario for nondecision processes because they are not conformed by what nondecision process do not want or cannot exclude. Arenas of decision might well be the spaces in which the nondecision processes finally complete their operation or get to be broken. In other words, decision making activities should not be considered as something opposed to nondecision processes or free of them, but as another area in which the mobilization of bias operates.

The insistence in that the arenas of decision or, more specifically, activities of decision making should not be disregarded from nondecision processes leads us to the necessity of defining a frame for analyzing such activities. Since those

activities, at least in what they have to do with the articulation participation-Third Sector, are to a large extent collectively undertaken the requirement here seems clear: we need a language to deal with the overwhelming complexities of the order of interactions.

5.3. Frames and encounters

Collective encounters are crucial in the life of TS organizations. It is through assemblies, meetings, informative sessions, and other non-ordinary events that many of the claims for being participative are finally put into practice. The non-ordinary character of such events lies in their distinction from the flow of everyday activities. Such events are normally planned and prepared, are intended to fulfill certain purposes, are carried out through a series of steps, and have identifiable starting and ending point. Since the conformation of TS organizations is supposed to play a major role in the ways in which such encounters are conducted, these events stand as a privileged area for looking toward the ongoing articulation between the Third Sector and participation.

But there is a risk when addressing this kind of encounters for analytical purposes. The risk is that of developing accounts that are copies of the accounts made by those that take an active part in those events. This is not to say that accounts made by agents involved have to be excluded. In fact, as constitutive elements in the preparation, unfolding, and remembering of such events, agents' accounts have a crucial role and thus should not be excluded. The question is that, in any attempt of understanding how these encounters are achieved, the observer requires a language capable of grasping those features that are neither evident nor relevant for those that take an active part in that achievement. In other words, agents' accounts have to be included as elements that have to be described and understood in terms of their links with the achievement of the events, as not as if they were the description and understanding of the events.

5.3.1. Footing

According to this necessity of a language in which encounters, whether they are official or 'spontaneous', can be addressed at a detailed level, it seems useful to consider Goffman's (1981) concept of footing. Built upon the concept of 'code switching' of Gumperz, footing is referred to the alignments, stances, or projected selves of those involved in a given situation. These alignments influence the

configuration of the situations. When a change in footing occurs, a switch in the sense and possibilities of the encounter takes place. In this sense, a

> change in footing implies a change in the alignment we take up to ourselves and the other present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance. A change in our footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events. (Goffman, 1981, p. 128)

This change can be identified through sets of cues and marks that function as a space of transition between episodes. Footing, as a persistent feature of interaction, is deployed through postures, alignments, and gestures, including the rhythm, volume, and tone of utterances. It is in the contextual matrix composed by these elements that even the briefest utterance is rendered meaningful. In this sense, the whole social situation has to be taken into account, even when it does not include a speech event.

5.3.2. The multiple layers of a situation

According to Goffman, social situations can be seen as physical arenas in which individuals can see and hear each other. These encounters include not only conversations but other relevant forms of live interaction that vary in terms of their structural stability. The range of forms goes from those situations in which an individual talks to himself in a way that other barely hear, to institutionalized events such as political addresses or lectures. In each form of interaction, there are explicit and tacit positions that those involved are likely to assume.

The relations among these different forms of interaction are at the basis of the complexity and multilayer character that a given situation can reach. Whether by words or by physical transactions, a meaningful context is formed. In order to make sense of the ways in which this process occurs, Goffman offers a detailed analytical language as a result of the decomposition of global folk categories such as speaker and listener. First of all, Goffman insists in the necessity of including hear, sight, and even touch, as crucial elements that allow people in a gathering to assess the direction of the encounter, as well as their place in the ways their interventions are being received. Second, he points out the relevance of the opening and closing of encounters, and the joining or leaving of people while the encounters are in course. Third, he emphasizes the ritual brackets through which

brief shifts in footing are made. The analytical unfolding of the global categories of speaker and listener results respectively in (1) the various forms of production format that come into play, and (2) the different statuses that the participation framework might assign to those involved.

In terms of production format, the speaker turns out to be distinguished as author, animator, or principal. As author, the speaker stands as the source of the utterances he made. As animator, he merely gives voice to those utterances. Finally, as principal, the words that are spoken establish his position and commitment. The speakers, during a conversation, can move from one format to another, and then move back to the first one according to the requirements of the situation.

Statuses of those involved are also managed through marks. Any cue is likely to open up “an array of structurally differentiated possibilities, establishing the participation framework in which the speaker will be guiding his delivery” (Goffman, 1981, p. 137). The ways in which those involved address their utterances imply a ratification or a rectification of the participative status of others. These markings on the status of those present in the situations have their correlates in the responses to others' utterances. Through these responses, people can make clear that they are ratified participants or that they are just 'bystanders' overhearing what is said.

5.3.3. Embedding

The shifts and combinations of participation frameworks and production formats are by no means lineal. In a given encounter, different layers are frequently founded. This leads to another concept in Goffman's attempt of an analytic language: embedding. Inside a given production format, the speaker can include utterances that belong to another production format. In the same way, interaction arrangements can have moments in which participation frameworks that are alien to the current situation are briefly enacted.

The set of concepts and distinctions that Goffman offers as a programmatic proposal are worth to consider mainly because of their capacity of rendering intelligible, at least in a descriptive manner, the ways in which a situation is configured and reconfigured. Every configuration establishes not only what can and cannot be said, but the valid forms of talk and the statuses of those involved.

In every situation there is a sense of what would be proper to say, whether in general terms or according to a specific position. Finding out the ways this sense is elaborated through different kind of cues and marks is thus the path to follow in order to understand the ongoing achievements by which an encounter is performed. Moreover, this language allows for a careful follow up of the interplay between attempts to sustain a given configuration and attempts to change it.

5.4. Key areas in the articulation Third Sector-Participation

This chapter represents the final stage in out route toward a framework for an empirical approach to the articulation Third Sector-participation. The idea of nondecision of Bachrach and Baratz, and Goffman's framework for analyzing social encounters have been described and discussed as specific issues that offer an adequate path for dealing with that articulation. Both elements constitute valuable resources in linking the analytical concepts discussed in Chapter 4 and the specificity of the phenomena of interest in the form of more delimited lines of inquiry.

In spite of its lack of analytical capacity, the idea of nondecision helps to take into account the processes by which an issue is excluded from public deliberation. The relevance of this idea lies in (1) the subsidiary character that the Third Sector seems to occupy regarding the Public and the Private Sector; (2) the centrality of decision making process as a component of participation and also as indicator of its reaches; (3) the relative effectiveness of decision making process in the Third Sector, considering its subsidiary character; and (4) the ways in which decision making is enabled by organizational arrangements of TS entities. The reinterpretation of the idea of nondecision through a wider perspective on power and the lens of Bourdieu's model of social reproduction allows us to pose specific questions about the links between that subsidiary character of the Third Sector and the claims for being participative.

Regarding the language for analyzing social encounters, this chapter has included a brief presentation of Goffman's frame analysis. Emphasizing the concept of footing, this approach offers us a basis for developing detailed accounts of interactions, so that we can depict the ways in which those involved actively define the situations in which they participate. In doing so, we are establishing an approach in which the local and unstable power relations, as well as the inequities

they induce, can be addressed at the level of their ongoing unfolding. While Goffman's approach is concerned with the order of interactions in their own terms, the features of encounters it allows us to grasp are valuable in that they can be interpreted according to a more structural approach like that of Bourdieu. In other words, Goffman's frame analysis provides the basis for a systematic, meaningful look to certain practices that later can be linked to the structural features in which they are inserted.

The framework that results from the articulation between (1) a broad perspective on power, (2) a theoretical model of social practices, and (3) approaches to specific issues such as nondecisions and social encounters has been developed in order to give our area of inquiry an adequate, more delimited formulation, as well as a clear, defined direction. It is not that the problems requiring an empirical approach had been formulated prior to the election and depiction of the theoretical framework. Instead, the process of posing questions around an organizational form that characterizes spaces other than those of the government and private enterprises has been slowly shaped through the lens of this framework. The task, from this lens, has necessarily to be focused in (1) the practices by which participation in the Third Sector is enacted; (2) the inequities and disequilibriums induced by those practices; (3) the place of decision making as an specific and crucial case of those enactments; and (4) the ways in which that apparently obvious association between participation and the Third Sector is sustained. The axis of these areas has to be found in the ways in which power, productively and reproductively, operates in those spaces of action that arise as something that cannot take place inside the State and the Market and yet is inescapably located between them.

6. Aims: understanding power phenomena inherent to participatory practices

This chapter consists of an account of the objectives that this research study intends to achieve. In order to make clear the basis upon which such objectives were developed, a brief summarization of the literature review and the conceptual framework is presented in the first section. The next section includes the formulation of the research problem in the form of a series of questions that resulted from a problematizing, theoretically informed reading of the literature review. The final section displays the objectives in four groups, each of which is focused on a different aspect of the research problem.

6.1. The object and the look

Chapters 1 to 5 have been devoted to: (1) exposing key issues with regard to participation and its place as a taken for granted characteristic or requisite of the Third Sector; (2) underlining derived issues of power, control, and regulation; (3) raising questions about these issues; and (4) depicting a conceptual framework capable of dealing with those questions. During the exposition, emphasis has been made on the links between participatory practices, the making of the Third Sector, and power phenomena that relies on such practices.

The first two chapters constitute the particular route we took for underlining and developing the elements upon which the research questions of this study has been built. Chapter 1 discusses the idea of participation. The pertinence of participation as an object of study lies in its presence across a wide diversity of areas of social life. Outstanding social phenomena such as social movements, organizational systems, political debates, as well as the idea of democracy are but a sample of the transversal character of participation. Even certain aspects of the everyday life such as the household labor and its distribution according to gender

find in participation a crucial element. Figuratively speaking it is as if participation were the main beam of many of the areas that define the way we live, from the social system as a whole to the more immediate reality of the family. Participation, as something that is expected to happen, something that has to be fostered, crosses those phenomena as a measure – how much do people participate? – and as an assessment of their quality – how do people participate? In this view, participation becomes a constant interpellation conditions and effects of which the effects constitute an object of study with great relevance.

While Chapter 1 is focused on the idea of participation in its wider sense, Chapter 2 addresses the Third Sector as a distinctive area of social activity in which participation occupies a prominent place. In other words, there is something specific to that inextricable articulation between the Third Sector and participation that, beyond its apparently obvious character, requires to be carefully analyzed. Based on a literature review, in both chapters: (1) widely known definitions, conceptions, and debates on participation and the Third Sector are discussed; (2) some notes on the historical origin of the terms, their regional variations, and their uses are included; (3) issues related to social power and social reproduction are highlighted; 4) areas that deserve better attention or have been traditionally neglected are underscored; and (5) a set of questions that seek to address the links between the achievement of participation and power phenomena is proposed.

As for the third, fourth and fifth chapters, they are intended to depict a specific framework for an analytical and interpretive approach to the aforementioned issues. The framework is composed by three levels, each of which is developed in a separated chapter. Chapter 3 discusses conceptions of power, highlighting the implications of Foucault's approach as an alternative to classic socio-psychological approaches. Power is conceived as an active, productive and relational phenomenon that is imminent to each and every social domain, and consists of actions that interfere with other actions. Chapter 4 starts from this idea and seeks to establish a basis for making sense of power relationships according to the practices by which they are performed, produced and reproduced. Drawing from Bourdieu's theoretical work on social practices, the concept of habitus – an implicit practical logic that is both the subjective counterpart and the product of objective structures – is introduced. Along with the concept of habitus, the

concepts of 'field', 'strategy' and 'capital', which are central to Bourdieu's thought and acquire meanings that are no equal to their common conceptions, are also explained. Chapter 5 deals with two useful approaches: Bachrach and Baratz's concept of nondecision – restrictions placed in the span of issues upon which decisions can be made – and Goffman's concept of footing – specific activities that frame social encounters. These concepts have been included and, to some extent, redefined in order to tackle specific aspects of power phenomena produced in spaces in which participatory practices in the Third Sector are performed.

6.2. The problem

According to current literature on the subject, participation appears as an idea that is to some extent associated to the day-to-day achievement of democracy. In fact, participation is usually thought of as the opposite of hierarchy-based decision making. According to this conception, any attempt to apply participatory approaches prescribes open access to information and joint decision making. Those involved should include all the people affected by the subjects that are being treated. Along with the privileged place of decision making when addressing participatory approaches, one of the most outstanding findings of the literature review is that the most important feature of participation, which is people having the same 'amount' of influence as the main concern, functions both as a goal and as a mean.

As for the links between participation and the Third Sector, literature that deals with the definition of Third Sector seems to include participation as a pre-requisite, a political and organizational feature – a goal and a mean – that is taken for granted and not just an option. This is related to what some authors call 'participatory orthodoxy' (Biggs, 1995; Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Natal, 2007), a sense that there is a particular way of doing things, some procedures and forms of talk that are prescribed while others are proscribed. Moreover, participation, as a taken for granted attribute of the Third Sector, seems to be subjected to attempts that seek to improve organizational processes in the Third Sector with the general purpose of increasing its efficiency. The fact that an important part of the literature that has been reviewed is devoted to the professionalization of the Third Sector, in a way that intends to change the functioning of Third Sector organizations so that

it can be similar to that of for-profit enterprises, points toward an issue that deserves attention. The emphasis in efficiency and the belief in the need of professionalizing the Third Sector – which in many cases means that it has to operate according to for-profit organizations' criteria – tends to assimilate participation, turning it into a set of managerial techniques that are said to be useful to prevent conflict and generate effective ideas.

With regard to issues of power, reviewed literature points out conditions that threaten the goal of equally-distributed influence: (1) the slightest difference among those involved in a specific undertaking, be it in terms of status, skills, experience, access to information or alliances, and (2) the implementation of procedures and systems of representation that rely on the idea of indirect participation and intended to avoid difficulties that arise when direct participatory approaches are conducted with numerous groups. Despite the establishment of rules and procedures intended to assure that everybody in a given context can have a say in the way things are done, such conditions imply the existence of asymmetric relationships that might give some voices an advantage while others might get minimized or silenced.

Differences among agents involved, a sense of orthodoxy in participatory approaches and the growing influence of attempts to professionalize the Third Sector are thus crucial aspects when trying to understand participation as it is achieved in the Third Sector. By pointing towards conditions that threaten the pretension of equally-distributed influence, they suggest the existence of power phenomena that is specific to the spaces in which participation and the Third Sector are articulated. From an organizational point of view, the sense of 'participatory orthodoxy' implies some functions as well as dysfunctions that are worth to be taken into account. Participation imposes a particular way of doing things in spite of their unintended dysfunctional consequences. Besides, considering this sense of orthodoxy along with differences among agents, individuals and groups involved in any participatory experience might find themselves in a position in which advice, training and evaluation is needed and experts' voices are privileged and capable of proclaiming whether a given participatory practice is legitimate or not. Furthermore, considering that professionalizing efforts do not advance over an empty land, participation appears as a territory under dispute, one in which the 'what' and 'how' of participation are

subjected to struggles and transformations, many of which are but an effect of the advance of entrepreneurial and managerial approaches over the Third Sector. Finally, as for the inevitable consideration of participation as a treat of the Third Sector, it seems to be related to some sort of collectively sustained sense of what is good to wish, think and say in front of certain situations, as if the participatory character of some encounter or activity were activated by means of the expression of such sense.

6.2.1. Research questions

Given the relevance of a series of not so evident links between participation in the Third Sector and issues of power, some questions can be posed:

(1) Which power phenomena are enabled by participation in the Third Sector?

(2) By means of which practices are they produced, maintained or, eventually, transformed?

(3) Which kind of conditions makes them possible?

(4) How are they linked to decision making?

(5) How are they linked to the inextricable relationship between participation and the Third Sector?

These questions are aimed at describing and understanding interferences of actions over other actions that operate through participation and how they allow some voices to have greater influence and others to fight back in order to put their concerns into the agenda. In order to study those interferences, it seems more adequate to put aside any pretension of conceptually defining what participation is, so that the ways in which it is enacted can be properly addressed. In empirical terms, this implies that participation has to be recognized as a series of scenarios through which power phenomena are deployed. The recognition of such scenarios depends on what agents involved explicitly claim to be involved with, and on what the researcher identifies as implicitly linked to those claims. Therefore, dealing with the enactment of participation implies a focus on the practices by which such enactment is achieved. In other words, sayings and doings that can be recognized as participation under the lens of common sense become the primary object of interest. Adding a temporal dimension to the study of these practices can be helpful in highlighting the links among them. A temporal dimension should lead us

to deal with: (1) the way a participatory experience arises; (2) the history of its internal struggles; (3) its participatory forms through time; (4) the effects of its functions and dysfunctions; (5) the extent to which those participatory forms are innovative; (6) its relation to more conventional forms; and (7) the role that common sense plays in the process.

6.3. Research objectives

In order to deal with these questions, four general objectives, with their respective specific objectives have been defined. The first one is focused on the specificities of participatory practices. The second seeks to offer an account of decision making processes as a central aspect of participation. The third objective consists of an analysis of power relationships enabled by participatory practices. Finally, the fourth objective is aimed at disentangling the taken for granted participatory nature of the Third Sector.

6.3.1. Participative practices

As said above, the first objective is to develop an accurate description of participatory practices in Third Sector organizations. Such a description needs to include: (1) both the argumentative and procedural forms of the practices under scrutiny; (2) the ways they are linked to each other and the different sets they form; (3) the limits under which these practices operate and exceptions made to those limits; (3) the joint relation of these practices, a global view capable of stressing their mutual reinforcements, their subordinations and oppositions, and their alternation; and (4) their functions and dysfunctions from an organizational point of view.

6.3.2. Decision making processes

The second goal consists of analyzing the ways in which decisions are made in order to make clear: (1) the practices, places, and moments under which they come into being; (2) the parallel processes of nondecision making and their relations with decision making; (3) the ways in which contradictions and conflicts are dealt with; and (4) how justifications based on views of participation as a mean or as an end itself are used.

6.3.3. Power relations

The third goal consists of an analysis of participative practices in terms of the power relations that are inherent to them. The focus on power relations implies a careful look at the disequilibriums, inequities, advantages, and disadvantages that participative practices imply for agents involved in them, according to (1) their positions; (2) the role of practices in the production and reproduction of day-to-day life in an organizational setting; (3) the relations between their institutive and instituted forms; (4) in terms of control and resistance, the innovations that participative practices enable; (5) images or conceptions of power that emerge in these practices; and (6) the strengthening or expiration of each kind of practice as an effect of its relation with global constraints and pressures across different domains.

6.3.4. Participation as a requisite of the Third Sector

The fourth goal of this study is to delimit the conceptions and evidences that make possible to think and speak of participation as an obvious, natural, requisite of the way in which Third Sector organizations function. This goal requires to carefully consider: (1) how demands or requests for participation arise and are carried out; (2) which conditions allow for participation to be considered as an obvious or essential element; (3) the kinds of knowledge upon which conceptions of participation are built, whether they are common sense assumptions, tactical guidelines, authorized techniques and procedures, or justifications based on what is considered politically correct; (4) the common premises and main variations of these kinds of knowledge; and (5) their belonging to specific disciplinary domains.

7. Method: an ethnographic approach to practices

The method for the empirical approach to the study of participation in the Third Sector is rooted in a framework that belongs to the qualitative methodological tradition. It consists of a specific form of ethnographic study intended to develop an exhaustive account of practices of participation by means of observation, interviews and documents. The resulting account, which forms the corpus of data under scrutiny, is then subjected to an interpretative analysis guided by the objectives and by the set of concepts upon which the research problem is founded. The following paragraphs offer a detailed description of these aspects, with special emphasis on the reasons for the decisions made throughout the process. While the first part of the chapter includes the specifications of the method as it was designed in the first place, the second part explains how these specifications were put into practice, contingencies and outcomes included.

7.1. An ethnographic account of practices

In order to make clear the decisions with regard to the methodological design, it is necessary to offer a brief account of the empirical prescriptions derived from the object and the goals of this research. These prescriptions include:

(1) a focus on practices as the basic unit of analysis and also as the axis that allows the observer to establish links between the empirical data and its conceptual meaning;

(2) the inescapable requirement of an interpretive analysis of empirical data, so that the strategies and interests around which practices are organized can be reconstructed; and

(3) a theoretically informed ethnographic approach, one in which the set of concepts with which the research problem has been built is explicitly and

purposefully held as the guide for methodological decisions in general, and for the analytical task in particular.

7.1.1. Observing and understanding practices

According to the formulation of the research problem, the focus of the study is to be found in the concept of practices as the axis that has to be attended in order to make sense of the ways in which *participation*, as a component of the Third Sector, is enacted. While the concept of practices has been addressed in Chapter 4, stressing its properties as the result of its links with other concepts such as *habitus* and field, it is still important to make a few remarks that allow to underscore its implications for empirical purposes.

Practices can be conceived as social, collective, meaningful behaviors regarded to different social fields. They are referred to what social agents say and do with regard to certain issues. More important, the very issues in which the practices find their specificity are simultaneously the product of such practices. This is why, instead of addressing *participation* starting with a conceptual and operative definition that previously determines what it is and its observable aspects, it is indispensable to focus the attention on the ways in which it is achieved. Now, let us proceed with the main attributes of the concept of practices.

The collective character of practices – the utterances and actions through which *participation* is achieved – is to be found in their origin and in the contexts in which they appear. As for their origin, practices appear as the result of socialization processes. By means of socialization, agents acquire those schemes of perception and assessment – a practical sense – upon which practices are deployed. With regard to their contexts, practices are the active tissue that conforms the distinguishable fields or areas of social life in which they are performed. According to this, each practice, even as an individual expression, has to be understood both as a moment and as a particular instantiation of long collective trends, the conditions of possibility of which have to be reconstructed.

Moreover, according to the centrality that their meanings have, practices cannot be simply addressed as mechanical moves, for their arising and direction is rooted in the connection among (1) the practical sense – the schemes of perception and assessment – that socialized agents have acquired throughout their lifetime; (2) the social networks that, through their constrictions and impositions, have

provided the bases for the acquisition of their correspondent practical organizations and schemes, and locate each agent in one of the different positions of the mobile systems of positions defined by each field; and (3) each specific situation, which is to be understood as moment or state of a field, one in which agents involved, based on their acquired practical schemes, experience a naturalized, immediate sense of necessity – opportunity or threat –, being mobilized by those schemes in order to pursue certain strategies. Meaning is crucial here, because it is the element by which practices articulate social networks – the world outside, simply posed – and practical senses – the internalized world – in each situation. The problem of meaning is thus unavoidable, and it is a crucial task of the research process to address it, so that it can be properly objectified and used as a central node in the network of relationships in which *participation* is shaped.

7.1.2. Interpretative requirements

Meaning, as it is understood in the framework of Bourdieu, is never completely accessible for agents in the sense that the formulation of explicit linguistic accounts of that meaning is excluded from the practices in which it is rooted. As the experience of necessity in which any practice finds its origin arises in an immediate, automatic manner, awareness on the schemes upon which the experience of necessity is founded is necessarily limited, particularly at the time the experience of necessity and their consequent practices arise. Otherwise, that feel for the game of which Bourdieu speaks would be easily dissolved through an attempt of objectifying one's own performance[10]. The most important implication of this is that, while agents' accounts of their own practices are still a crucial aspect in that those accounts are themselves practices rooted in the same practical sense that the researcher seeks to reconstruct, they are not, by any means, complete, unproblematic accounts. Due to their practical nature, the partial character of such accounts requires to be addressed as another empirical element, the meaning of which has to be elaborated by the researcher by attending to the consistencies in the directions that practices follow. Such kind of task requires an interpretive activity from the part of the researcher, one that is

[10] This is why Bourdieu poses serious doubts about the possibility of simultaneously being participant and observer in the course of any event.

guided by the conceptual premises of the study and demands a moment of rupture with the researcher's involvement in the activities that are being studied.

7.1.3. The ethnographic approach

So far, we have established some key requisites for our empirical approach to the study of *participation* in the Third Sector. After underscoring the implications of the way in which the object of study and the research questions have been elaborated, it is necessary to deal with the ways in which access to practices, the building of a set of data – an objectification of such practices –, and its further analysis under an interpretive path can be better achieved according to those requisites.

In general terms, the method followed in this research can be referred to as a 'praxeological-ethnographic study'. While the term might seem a bit esoteric, its meaning is simpler: it consists of a theoretically driven ethnographic study that is empirically focused on specific practices across different relevant scenarios.

As an ethnographic study, it implies expending a considerable amount of time in interaction with members of a given group or community. By means of such continuous interaction, the researcher is able to observe naturally occurring events, to talk to people involved in them and to retrieve different sorts of materials that are related to what people say and what they do with what they say. This allows the researcher to develop a holistic account of daily life in a given context, taking advantage of a flexible, open planning. Besides, an ethnographic approach is well suited to those undertakings that require to deal with the meanings that people, as competent agents in their own settings, ascribe to their own and other's behaviors.

Because of the focus on practices, the ethnographic approach of this study has to be understood as one that has displaced it axis. Instead of taking a community, organization or group as the unit of study, it centers its attention on those practices by which the object of study is enacted. No doubt that thinking of organizations or groups cannot be put aside, for the performance of any practice is always linked to a social formation. In fact, organizations and groups are unavoidable, useful categories, because of operative, descriptive and analytical reasons. A focus on practices of certain kind implies that the fieldwork is conducted throughout a variety of settings regarded to different social formations

and not by exhausting the naturally occurring events with regard to a single organization, group or community.

The general requirements in terms of method have been specified in the need for an ethnographic study focused on the interpretation of practices. Hence, we can adress the decisions made on the more specific questions of method: sample strategy, data collection and analytic treatment, as well as some ethical issues.

7.2. Sampling: When and where to find those practices?

With regard to the selection of cases, the selected strategy consisted of a combination of two methods: purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. Sampling units included organizations, agents and situations, with the first of them as the most relevant for practical purposes. Sampling criteria, specified only at the organizational level, included paradigmaticity – liminality or centrality with regard to the belonging of organizations to the Third Sector – and implication – current engagement or non-engagement in controversies and debates on key public issues.

Purposeful sampling, a method widely applied in qualitative research, implies "selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Selecting cases by means of a purposeful sampling strategy implies an explicit consideration of both practical constraints (particularly with regard to resources available and the need of gaining access to organization) and criteria of relevancy. Purposeful sampling offers, among other advantages, the possibility of achieving the sampling process along with the data collection and the analytical tasks, so that the inclusion of new cases can be considered whenever it proves to be necessary.

Snowball sampling, by its side, was included because of the need to gain access to other Third Sector entities by taking advantage of the relationships that members of already selected entities have. This sampling strategy was formally introduced by Goodman (1961), as a method for collecting data from hidden populations assuring their statistical representativeness (Lambert, 1990). Once that, according to our methodological approach, any attempt of gaining statistical representativeness is put aside, the main idea of this method consists of getting

access to new, potentially interesting cases through recommendations made by current cases under study based on their knowledge and relationships in the area of interest. Here, the idea of qualitative representativeness, understood as the pertinence of the set of selected cases that conform the sample with regard to the goals of the research, serves as the basis for assessing how appropriate each case is.

As for the units that lead the sampling process, a three-step sequence was depicted in the first place. Despite of the fact that practices of *participation* constitute the primary focus of interests, during the planning of the empirical research the identification of such practices was included as a task still to be done. Therefore, the sampling procedure was designed to follow a path that started with the selection of relevant Third Sector entities, as a first approach to the institutional spaces in which those practices were performed. Next, based on a minimal knowledge about each entity, the process was intended to continue with a more detail selection of informants that, from different points of view, are in conditions of offering detailed accounts of the participatory practices in which they are or have been involved. Simultaneously, based on the same general knowledge of each entity, we planned to select a series of events and daily life activities in which the performance of practices of participation was expected to appear. According to this, the sampling strategy was expected to progressively lead us from the organizational settings in which practices of participation were performed to agents capable of offering detailed and varied accounts of such practices and also to their ongoing performance.

The population of interest is conformed by those formally constituted, legally registered organizations that, according to its juristic status are neither governmental nor for-profit (mainly foundations, associations, mutual societies and co-operatives). Operative constraints with regard to resources available for the study lead us to narrow down the specification of the population to that of organizations that operate in Barcelona and nearby.

Criteria of relevance for selecting organizations is based on two key aspects of Third Sector entities that are relevant for addressing the research questions: paradigmaticity, or the degree at which they can be unproblematically be

considered as such, and implication, or the degree at which they are involved in struggles over decisions with regard to current public issues of high interest.

It might seem contradictory to assess the degree at which an organization seems to fit with the attributes that characterize a Third Sector organization when that organization has already been included in the population. Nevertheless, this apparent contradiction can be cleared up by a simple distinction. While the definition of the population is based on key formal aspects with regard to the juristic status of the organizations, the criterion of paradigmaticity is focused on the actual fulfillment of the set of attributes that define Third Sector organizations: (1) autonomy with regard to governmental structures and for-profit enterprises; (2) goals regarded to issues of wellbeing of the population or segments of the population; (3) self-government in any of its possible forms; and (5) voluntary membership and collaboration in their activities. A simple, yet useful manner of distinguishing Third Sector organizations according to their degree of paradigmaticity consists of categorizing them as paradigmatic – textbook examples – or liminal – doubtful cases.

Implication, understood as the current engagement of Third Sector entities in controversies and debates on key public issues, is a relevant criterion for selecting organizations because it underlines the active role that an organization might play in the field in which its activity is located. A rough, initial distinction among Third Sector entities according to this criterion can be established by categorizing them as engaged or non-engaged with regard to struggles on those public issues.

Liminality or paradigmaticity with regard to the belonging of organizations to the Third Sector; and current engagement or non-engagement in controversies and debates on key public issues are thus extreme cases of characteristics that are crucial for selecting organizations. By combining those extreme positions, we have elaborated a four-type classificatory scheme in order to establish a framework for our sample: (1) paradigmatic, engaged organizations; (2) paradigmatic, non-engaged organizations; (3) liminal, engaged organizations; (4) and liminal, non-engaged organizations. An important prevention has to be made, though. This classificatory scheme is exclusively intended to serve as an aid in the sampling process, in order to facilitate the selection of organizations, the characteristics, positions and activities of which can allow us to elaborate a rich, meaningful

empirical material according to the aims of this research. Figure 5 offers a schematic overview of the sampling process as it was planned in the first place.

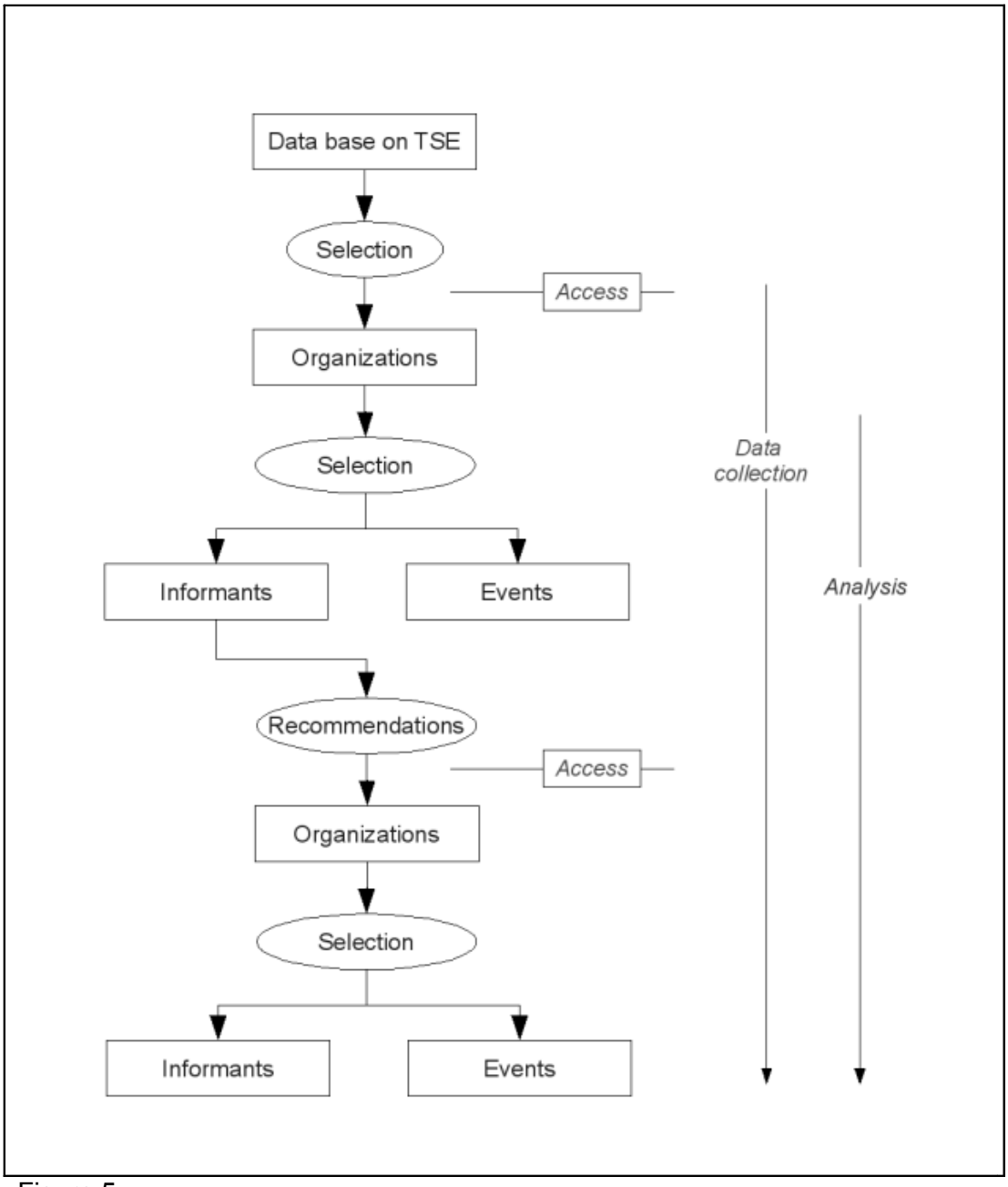

Figure 5.
Diagram of the sampling process

The starting point consists of the elaboration of a data base containing, with an acceptable level of accuracy, the names, areas of activity, addresses and telephone numbers of Third Sector entities operating in Barcelona and surrounding areas. Based on the selection criteria, a first selection process should serve to obtain a list of at least 20 cases, five by each of the four types included in

the classificatory scheme. By selecting five cases per type, it is possible to prevent possible difficulties such as the unregistered dissolution of the organization or the impossibility of gaining access, which is one of the most troubling situations in research on organizations. Besides, it is worth to note that, considering the interpretative nature of the study, the number of cases is not as important as the pertinence of the materials they provide, and the detailed, in-depth analysis of such materials.

Once that access to at least one organization per type is achieved, the next step implies the selection of informants whose positions in the organization seems to enable them to provide relevant accounts of the characteristics, history and activities of the organization, particularly those regarded to participation. Simultaneously, a selection of moments and events in which participatory activities are performed should be conducted. Finally, on the basis of recommendations made by selected informants, new cases are added to the sample, and the process is repeated. It has to be noted that, as said above, this sampling strategy implies that the data collection and the analysis are alternatively conducted so that the possibility of including new cases passes through decisions made according to needs emerging in the course of the study.

7.3. Data collection: How to create a corpus?

Along with the sampling process, the collection of data goes from the general characteristics of the organization to its participatory spaces. Figure 6 shows a diagram of the process as it was intended to be performed with regard to each of the organizations included in the sample.

Once that access to organization is gained – something that was not expected to occur with all of the selected cases –, the data collection process or, to be more accurate, the production of the empirical material, starts. By means of interviews with selected informants and observation of daily activities and, more important, specific events, distinguishable from day-to-day activities and regarded to *participation*, the planned process was intended to provide a rich, detailed corpus composed of descriptions, accounts, conversations and different sorts of documentary materials. The following paragraphs offer more details on the intended use of both techniques. Besides, the diagram includes the next steps of the process: (1) a basic pre-analysis in order to systematically keep track of

topics, questions and insights with regard to the ongoing process of data collection; (2) the elaboration of the corpus composed by the data gathered and processed; (3) the detailed analysis of the corpus; and, closing the relationship with the organization, (4) the delivery of feedback based on the results of the analysis.

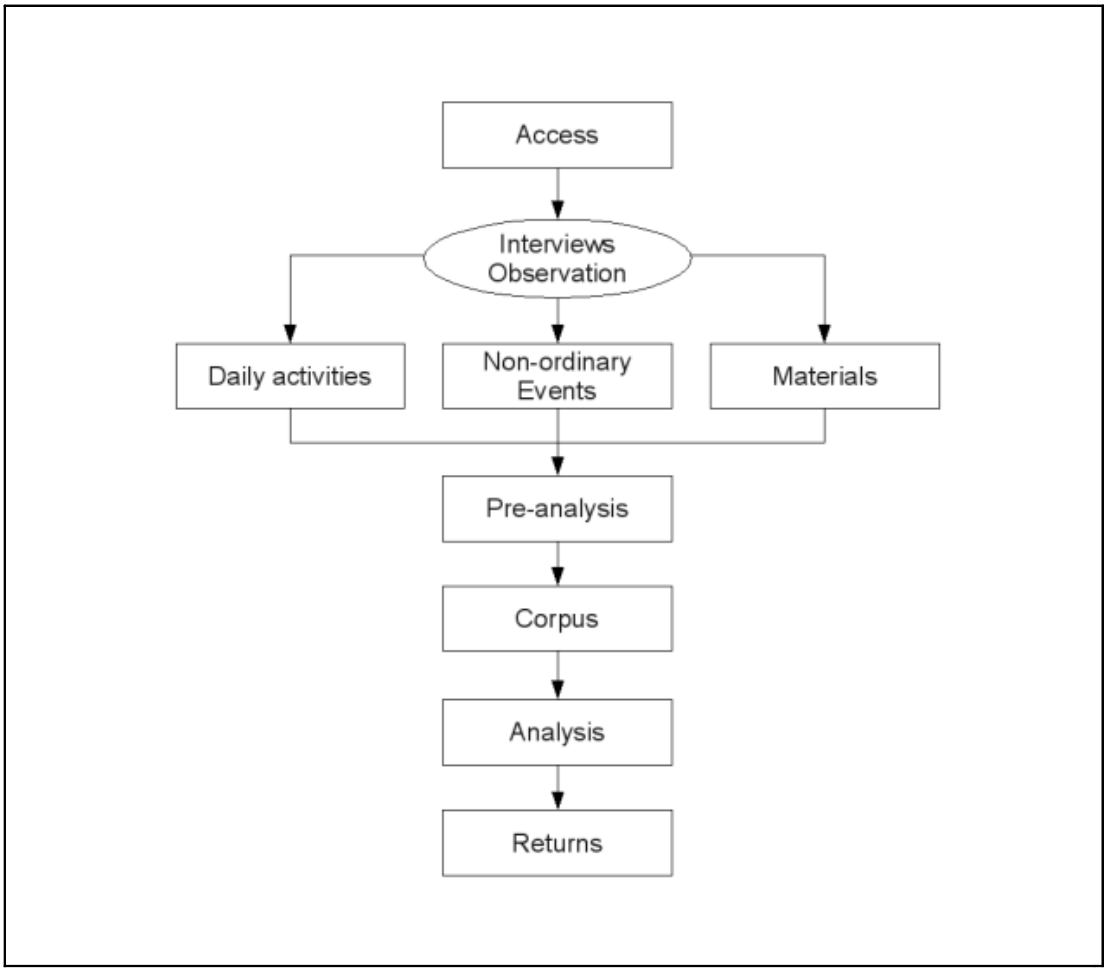

Figure 6.
Diagram of the data gathering process

7.3.1. Interviews

In-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews were included in the design with regard to two different, yet closely related aims. On one hand, as an extension of encounters devoted to negotiate access to the organization, a first set of interviews was intended to allow us to built a general background on the organization, its members, mission, structure, history, current undertakings, decision making processes and routines, specifically those spaces and activities

regarded to participation. On the other hand, counting with such background and with observations made of participatory activities as its basis, a second set of interviews were intended to provide rich, detailed accounts on participation practices and decision making processes, stressing the ways in which they are conceived and achieved according to different points of view.

Table 5 includes an integrated script elaborated to serve as guide during the interviews. The script includes a wide range of topics, organized around eight areas of inquiry that go from the general characteristics of the organization to the specifics of decision making and participation. Each topic is marked according to its inclusion in the general interview, the specific interview, or both of them.

The flexible use of interviews has both practical and substantive advantages. On one hand, it allows the researcher to establish where and when to perform the observational work. On the other, it allows to explore the conditions in which observed practices are produced and the meanings that agents put at stake while taking a part in such practices. Whenever interviewees agree, interviews had to be digitally recorded for further transcription.

7.3.2. Observation

Observation of naturally occurring events and situations was also included in the design. According to the emphasis made on the need for addressing our object of study in terms of practices, observation is expected to serve as a mean for the elaboration of a first hand, detailed account of participatory practices, specifying the conditions and actions by which they are performed, their variations and their immediate effects. There are two great areas for observation. One is focused in the day-to-day activities of the organizations included in the sample, and the other includes specific, non-ordinary events regarded to *participation* and/or decision making. Thus, observation follows a path that goes from the relatively undifferentiated pool of daily activities to the more specific, distinguishable performance of differentiated activities that can be addressed as events.

Table 5
Integrated script for the general and the specific interviews (part 1)

Areas	Topic	Interview*	
		G	S
General overview	*Mission and main activity*	x	
	Levels of operation (local, regional, national, international)	x	
	Legal status and registration	x	
Background	*Original initiatives*	x	
	Founders	x	
	Significant changes over time	x	
Composition	*Forms of involvement (associates, employees, volunteers, and others)*	x	
	Distribution (numbers)	x	
	Relationships with other organizations	x	
	Interviewee's form of involvement		x
Organizational features	*Organizational structure (chart)*	x	
	Interviewee's position		x
	Personnel management (selection, training, assessment)	x	
	Management of information	x	x
	Funds and resources	x	
Activities	*Specific activities (on a daily basis, periodical, and sporadic)*	x	x
	Agents involved	x	
	Beneficiaries	x	
	Interviewee's responsibilities on such activities		x
Current situation	*Current undertakings and challenges*	x	
	Frequent difficulties	x	x
	Long term plans and projects	x	x
	Interviewee's assessment of his own involvement with the organization		x

Table 5
Integrated script for the general and the specific interviews (part 2)

Areas	Topic	Interview*	
		G	S
Decision making	*Intra-organizational areas of decision*	x	x
	Involvement in wider decision making processes	x	x
	Decision makers	x	x
	Procedures	x	x
	Examples		x
	Interviewee's role in decision making		x
	Interviewee's assessment of current decision making processes		x
Participation	*The place of participation in the organization*	x	x
	Issues that require participation	x	x
	Who is expected to participate	x	x
	When, where and how is participation achieved	x	x
	Interviewee's conception of participation (mean or end)		x
	Interviewee's role in activities intended to enable participation		
	Interviewee's assessment of activities intended to enable participation		x

* When marked with an 'X', the G column indicates that the topic is to be addressed in the general interview. The same occurs with the S column with regard to the specific interviews.

Albeit that, in general terms, the kind of observation that we intended to perform can be depicted as participant, it has to be said that, in the strict sense, its participatory character is narrow. Considering that the empirical work had been planned to address certain kinds of practices, the role of the observer in front of the events and situations that he was supposed to observe was thought of as a limited one, because the relationship of the researcher with the organizations did not seem to require a long-term, intense involvement.

There were some key requisites that the design took into account to assure the usefulness of observations. A prior condition for a meaningful observational work was the selection of the places and moments that were worth to be observed. As

said above, this task depended on the results of the general interviews. With regard to the recording of observed events, a careful, detailed and systematic register based on brief notes taken during the observation had to be made immediately after the observation.

7.3.3. Documents

The methodological design also considered the possibility of including documents in the corpus. Nevertheless, in contrast with interviews and observations, the production of which was designed to follow a direct selection of informants and situations, the inclusion of documents and other informative materials was conceived to follow a different path. Instead of directly selecting relevant documents among those available, the inclusion of documents was to be made on the basis of their utilization or nomination during the interviews and the observed events. According to this, documents had to be addressed as elements of participatory practices and their further analysis would be necessarily intended to clarify their functions in such practices, along with the prescriptions and conceptions of participation in which their contents were based.

7.4. Analytical treatment: How to make sense of the corpus?

The analytical treatment of the corpus pointed toward an interpretive approach based on the conceptual framework. The analysis was designed in order to disentangle the meanings, conditions of possibility and strategic directions of participatory practices, as well as the relationships among them, particularly those of interference. For operative purposes, some guidelines of the Grounded Theory were included as an aid to the process.

The analytical procedure included two different phases. First, a simple form of pre-analysis was included. Conceived to be conducted along with the data collection, this phase contemplated the elaboration of a simple data base in which the topics, questions and lines of inquiry founded in interviews, observations and documents could be systematically recorded. By means of this data base, the researcher could be able to: (1) made decisions with regard to the next steps to take during the collection of data; (2) keep track of early insights that could be useful in the next phase of the analysis; and (3) count with a synthetic index of his empirical materials.

The second phase of the analysis was intended to fully address the corpus of empirical materials by means of an exhaustive interpretive process in which practices, its conditions of possibility, its meaning and the relationships among them could be identified, described and understood. This phase can be seen as an attempt to develop a theoretical framework for a better understanding of power phenomena inherent to participatory practices. Roughly speaking, it implies the use of formal theory – particularly that of Bourdieu, but also those of Foucault, Bachrach and Baratz, and Goffman – to build substantive theory (Glassier and Strauss, 1967). According to this, the framework through which the analysis has to be performed implies that the object of the study is addressed both as a product of, and as a process within a matrix of institutions, meanings, places and practices (Hacking, 1999). Besides of the inescapable necessity of an interpretive approach, one that has to advance against the illusion of immediate understanding (Gutiérrez, 2005), a task like this requires a relational, non-substantialist, thinking (Bourdieu, 1980).

In order to systematically organize and conduct the analytical process, some guidelines retrieved from the Grounded Theory in one of its recent developments (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) have been taken into account. According to such guidelines, the analytical process was planned to start with the segmentation and coding of the corpus, according to the properties and dimensions of the researched phenomenon. Next, based on the establishment and specification of the relationships among the categories resulting of the first coding, a more abstract sort of codification – axial coding – had to be conducted. Throughout the process, the elaboration and progressive refinement of comments, descriptions and definitions of the central categories and its relationships were required.

Besides of these general guidelines, the Grounded Theory includes a set of analytical procedures intended to provide a systematic basis for the detailed examination of data. Among such procedures, our analytical treatment included: (1) microanalysis, a careful and detailed examination and interpretation of small sections of the corpus that is useful in the first stages of the analysis; (2) making questions throughout the whole analytical process, so that every further step follows an increasingly focused direction, critical for the delimitation of the properties and dimensions of the categories; and (3) a constant comparison or, more precisely, the search for contrasts and correspondences among sections of

the corpus and among categories and groups of categories resulting from the analysis, in order to gain accuracy in their interpretation and find new relations or refine those previously made.

In order to facilitate the process, the performance of the analytical task was planned including the aid of ATLAS.ti, a well known software for qualitative data analysis that proves to be helpful for managing great qualitative data sets in a systematical, visual manner (Muñoz, 2003).

7.5. Ethical issues

The last element of the methodological design is devoted to ethical issues with regard to the relationship with the informants. From an ethical point of view, there were at least two prescriptions, the observation of which we explicitly included in the design. These prescriptions are intended to provide the conditions for a relationship of mutual respect and trust between the researcher and the potential informants.

One of such prescriptions is regarded to the management of expectations, particularly during the first contacts. It is necessary to generate the conditions for an informed, voluntary consent. In order to do so, it is crucial to offer a clear explanation of the purpose and characteristics of the research project when negotiating the access to the organization. Such a task requires explicit statements on the kind of collaboration that is expected from the potential informants and on the kind of activities that the researcher requires to perform. Besides, it is equally important to assure that the representatives of the organization, the 'gatekeepers', understand those statements and its implications. Expectations with regard to the process and the role of those that are likely to get involved in it have to be clarified in order to avoid further misunderstandings and conflictive situations. What is at stake here is the construction of a relationship of trust, in which informants can accept to take part in the study without any form of pressure.

The other prescription addresses issues of confidentiality with regard to the treatment of data. This point is particularly sensitive because it might be the case that, despite of following certain procedures to make the information anonymous, some characteristics included in reports of the results of the study allow the readers to identify the sources. Far from putting aside this possibility during the

negotiations for gaining access to each organization, the researcher has to mention it, in order to find out the positions that the representatives of the organizations have, so that satisfactory solutions can be proposed and agreed in advance.

7.6. Procedure: from fieldwork to desk work

While the former section of this chapter was intended to offer a detailed view of the method as it was designed in the first place, the next section is aimed to describe how the method was put into practice. In consonance with the design, the account of the procedure includes (1) how the sampling was carried out, and which organizations were finally included; (2) how the data building and the collection of materials was conducted; (3) how the data were processed in order to conform the corpus; and (4) how the analysis was performed. In order to offer such account, a general overview of the whole process appears in the first place, and then, details on each area of work are offered. It is important to remember that all of the tasks were performed in a recursive manner, which means that there was not a clear temporary division, but a sort of back and forth movement among them. This is why I considered inappropriate to refer to them as stages. Throughout the following lines, I intend to underscore those contingencies and decisions, the implications of which I considered important with regard to the goals of the study.

The fieldwork was conducted from June 2006 to March 2008. I kept track of the process by writing a diary including any event, idea or question with regard to the tasks that I was involved in. I did most of the analytical work, including the transcriptions of interviews and observations, and the digitalization of collected materials, during that period, but the final stages took me another two months, so I finally completed the analysis at the beginning of June 2008. During the process, I had access to 16 Third Sector entities and got involved on a regular basis with three of them. Besides, I had the opportunity of participating as guest in two local government organisms in which Third Sector organizations are represented, and in one large event for the Third Sector organized by the government of Catalonia.

7.7. Sampling and access

The sampling process started with the search for data bases, directories and catalogs on Third Sector organizations in Barcelona and surrounding areas. While

I found numerous Web-based sources, the majority of them was still under construction or had a limited scope. By exploring those sources that at first glance seemed to be more complete and comprehensive, I finally decided to base the initial sampling in the data contained in the directories section of the Web site of the Barcelona City Council[11]. The directory of associations contained in that section includes 5167 associations and it allows to find organizations according to their specific areas of activity and their location.

By trying to establish the initial sample according to different combinations of search criteria, I found that it was difficult to find information that allowed me to categorize organizations according to the four-type classificatory scheme that I had previously defined (paradigmatic, engaged organizations; paradigmatic, non-engaged organizations; liminal, engaged organizations; and liminal, non-engaged organizations). Nevertheless, I proceeded with my task, assuming that, as a starting point, I had to make conjectures based on the information available in the directory and, when available, in the Web sites of the associations. I finally completed the task with a selection of 20 organizations, being aware that their pertinence for the aims of the study was still to be assessed during the first contacts.

Next, I started the process of establishing contact with the 20 organizations I had selected. In all cases, my attempts of making contact included two channels: phone calls and letters. In order to offer key information of my purposes, I wrote down a brief explanation of the object and goals of the study, including the kind of collaboration I required from the part of the organization and the possibility of offering some return according to the interests of the organization. The phone call and the letter[12] were based on this brief explanation. Most of the letters I sent were not replied. Phone calls were successful only in five cases. Here, success as is understood as the effective scheduling of a first interview to a senior member of each organization so I could negotiate the access to the organizations. As for the other 15 organizations, different things occurred. In some cases, the phone number had changed. In others, the person whom I spoke to refused to consider

[11] This directory can be found in: http://w3.bcn.es/V08/Home/V08HomeLinkPl/0,2520,1653_71890_1,00.html

[12] See Appendix 1.

my request. For an illustrative example, there was a case in which the person who answered my phone call told me that people in their association were tired of being asked for interviews and the like, and that I should try to get what I needed by browsing their Web site, something that, I have to say, I had already done before placing the call.

Soon enough, I realized that direct attempts to get in touch with senior members of Third Sector organizations drawn from the data base was more demanding than I had thought. Fortunately, by that time I had talked to several colleagues about this research, and found that some of them had among their acquaintances people deeply involved in associative networks. Thanks to the recommendations that these colleagues offered and, specially, to their disposition for helping me in the process of establishing contact with their acquaintances, I found a way of tackling what, at that time, seemed to be an overwhelming task.

With the help that my colleagues – now key informants – provided, I added another four organizations to my list and got the opportunity to talk to the head of the *Subdirecció General d'Associacionisme I Voluntariat*[13] (SGAV). I then repeated the procedure – phone calls and letters – with the newly added organizations, and finally got to schedule a first interview with three of them. As for the conversations with the head of the SGAV, he offered me access to the Volunteering Summer School, so I could get in touch with members of different organizations.

Gaining access to organizations in a significant way was not always an easy task. Looking back to the beginnings of the process, I can say that in many occasions, difficulties in gaining access were often due to issues of timing. A chronic state of scarcity with regard to resources and collaborators generates a work overload that keeps members of an association extremely busy. In a few cases, especially when I asked for access to decision making arenas, I faced endless chains of delays in which my contact with the organization asked me to speak with another member, and so on. In many occasions, when anticipating a not very promising result, I found myself trying to take advantage of the few opportunities of talking to members of a given Third Sector entity, so I could collect some meaningful accounts during those brief encounters.

[13] General Section for Associationism and Volunteering, from the Catalonia Government.

Anyway, it would be unfair not to recognize that there were some exceptions in which members of the board of a Third Sector organization were willing to collaborate and facilitate my work in every possible way. It is not a coincidence that the contact with these organizations had been made through recommendations of my colleagues. These exceptions were crucial, because they offered me the opportunity of developing an in-depth account of their activities, concerns and opinions.

As a result of the first attempts of establishing contacts with organizations included in my first selection, I started the data collection with eight Third Sector entities. But the sampling process did not end there. According to the design, specifically that of the snowball sampling, I had considered the possibility of including more organizations by taking advantage of recommendations made by people from the organizations that I had included in the first place. This approach turned out to be very useful in the process, because it allowed me to get access to another eight organizations. Besides, I got access to two governmental organisms in which Third Sector organizations had representation, and the special event that I have mentioned above (the Volunteering Summer School).

The sample of organizations as it was finally composed appears in Figure 7. Two of the organizations included are surrounded by a dashed rectangle. I included this distinction in their representation to make clear that these organizations were not included in the sample as Third Sector organizations, but as institutional spaces in which informants provided access to other Third Sector organizations.

In order to simplify references made to organizations included in the sample, Table 6 includes the complete name of each of them and an acronym – whether it is used by the organization itself or not – that will be used from now on.

One characteristic of the sample that deserves to be underscored is its diversity, both in terms of their scope – professional associations, mutual aid, health, work, development, immigration, etcetera – and in terms of their dimensions and compositions – nine out of 20 organizations were integrated by more organizations.

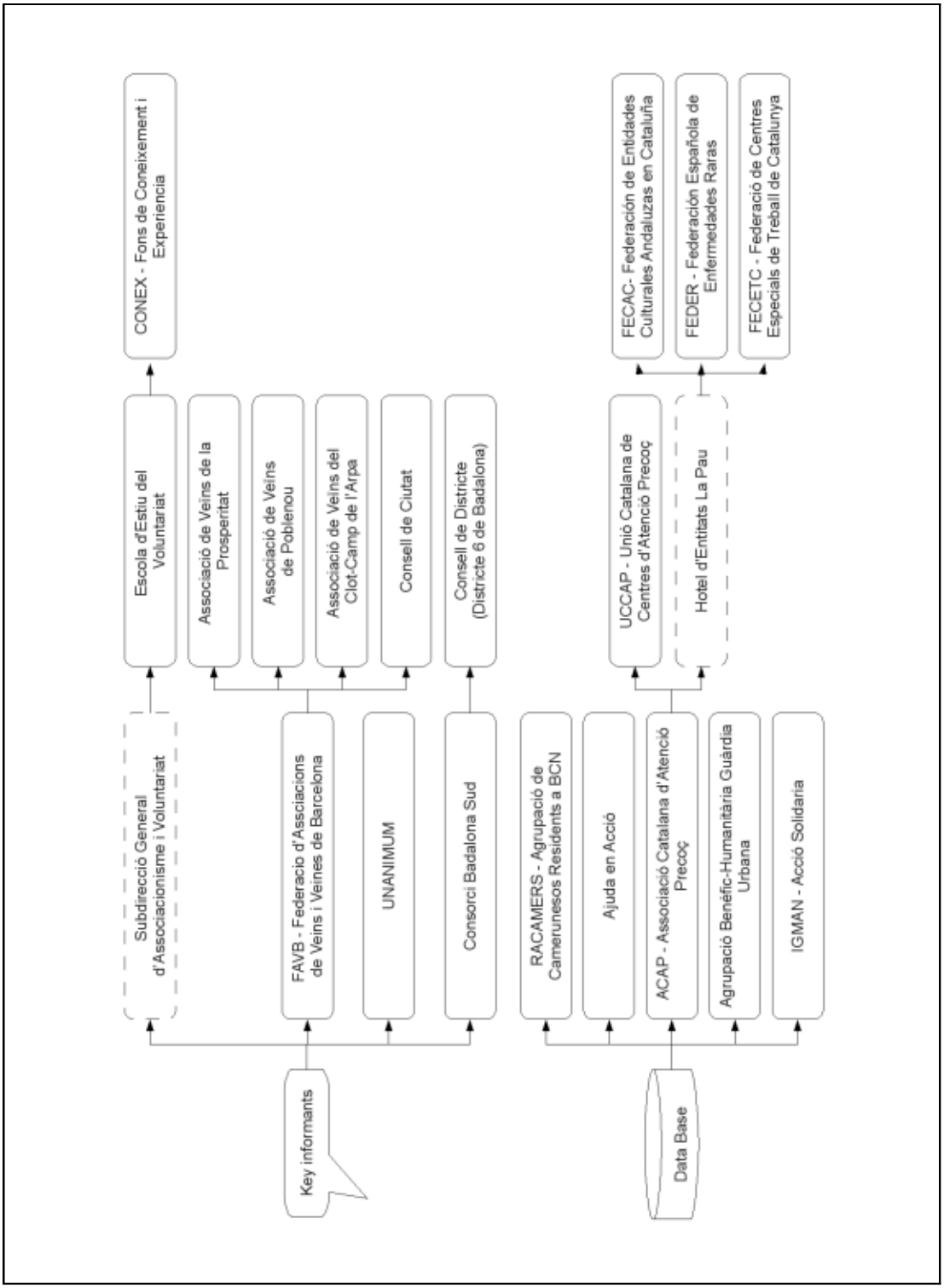

Figure 7.
The sample according to the snowball method

As for the *CC* (City Council of Barcelona), the *CDSB* (Badalona 6th District Council), and the *EVV* (Volunteering Summer School), they were included because they represent a privileged scenario for observing activities that imply actions and relationships among different Third Sector entities, and between them

and the government. Even if such spaces cannot be considered as Third Sector organizations, they are, in their liminal character, inextricable from the Third Sector.

Table 6
Organizations included in the sample and their acronyms

Organization	Data
ACAP - Associació Catalana d'Atenció Precoç	ACAP
Agrupació Benèfic-Humanitària Guàrdia Urbana	ABHGU
Ajuda en Acció	AjA
Associació de Veïns de la Prosperitat	AVPr
Associació de Veïns de Poblenou	AVPo
Associació de Veïns del Clot-Camp de l'Arpa	AVCCA
CONEX - Fons de Coneixement i Experiencia	CONEX
Consell de Ciutat de Barcelona*	CC
Consell del Districte 6 de Badalona*	CDSB
Consorci Badalona Sud	CBS
Escola d'Estiu del Voluntariat*	EEV
FECAC- Federación de Entidades Culturales Andaluzas en Cataluña	FECAC
FAVB - Federacio d'Assciacions de Veins i Veines de Barcelona	FAVB
FECETC - Federació de Centres Especials de Treball de Catalunya	FECETC
FEDER - Federación Española de Enfermedades Raras	FEDER
IGMAN - Acció Solidaria	IGMAN
RACAMERS - Agrupació de Camerunesos Residents a BCN	RACAMERS
UCCAP - Unió Catalana de Centres d'Atenció Precoç	UCAP
UNANIMUM	UNANIMUM

As for the categorization of organizations included in the sample, Table 7 shows which organizations were finally assigned to each type of the classificatory scheme.

According to the classificatory scheme, I sought to gain access to an equal number of organizations per type. Nevertheless, I had to pay less attention to this purpose in order to take advantage of recommendations made by members of

organizations in which I had already gained access so I could gain access to other organizations. Besides, in many occasions, I had to change the original categorization when the information I was able to obtain during the first encounters led me to do so.

Table 7
Organizations per type according to the classificatory scheme

Criteria		Engagement	
		Engaged	Non-engaged
Paradigmaticy	Paradigmatic	IGMAN FAVB AVPo AVCCA AVPr	FEDER ACAP ABHGU CONEX
	Liminal	CBS CC AjA CDSB	UNANIMUM FECAC RACAMERS FECETC EEV UCCAP

7.8. Data collection

In each organization, data collection started with the first interview. Besides of negotiating the access and looking for an informed consent from the part of the organization, in every case, I tried to take advantage of the first encounter so I could carry out the general interview, according to the contents of the script that have been presented in Table 4. The script proved to be useful, because it allowed me to conduct the interview in a flexible manner, adjusting the sequence of addressed issues according to the direction of the conversation. With the exception of some interviewees whose availability was reduced to a few minutes, I often got to explore practically all of the topics that I had included in the general interview and, in some cases, I even got to address some topics included only in the specific interview. This proved to be a good tactic, because it helped me to create a meaningful set of data, even in those cases in which the contact with the organization was limited to that first interview. Table 8 displays the outcomes of

the fieldwork according to each organization. Specifics on who was interviewed, what situations were observed, and what documents were collected is included.

Table 8
Data collected per organization: interviews, observations and collected materials (part 1)*

Organization	Data
ACAP	Interviews: - The manager of the association (brochure on their training program, annual report on early childhood intervention in Catalonia, scientific journal of the association, white paper on early childhood intervention)
ABHGU	Interviews: - Current and former Presidents Observation: - Daily activities - Periodic aid delivery: economic supplement for retired urban guards
AjA	Interviews: - The manager of the catalan delegation (annual report, bimonthly magazine)
AVPr	Interviews: - President
AVPo	Interviews: - President (references to documents in the Web site of the association) Observation: - Annual Assembly of the Association
AVCCA	Interviews: - Senior member
CBS	Interviews: - A technician on culture and leisure (handout with intervention plans, handout with participative procedures for the annual planning, work group meeting minutes, application form for proposing needs, goals and actions) - Project manager Observation: - Location and surrounding area - Daily activities (blue book: foundational document) - Plenary session
CC	Observation: - Plenary session (agenda and documents related to the municipal action plan: statistical data about the results of the participative process, sectorial reports and contributions of the City Council)

Table 8
Data collected per organization: interviews, observations and collected materials (part 2)*

Organization	Data
CDSB	Observation: - Plenary session (draft of civic by-law)
CONEX	Interviews: - Two senior volunteers (brochure of the association, fliers and brochures of their activities and services, informative handouts, statute)
EVV	Observation: - Workshop on participation (handout of the workshop) - Workshop on teamwork and volunteer management (handout of the workshop, articles and questionnaire on volunteer's motivations) - Encounters and conversations during breaks
FAVB	Interviews: - President (book about the history of urban movements in Barcelona, journal of the FAVB, handout about good practices in neighborhood associations, proposals of the federation for the municipal action plan, newsletters and magazines of neighborhood associations, diagram of the process of internal debate for the municipal action plan, documents of the last general assembly of the FAVB, brochure on how to rent a flat in Barcelona) - Technical manager (book about the neighborhoods of Barcelona) Observation: - Daily activities - Meeting on the facilities and services plan (files in the Web site of the FAVB)
FECAC	Interviews: - An advisor of the president - The secretary of the federation
FECETC	Interviews: - A technician and an administrative worker
FEDER	Interviews: - The Catalan delegate and a member of the board (brochure of the federation, annual report, annual plan) Observation: - Delegation's Assembly
FECETC	Interviews: - A technician and an administrative worker
IGMAN	Interviews: - Senior member (magazine of the organization)

Table 8
Data collected per organization: interviews, observations and collected materials (part 3)

Organization	Data
RACAMERS	Interviews: - President (brochure of the association)
UCCAP	Interviews: - The manager of the association
UNANIMUM	Interviews: - Former treasurer

* As I explained before, the collection of documents was included as an activity associated to interviews and observation. According to this prescription, all collected materials were included when they were mentioned or delivered to me by interviewees or people involved in observed situations. References to those materials appear in parenthesis, right after the interview or the observation in which they were brought by.

Contrary to what I had in mind before the beginning of the fieldwork, interviews and observations followed different paths in each organization. In some cases I only conducted the general interview, while in others, I started with observations since the first contact. In fact, the original sequence of the design, which included the general interview, followed from observations and from specific interviews, was carried out only in those organizations with which I got involved on a regular basis.

The outcomes of the fieldwork are summarized as follows: 19 interviews to members of organizations, observation of daily life activities in three organizations, observation of non-ordinary events in eight organizations, and the collection of 34 documents in 12 organizations (Table 9).

In a manner similar to that of the sampling strategy, the differences between the previous design of the data collection and its effective development were the product of decisions made with regard to contingencies that appear during the fieldwork. Nevertheless, changes proved to be effective because they allowed me to establish a wide map of the organizations included in the sample that later was complemented with a progressive focus in the activities and conditions of operation of some of those organizations.

Table 9
*Overview of collected materials per organization**

Organization	Interviews	Observation		Documents
		Daily life	Events	
ACAP	1***			4
ABHGU	1**	X	X	
AjA	1			2
AVPr	1			
AVPo	1		X	1
AVCCA	1			
CONEX	1**			4
CC			X	3
CDSB			X	1
CBS	2	X	X	5
EEV			X	1
FECAC	2			
FAVB	2	X	X	8
FECETC	1**			
FEDER	1**		X	3
IGMAN	1			1
RACAMERS	1			1
UCCAP	1***			
UNANIMUM	1			
Total	19			34

* While in the case of interviews and documents the table specifies the number of each, in the case of observations the 'X' marks those cases in which they were carried out.

** Each of these interviews was made to two members of the correspondent entities.

*** In this particular case, both interviews were made to the same individual, who, simultaneously, occupies the position of manager in the ACAP and the UCCAP.

As explained before, the original design included what I called pre-analysis, the ongoing elaboration of a data base composed by references to the materials produced or retrieved during the fieldwork. While the original design of the data base included fields with regard to the topics that each material contained, questions that arose with regard to such materials and further lines of inquiry, its final form included yet another field in which practical questions about contingencies were recorded. Besides of being a useful aid when making

decisions during the fieldwork and keeping record of them, such data base allowed me to identify possible theoretical implications among those practical constraints that would require to be properly addressed during the analysis (e.g. the scarcity of resources and compromised collaborators, the way in which the involvement of an individual in several organizational settings contributes to articulate specific associative networks, the use of ITCs as an ersatz for face-to-face encounters, etcetera).

The set of materials that resulted from the data collection was thus the outcome of a wide, general approach to all cases and a series of specific, detailed approaches to some of those cases. The next section describes how these materials were prepared for the analysis.

7.9. Data processing

Data processing included the transcription of interviews and observations, as well as the digitalization of collected documents. The task was performed according to the practical needs specified in the design of the analytical process.

The transcription of interviews was performed with the assistance of the transcription module of the DSS Player Pro, a specialized software that allows the user to regulate the speed of the reproduction of digital recordings and to go back and forth with the aid of a pedal. Since five out of 19 interviews were registered in the form of hand-writing notes, only 14 interviews – 13 hours of recorded material – were fully transcribed. In the process, a basic set of graphic conventions (Vázquez, 1997) was followed to assure the integrity of data, that is, that any relevant aspect of each interview and its transcription were recovered in a standardized manner. In the case of those interviews that were registered through hand-writing notes, the notes were transcribed immediately after the interviews, so that important details were not missed.

With regard to the notes that were taken during observations, the process followed was similar to that of interviews registered by hand-writing notes, being the immediacy of their transcription the most important requisite to assure that each of the details included in the notes taken during the observation were further developed as completely as possible.

As for the documents that were collected while doing interviews and observations, I had to choose an effective way of dealing with them. Considering the variety of formats and contents – reports, brochures, handouts, minutes, press notes, agendas, journals, etcetera –, along with the high volume of data contained in them, I decided to digitalize those sections that seem to be relevant for the purposes of the analysis. Besides, considering that the relevance of any selected section could be highlighted during the analysis, I decided to keep the selection of sections from collected documents open during the analytical process. The digitalization was made with the aid of a scanner. In those cases in which a digital version of the document was available I created image files of the selected excerpts by means of screen captures.

The result of the processing of data was a set of digital files. Interviews and observations were stored in rtf format, and collected documents were stored in jpg format. This set of files, which can be considered as the corpus of the research, was finally composed by 21 files of observations, eight of which were focused on non-ordinary events of different nature, 19 files of interviews, and 34 files with excerpts taken from collected documents. As can be advanced, the length of documents with accounts of observations is the most variable, in a range that goes from 362 words in the smaller one to 3167 in the larger one. Exception made to the case of interviews that were registered by hand-writing notes, the length of interviews range from 5790 words to 16344 words.

7.10. Analysis

Once the corpus had been built, I realized that the high volume of materials that I had to analyze could lead me to open an unmanageable and, worst, unnecessary number of lines of inquiry. At this point of the research, this possibility implied a serious risk, because it could give place to a collection of fragmented, scattered, loosely connected results. In order to establish a clear path for the analysis, I organized the process in two stages. The first stage, which I have called set up analysis, was based on an open, non systematical reading of the corpus in order to produce a set of possible main outcomes that later could serve as the basic guidelines for the analysis. The second stage was an in-depth, systematical analysis, based on a detail interpretation and conceptual elaboration of the corpus. Roughly speaking, the organization of the analytical process can be

described by making reference to the idea of disciplined imagination (Weick, 1989). According to this view, the set up analysis would be focused on the imagination, and the in-depth analysis would be more concerned with the discipline.

7.10.1. Set up analysis

The set up analysis consisted of an open reading of the corpus, so that the great lines for the detailed analysis could be depicted. Based on the goals of the study, the set up analysis was intended to generate some key insights that later could be grouped and synthesized, specifying their relationships and theoretical implications. The outcome of the set up analysis was an analytical script that later served as the main guide and frame of reference during the in-depth analysis. Figure 8 shows the starting point, the steps, and the outcomes of the set up analysis in the form of a diagram. Below, I offer more details on each of the tasks performed during the set up analysis. The description of each of the tasks includes the questions around which they were carried out.

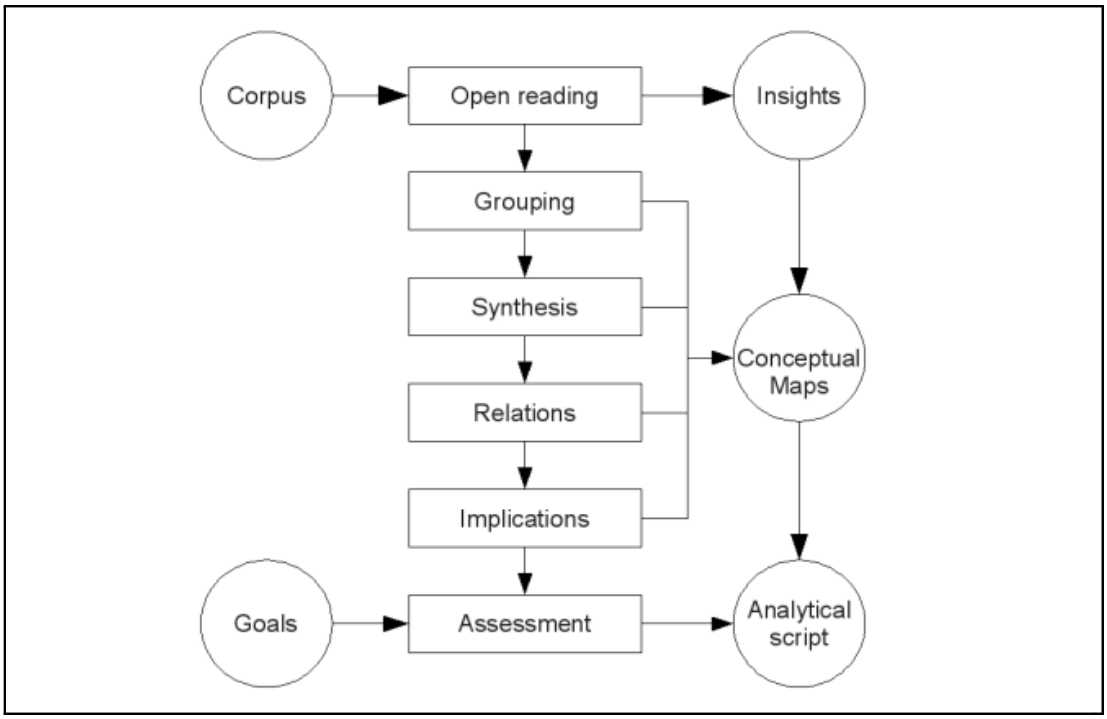

Figure 8.
Diagram of the set up analysis

Insights were the result of an open, non-systematical reading of materials (the corpus) as a first step to establish loosely defined propositions about the empirical

material. Such propositions had a general character and were posed as hypotheses. The production of insights implied a free, interpretive process that later was revisited in order to develop a more accurate delimitation and formulation. The key question that I kept in mind during the process was: What interpretative patterns can I trace from a reading of the empirical materials?[14]

Next, I proceeded with the grouping of the somehow unorganized list of insights. I grouped those anticipated results or, more accurately, proto-results, on the basis of their similarities, but also according to the specific – not necessarily obvious – phenomena to which they were linked. The guiding questions in this process were: How can these proto-results be organized? Towards which kind of conclusions does the material lead?

Later, I sought to make sense of the groups of proto-results from the point of view of the goals and the conceptual framework of the study. The process, which implied a higher level of abstraction, was guided by the following question: How can these suggested results be formulated in a conceptual key? The task, which was focused on the transformation of those groups of proto-results into different sets of categories, implied a considerable effort of synthesis.

later, I entered into a reflective work focused on the implications and the meaning of the categories that resulted from the conceptual formulation of grouped proto-results. Besides, along with the elaboration of implications, I also sought to explore and define possible relationships among those categories. This stage of the set up analysis gave place to a series of interrelated terms graphically represented in the form of conceptual maps. The process was carried out with the aid of CmapTools, a specialized software for elaborating and sharing conceptual maps. The leading questions here were: Which kind of interpretation of the phenomenon under scrutiny can be done from the lens of a conceptual elaboration of suggested results? What kind of links can be established among the different suggested results?, What adjustments or redefinitions of suggested results are likely to be required considering the relationships among them?

Next, I assessed the conceptual maps of proto-results in their final elaboration. By means of a simultaneous reading of the aims of the research project and the conceptual elaboration, implications and links among suggested results, I sought

[14] A brief description of the outcomes of this task can be consulted in Appendix 2.

to locate each of the outcomes of the set up analysis in one of the four research objectives. Key questions in the process were: To which extent does the conceptual elaboration of the proto-results cover the scope of the research questions and goals? How do the outcomes of the set-up analysis answer the research questions? As, in general terms, the resulting conceptual maps[15] seemed to cover the scope of the aims of the study, I proceeded with the elaboration of an analytical script based on such maps.

The analytical script was conceived to serve as a guide during the in-depth analysis. It implied the design of a previous structure of results in which the detailed interpretation of empirical materials could be located. This previous structure included the main lines of the analysis, their possible internal organization and the kind of arguments they were intended to support in order to render the results and their interpretation intelligible. Guiding questions in the elaboration of the analytical script were: Which elements need to be taken into account in the development and presentation of the analysis? How can their main arguments be supported and illustrated?

A relevant decision made during the elaboration of the analytical script was that of developing the in-depth analysis according to the structure of the maps elaborated during the set up analysis. Each of the three resulting maps was focused on distinctive phenomena: (1) the activities by which Third Sector entities seek to gain influence in relevant decision arenas; (2) the functioning of Third Sector organizations; and (3) the interplay between implicit intentionalities and current participatory practices.

The idea of mapping practices of participation in the Third Sector will be properly addressed in the next chapters, along with the results of the analysis. Nevertheless, it is important to advance that the organization of the analysis and its results according to different maps was included not only as a formal resource, but also as a representational device that is congruent with the properties of the phenomena under scrutiny. As the early interpretation of empirical materials lead me to focus on practices as activities and relationships located at different plains and scales, the mapping of those practices, the links among them, and their

[15] See Appendix 3.

implications in each plain and scale arose as a good path for render them intelligible.

7.10.2. In-depth analysis

The in-depth analysis was carried out according to the framework provided by the analytical script and the maps elaborated during the set up analysis. Figure 9 shows a diagram of each of the steps taken, including their outcomes.

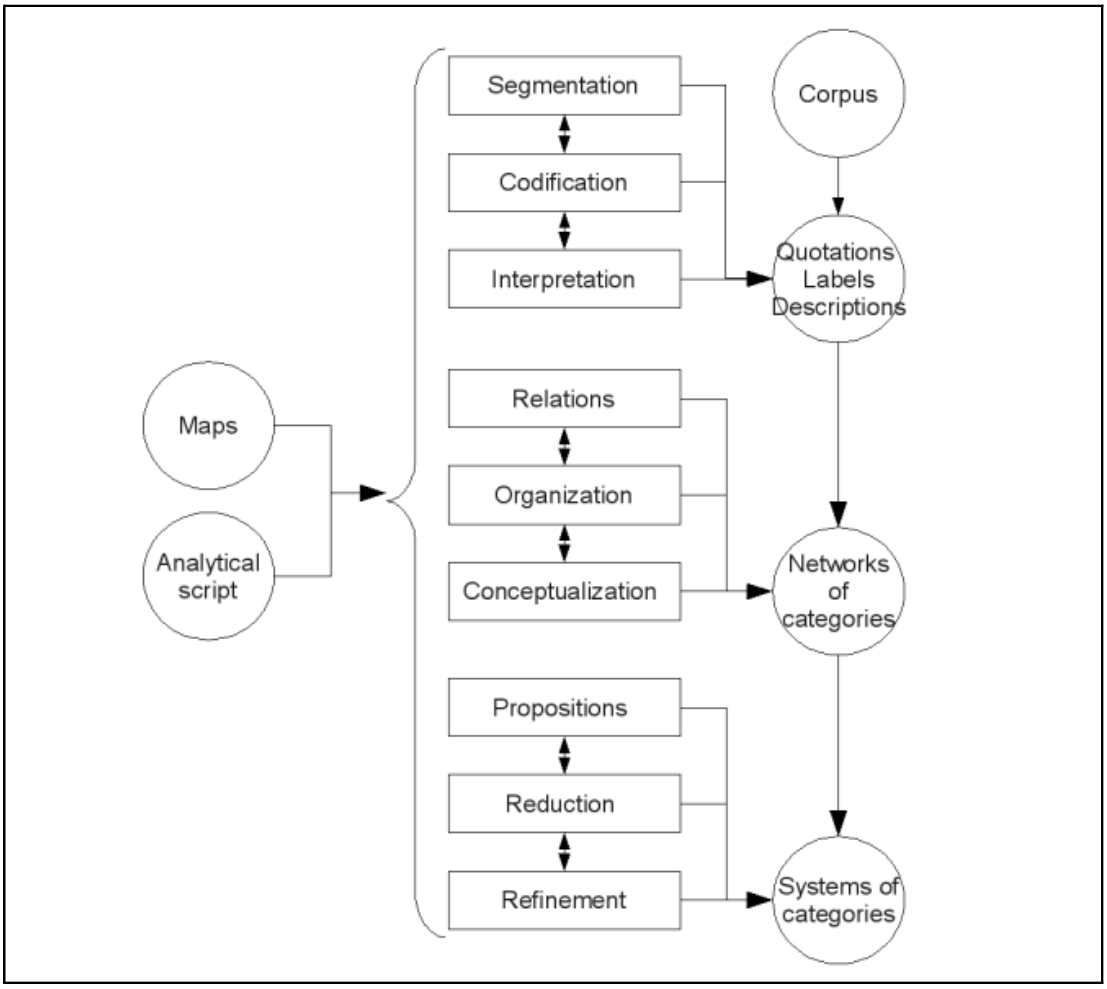

Figure 9.
Diagram of the in-depth analysis

The diagram displays the activities of the analysis organized in a sequence composed of three blocks, each one including three interrelated tasks. The process was not strictly linear. During the development of one block of tasks, activities related to tasks that were part of the other two blocks were also performed whenever I thought they were required. Nevertheless, the sequential

organization remains pertinent because the outcomes of each block served as the inputs of the next block.

For practical purposes, the in-depth analysis was carried out with the aid of ATLAS.ti 5.2. The preparation of the corpus according to the requirements of the software implied the creation of a hermeneutic unit and the assignation as primary documents of the files that contained interviews, observations and excerpts from collected documents.

According to the tasks comprised in the first block, I started the analysis with a meticulous review of the materials included in the corpus. The aim of this step was to elaborate an organized description of the information according to the interests of the analysis. This description was the result of a recursive process in which meaningful pieces of the corpus were selected, labeled, and interpreted. According to the terminology of the ATLAS.ti, which is based on the Grounded Theory, the first step implied (1) the segmentation of texts and images in the form of quotations; (2) the codification of such quotations; and (3) the elaboration of comments – the interpretative description – associated to each quotation.

This step was guided by the search for the meaning of the materials that were being reviewed. At the beginning, the labeling process took me considerable effort. Each new selection of text and its resulting quotation seem to require a code of its own. Nevertheless, as the process advanced, new quotations seemed to fit already elaborated codes. As for the guiding function of the outcomes of the set up analysis, most of the labels used in the process were adapted from the terms included in the analytical script elaborated during the set up analysis.

A similar thing occurred with the development of the interpretative description of each quotation. Each of the quotations linked to the same code seemed to add something new, even in a subtle way, to the analysis – otherwise they would not have been selected. But as common patterns emerged during the interpretative process, some of those patterns seemed to apply when commenting the content of quotations linked to the same code. The interpretative description was inspired by the relationships included in the maps elaborated during the set up analysis. Special attention was paid to absences, things that were taken for granted or silenced.

The second block of tasks was mainly focused on the labels produced during the first block. Again, the tasks comprised in this block were developed in a recursive manner. First of all, I reviewed descriptions of quotations linked to each label or code in order to develop an incipient definition of the code. Then, according to the properties included in the definition of each code, I explored possible relations between different pairs of codes. As in the former block of tasks, the maps elaborated during the set up analysis were helpful, because they allowed me to anticipate most of the relation I finally established. At the beginning of this task, I used the relation types that the ATLAS.ti includes in its default setting. Later, I had to modify them so that they were congruent with the framework of the study. Table 10 includes the resulting set of relation types I finally used.

Table 10
ATLAS.ti code-to-code relations used during the analysis

Relation	Type
A is associated with B	Symmetric
A is based on B	Asymmetric
A mutual reinforcement B	Symmetric
A is part of B	Transitive
A generates B	Asymmetric
A codetermine B (A determined B and *vice versa*)	Symmetric
A constrains B	Asymmetric
A contradicts B (and *vice versa*)	Symmetric
A is a B	Transitive
A manages B	Asymmetric
A 'no name' B	Symmetric
A is property of B	Asymmetric
A requires B	Asymmetric
A substitutes B	Asymmetric

Once the work on the relations between pairs of codes was almost finished, I started to look for different ways to organize the resulting networks. Using the conceptual maps as a guide, I established several groups of interrelated concepts. The criteria by which the grouping was made was composed of two conditions: (1) each code should be linked to another code included in the group; and (2) the resulting group of codes and the relations among them should allow me to

account for a specific phenomenon or feature of the practices under scrutiny. ATLAS.ti offered me two specific tools for this task: the creation and management of networks, which was the most useful, and the creation and management of code families.

During the creation of groups of codes, the incipient definitions were reviewed, modified, and developed in order to take into account the implications of their inclusion in one or more groups of interrelated codes. Following the same logic, some of the existing relations were modified, others were eliminated, and yet new ones were identified and established. The product of the second block of analytical tasks was thus a series of networks[16], each of which included well-defined, interrelated codes that, at this point could be referred to as categories.

The third block consisted of three closely related tasks, the purpose of which was to review the results of the whole process in order to (1) write down a series of comprehensive propositions capable of offering a accurate, abstract account of the main findings; (2) identify and solve redundancies in the form of equivalent or similar categories or relations among categories; and (3) clarify and structure the relations among the networks of categories.

I began to develop some propositions along with the first and second blocks of analytical tasks. Nevertheless, it was not until the networks of categories were completed that I systematically elaborated those propositions. Throughout the process, I used the ATLAS.ti memo manager to keep track of the propositions so I could easily add new ones or modify an existing one. Regardless of the extended length of time it required, the elaboration of the propositions allowed me to transform the interpretive descriptions into a more abstract account of the categories and their relations. When the development of the propositions was almost complete, I grouped them into five memo families. Three of the families were more abstract elaborations of the phenomena addressed by the conceptual maps that resulted from the set up analysis: (1) activities for gaining influence as economic exchanges; (2) the organizational functioning as a network of actions and relations; and (3) the interplay between intentionalities and practices as loosely coupled systems of general expectations and specific undertakings. With regard to the rest of the families, one was devoted to methodological issues – the

[16] See Appendix 4.

propositions it contained were the basis for those chapters – and the other included further lines of inquiry.

During the elaboration of the propositions, I developed a progressive refinement and organization of the former outcomes of the analysis. Through the refinement process I sought to (1) review the structure of the networks of categories so I could distinguish axial categories; (2) identify unrelated codes that had been put aside during the process, (2) reorganize the networks of categories in a hierarchical form; (3) review the definitions of axial categories and develop observations about their relations with other categories; and (4) select some quotations directly or indirectly linked to the axial categories and check out if their interpretative descriptions were congruent with the propositions. In the process of refinement and organization, I had to go back and forth from one element to another (from categories to propositions, from definitions to networks, and so on) so I could assure the structural coherence and empirical foundation of the results.

I have to say that, once that that the systems of categories were fully organized and elaborated, I realized that I could keep working indefinitely on the refinement of the results without adding any significant feature. At that point, I decided to conclude the analytical process and move on to the next step.

In order to illustrate the dimensions of the outcomes of the analysis in quantitative terms, Table 11 displays the number of ATLAS.ti elements created during the process.

Table 11
Number of ATLAS.ti elements elaborated during the analysis

Element	Number
Primary documents	74
Quotations	831
Codes	145
Code-to-code links	318
Memos	42
Networks	21
Primary document families	8
Code families	8
Memo families	5

On one side, quotations, codes, and relations between codes are the most numerous elements, because they are related with the early exploration and description of empirical material. On the other side, Memos and networks are less numerous because they constitute devices for the synthesis and conceptual organization of information drawn from the interpretation of empirical materials.

The final outcomes of the analysis are composed by three systems of categories. Organized in the form of a map, each system of categories offers an account of participative practices in terms of spatial relations located at a distinguishable plain and scale. The following chapters offer a detailed account of such maps.

8. Three maps of participation in the Third Sector

The outcomes of the analysis are presented in the form of three maps that show the ways in which participation and Third Sector are achieved through a dense matrix of practices. Each map is focused on a different layer of that matrix: distinctive forms of talk, the embodiment of procedures, and different sets of activities that are exchanged. The ongoing performance of practices and their traces have been the focus of attention during empirical work. As with any interpretive process, the leading questions and the framework in which they find their meaning have been the basis for distinguishing what is relevant from what is not. These questions have provided a language that enabled us to 'write the field' of participation in *power-clef*, using a conceptual notation that is based on the possibility of drawing at different scales the boundaries, locations, and flows that result from the more or less stable patterns that emerge with the practices that have been addressed.

8.1. Third Sector: its components, its neighbors, and its ground

Before offering the results of the analysis, it is necessary to settle the framework in which they are rooted. Considering that there are different and contesting approaches to Third Sector, and that organizations that belong to it can adopt a wide range of juridical forms depending on the country or region in which they operate, it is useful to start the exposition of results with the specification of a common set of terms that helps to make sense of the phenomenon under study.

Organizations that belong to Third Sector are going to be referred to by the generic term 'entity' and any consideration of their juridical form will only be included when it proves to be fruitful for the aims of the analysis. A further distinction among entities has to be drawn. Since there is a specific modality of entity that is characterized by being composed by the joining of other entities, it

makes sense to stress a difference that proves to play an important role in the ways in which participation is enacted. This is why, when speaking about entities, two basic modalities will be taken into account. 'Coordinative-representative entity' is the term by which the grouping – or 'second level' – modality of Third Sector organization is designated. Non-representative Third Sector organizations – those that are usually called 'first level associations' – will be referred to as 'grassroots entities'. A third type, which includes those collective undertakings that group different entities around a specific concern and have a temporary character, will be referred to as 'joint undertaking'. Public sector organizations will be referred to as 'government' or as 'governmental agencies', depending on their degree of specialization. Political parties will also be considered as belonging to the Public Sector. A distinction will be made between parties in government and opposition parties. Finally, Private Sector organizations in turn will be referred to as 'for-profit enterprises'.

These terms are intended to settle the ground for a common denomination of the major areas of activity and forms of organization this study is focused on. The starting point of that set of terms is the recognition of the Third Sector as an organized area of activity that can be distinguished from the Public and Private Sectors – which make reference to government and private, for-profit enterprises respectively. The key for a distinction can be found in two features that are neither free of controversy nor ambiguity: a) the origin and location of the effort upon which the activity is founded and b) the kind of aims it pursues. The distinction rests upon a transference and combination of characteristics that are taken for granted when dealing with Private and Public Sector. About the first feature, the origin and location of the activity, Third Sector is characterized by its belonging to private initiatives. Nevertheless, in terms of aims and interests, Third Sector activity pursues what is usually called the public well being. In other words, in terms of aims, Third Sector is expected to be public, but in terms of origin and ownership it is private in the sense that it includes those efforts that are neither rooted in nor directly managed by any governmental – public – organization.

8.2. Mapping the Third Sector activities at different layers

Results have been deployed in the form of three grand maps (Chapters 9, 10, and 11). Together, these maps offer a wide, multilayer picture on participative

practices in the Third Sector. This picture is focused on the functioning of Third Sector, its imaginaries, its relations with the Public and Private Sectors and its links with daily life. These aspects are disentangled to identify power phenomena and their effects or, in other words, the constraints they impose, the ways in which the imposition is performed and the consequences they have.

Each map shows aspects of participatory practices that are located at different levels an thus require particular approaches and forms of representation: (1) a wide view of inter-sectorial and intra-sectorial exchanges of civic goods; (2) the creation, development, and functioning of Third Sector organizations; and (3) the meanings, intentionalities, and expectations that shape day to day activities in these organizations.

With regard to the elaboration of maps, it is important to remember that the decision of their inclusion is not based on formal concerns only. During the analysis of participatory practices, we started to identify different layers and scales – exchanges, functioning and meanings – at which the practices could be located. Each level made sense in as much as their delimitation allowed us to identify particular properties of the practices under scrutiny, including their rules of codification. Since these properties were only conceivable as the result of the location of their correspondent practices in an specific quadrant of a particular layer, it seemed to us that it was not only desirable but also mandatory to develop each layer and present the outcomes of the analysis according to them. Moreover, since each layer emerged with the codification of particular configurations of spatial relations – be it the boundary-loaded space of exchanges, the detailed space of organizational functioning, or the diffuse space of aims, intentions and expectations – the very concept of map was, for practical purposes, unavoidable.

8.2.1. Third Sector activities in a market

The first map (Chapter 9) offers a view of the relationships between government and Third Sector organizations through the lens of an approach called 'economy of civic activities'. From this perspective, Third Sector activity is interpreted in terms of its capabilities and interests in the production, distribution and acquisition of civic activities and, thus, as belonging to a specific market system in which those activities, in a manner similar to that of goods, circulate across intra and inter-sectorial boundaries. Here, the sense of rationality that is intrinsic to the

apparent irrationality in which the experience of value or interest is founded is explored according to the exchanges in which it emerges and the relationships through which those exchanges are made possible. This leads to an economical map of Third Sector participation, which is focused on the relative permeability of that boundaries, and attempts to identify the forces that regulate that permeability and their consequences in some important features of the market such as the prices given to specific civic activities, the attempts to establish a monopoly on some of those activities, the struggles over the criteria that define the quality and, thus, the value of a given activity and the cues that lead to disentangle the functions and effects of a gray market.

The most remarkable findings of this line of inquiry include (1) a set of growing forces located in the activity of the government that push towards the substitution of the role of Third Sector as a retailer in the market of civic activities; (2) the tendency to foster the conversion of Third Sector entities into extensions of the Public Sector; and (3) the relative efficacy of resistances and oppositions to these pressures and tendencies. As a whole, Third Sector appears as a necessary element in such market because of the recycling function it performs. Such recycling function, which is partially a result of the consideration of spare time as a dysfunction, can be seen as a distinctive feature of Third Sector, one that is rooted in the idea of voluntary work. In spite of the existence of special cases, specific Third Sector entities are highly dispensable from the point of view of the market, and can be easily substituted by other entities.

8.2.2. Third Sector entities through their organizational arrangements

The second map (Chapter 10) shows the functioning of Third Sector entities, specifically their movements and internal dynamics. This map, to which we have named 'physical', is focused on the social and praxeological dimensions of organizational processes. According to this, organizational activity is addressed in terms of relations among agents and sets of practices.

Special attention has been given to the constraints that the location of Third Sector in front of the Private Sector and, fundamentally, the Public Sector, imposes to Third Sector entities. According to this line of interpretation, it is worth to look for conditions that shape the organizational arrangements and participatory encounters that characterize Third Sector. Special attention is paid to the links

between procedures and nondecision processes, which find their conditions of possibility not only in the strategical use of existing biases, but also in the ways decisions are made. Decision making processes are explored as series of highly formalized activities that reduce the possibility of unpredictable outcomes to appear.

As an extension of the search for constraints that are not obvious at a first glance, another aspect that has gained considerable relevancy through the analysis is the enactment of a specific rationality. Such rationality imposes its own needs and informs the processes by which certain organizational arrangements are developed. Here, I describe what we have called the 'apex' as the functional embodiment of that rationality.

The physical map also includes some interesting findings on the centrality of time, its images, and its use. Time is underscored as a key aspect for understanding why Third Sector entities seem to operate under a chronic state of delay and urgency. Finally, as a bridge between this map – a physical map of participation – and the economical map, Third Sector activity is presented as a set of devices that transform certain raw materials (e.g. spare time or spontaneous public demonstrations) in order to make them suitable to effectively enter into the legal market of civic goods. Along with this point, an emphasis is made on the implications that this transformation process has in organizational arrangements of Third Sector entities, underlining their disciplinary effects on the grassroots. The institutionalization of collective undertakings appears as the distinctive mark of Third Sector, a process in which formalization generates its own needs, transforming practices and agents involved in a manner that is suitable with those of the Public and Private Sectors.

8.2.3. Third Sector as the place of the proper thinking

The third map (Chapter 11), which we have called 'meteorological', is focused on the symbolic dynamics by which memories and expectations take a part in the life of TS entities. An attempt is made to understand the production of meanings that lead the activity of this sector. This map shows the meanings that shape the relation between past, present and future – which is the reason for including the adjective 'meteorological' in its name. In order to do so, the map includes issues such as (1) the narrowing effect that the future and the past – as comfortable

places to inhabit - have over the present; (2) the diverse forms of talk that built the situations through which the activities of Third Sector are conducted; (3) the centrality of certain good-thinking things as expressions that discourage actual debates; and (4) the constant appeal to certain principles that are neither unproblematic nor univocal (e. g. legitimacy, efficacy, participation, debate).

Regarding the most outstanding findings of this map, we would like to underscore (1) the erosion or transformation of the sense of a mission in TS entities, (2) the progressive though never definitive advance of managerial and specialized forms of talk, in front of common sense-based forms of talk; and (3) the effects produced by the proper thinking of a situation that agents' activity defines as participative.

Throughout the three maps, three interpretive lines on participation are underlined: a) a look to organizational arrangements of TS entities as a set of standardizing disciplinary devices; b) a focus on the shaping effects of the exchangeability of activities produced by TS entities; and c) an emphasis on the transformation and displacement of the sense of a mission in Third Sector entities as a result of formalization processes and the deployment of the proper thinking.

9. An economical map: the market of participation

The results presented in this section are based on an approach to TS activity that conceives it as both the product and the producer of a specific market. The specificity of this market can be found (1) in the properties of the value by which some activities and outcomes generated by the Third Sector function as goods; (2) in the processes through which such goods are produced, collected, transformed and offered; and (3) in the balanced instability of the network of exchanges that enables the market to function.

An approach like this is intended to offer some interesting insights on (1) the structuring role that the Third Sector plays in front of daily-life; (2) the role of daily life concerns and common sense-based activities, which are, to a large extent, a primary fount of raw materials; and (3) the ambivalent and unbalanced relations between Third Sector and Public Sector.

9.1. Economy as a lens

In order to provide a framework for the following pages, some preventions have to be made. A market-like approach to the Third Sector requires dealing with the specificity of the value given to the goods that circulate through its channels. This approach has not to be confused with an attempt of analyzing TS entities and activities in terms of their financial characteristics and implications (e.g. their impact as sources of employment)[17]. Instead of looking for an account of those economical factors that, from an exterior position, are related to the domain of activity of the Third Sector, the purpose here is to deal with the specificity of the Third Sector from the point of view of its dynamics of generation and exchange of

[17] A quest like this would necessarily require of tools and concepts of economics. From an economical perspective in the strict sense, the specificity of TS activities is to be found in a domain other than that of the market, with some sort of outside-inside relationship. No doubt that this is an area of inquiry by its own right, but our analytical efforts have followed a different direction.

a special form of goods. As this form of goods finds its particular character in the value of the objects and activities upon which the Third Sector operates, the kind of market that arises with the circulation of such goods has its own premises and principles.

Our aim here thus, is not to establish a balance, to use a term that belongs to accounting. As during the first stages of the analysis exchanges and the generation of value started to gain a major place as a phenomenon that was involved in practically every sphere of activity of TS entities, a decision was made to borrow the language of economics in order to reach a better comprehension of exchanges and their implications. The economical approach that has informed the analysis is specifically focused in the ecologic and symbolic dimensions of exchanges. The emphasis on the ecologic dimension is worth to be made because it seeks to locate exchanges, understood as economical activity, in specific zones of daily life, which is the territory in which the Third Sector and its neighbors operate. As for the symbolic dimension, it has proved to be useful considering the goals of this research, because it stresses the centrality of meaning as an element of those economical activities that plays a major role in any attempt to properly understand the forms of exchanges and the generation or acquisition of value.

The concept of market, conceived as a defined structure that includes and organizes its own meanings, institutions, agents and practices in order to enable the exchange of certain kinds of goods, has proved to be helpful in the analysis of participation. To advance the necessity of addressing TS activity in terms of its embeddedness in a specific market, it is worth to consider the role that TS entities play as providers of spaces and procedures in which certain forms of participation can be produced. Public Sector, and to a lesser extent, Private Sector, is willing to offer funds, advice and facilities in order to assure that those forms of participation can be achieved. Of course, this demand of certain forms of participation has considerable effects. Let us consider for instance how access to resources can effectively foster those undertakings that are not contrary to the policies that a local government follows in regard to an issue, while diminishing or posing difficulties to other undertakings that follow a different direction. Thinking of the Third Sector as zone deeply embedded in a specific market allows us to better

understand its role in the collection, production, refinement and distribution of civic goods, an idea that will be developed in the following pages.

9.2. Civic value and civic goods

As civic goods are the keystone for understanding TS activities as part of a market, it is indispensable to clarify their definitional properties and contents. The term *civic good* is referred to any object, material or immaterial, activity or outcome, that (1) is located in the domain of public life; (2) is intended to fulfill certain needs or purposes; (3) is subjected to demands and offers; (4) has a value that fluctuates in every time it is estimated; and (5) can be exchanged according to its value. Value is always established according to the capacity of any activity or outcome to increase the potential influence that a given agent can exert on public issues.

The domain that defines the specificity of civic goods is thus composed by issues that are recognizable as a matter of collective concern and are able to be addressed in consonance with their status. Of course, some issues are considered of public concern without any controversy, while others generate intense debates on their public or private status. Nevertheless, the value that a civic activity can acquire does not necessarily require of the issue it addresses to be considered as a public matter beyond any doubt. In order to find out if a given activity has to be considered as a civic one, it is necessary to see if the issue it addresses gets to be located in the social agenda, at least as a subject of debates. This means that the minimal expression of civic activity consists of generating discussions intended to establish if an issue effectively deserves to be considered as public.

At this point, it is pertinent to remember that even well-established public issues such as health, urban development, housing, education and security were once a non-public matter. Their entrance into the domain of public issues can be seen as an historical product, the result of long-range processes of social change. Moreover, in such processes, it was the very definition of the public domain what was being subjected to definition. The most important implication of the recognition of the contingent, historical conformation of the public domain, as a notion, as category that groups some issues, and also as an area of activity, is that it reminds us that civic activity is not a already given fact, but an ongoing

accomplishment, the boundaries and contents of which vary across time and places.

Civic activity is thus the domain of action on public issues, including the processes by which those issues acquire their public character. How then a civic activity or its outcomes get to be able to function as merchandise?

9.2.1. Marketization

What makes a civic good out of a civic activity is that some civic activities are subjected to demand by certain groups, institutions or segments of the population. As the groups, entities or segments of the population that require those civic activities or outcomes are willing to offer something in exchange of those goods, they assume the role of consumers or users. This condition generates a situation in which offer and demand appear. Once the market is created, activities are likely to acquire a different character. In as much as civic activities are required by groups or entities other than those in which they are produced, specific constraints to their production are likely to appear, being one of the most influent the rise of the offer and the progressively growing importance of the role of producer.

As can be seen, the property of being a *civic good* is fundamentally relational. An activity acquires the status of being a good – something that can be exchanged – due to its position in a given situation. According to this, the definition of a civic good is necessarily an open one, because it can include any of the activities that characterize civic life, from a public demonstration that allows for the collective expression of complaints to the elaboration of a detail proposal on neighborhood equipments.

Once that the notion of *civic good* has been drawn, it might be necessary to determine which activities and outcomes get to be treated as goods. During the analysis, a lot of attention has been given to this task. Its importance is due to the need of exploring the relations between the objects that are exchanged, including their form, contents, and conditions of production, along with the exchanges themselves. Identifying what functions as a civic good is then a crucial requirement for any attempt of understanding how the market of participation works and how its components – institutions, organizational arrangements, agents and meanings – enable its operation and, at the same time, are transformed by that operation. In the following pages, we offer a detailed exposition of those

activities and outcomes that function as goods. The different kinds of activities that function as goods are organized according to a classificatory scheme that has no other end but to offer a useful framework for underlining their specificities.

9.3. Varieties of civic activities

An activity gets to be a civic good when expectations on its capacity for exerting influence over public matter raise demands. Such demands, which are crucial for exchanges to appear, are linked to certain needs or purposes, each of which can be conceived as a form of gaining capacity for exerting influence. Hence, it is possible to group civic activities according to the kind of needs they are intended to fulfill. On this basis, we have built a three-level classificatory scheme of civic activities. As the categories of our scheme are organized in terms of the needs that civic values are supposed to satisfy, the scheme itself offers a basis for understanding how each good acquires value.

There are some complex aspects around the notion of *civic good*. Consequently, some observations on the problems derived from these aspects when using the proposed classificatory scheme are first exposed. It is our belief that the following observations, which were drawn from the analysis, will help to clarify not only the premises under which different kinds of civic goods were identified and grouped, but also the particularities of the processes through which they come into being or cease to function as such.

9.3.1. Fluctuating character

The attempt of defining different classes of civic activities can hardly result into a clear and definitive well-delimited set of categories. This difficulty is partially due to the openness that defines a civic good. Openness is not the result of a lack of a better understanding, but a constitutive part of the object it is intended to address. It underscores the constant state of fluctuation of what gets to function as a civic good. This state of fluctuation finds its origins at two different levels. First, it is the outcome of the changing conditions of production, circulation and exchange of the specific good. In as much as civic activities or their outcomes are always located in a network in which specific relations are constantly changing, their specific positions in that network are likely to change too. Second, considering that most civic activities are but moments in the middle of wider processes, and considering

that any specific outcome is usually absorbed by new activities as an input, the form and contents of any potential civic good are also subjected to changes.

The state of fluctuation is one of the most important properties of civic goods. Consider for example the value of a public demonstration in which disagreements with regard to decisions made by the government are made visible. The value of such demonstration is likely to be affected by (1) the relative importance that the issue has for the population; (2) the specific moment in which the demonstration is carried out; (3) the expectations it generates prior to its effective realizations; (4) the locus in which the capacity to exert influence over the issue is located; an so on. When we say that civic goods fluctuate, we are stressing that their value, their form and their contents are subjected to changes, according to their position in a locally unstable and yet, as a whole, balanced market. Moreover, fluctuation allows us to underline the strategic relevance of the management of time, because each civic good has a ripeness level and an expiry point.

At this point, it is worth to consider a specific situation. During the 80's, many neighborhood associations in Spain had to deal with severe changes due to the end of four decades of dictatorship and an accelerated process of transformation toward a democratic system. During the last years of the dictatorship, neighborhood associations functioned as the legal branch of different social movements that were not allowed to openly intervene in public matters. With the arrival of democracy and the legalization of clandestine political parties, the activity of neighborhood associations was diminished as many of their leaders gained positions in government. Nevertheless, this kind of associations continued an important activity, because they allowed many complaints and requirements to be heard by the new democratic government, especially at the local level. The activities performed by neighborhood associations, as well as their structure and functioning were subjected to changes. In some cases, a combination of different conditions such as (1) the presence of a highly dynamic group of leaders; (2) a population mainly conformed by members of the working class; and (3) a long history of struggles and collective undertakings, gave place to wide and organized mobilizations around well-delimited demands or vindications.

In the next excerpt of an interview, an old member of the core of an association that matches the aforementioned conditions offers an account of the ways in

which the entity and people from the neighborhood fought against the construction of a high-speed avenue in the middle of the neighborhood:

> ...la movilización fue… muy fuerte, se recogieron muchas firmas, hicimos unas acciones potentes, era cuando había el campeonato del mundo de fútbol en el noven… 84, un partido de fútbol en medio de la Meridiana, cortando la Meridiana, hicimos un referéndum que votaron 3 o 4 mil personas, ¿no?, y lo interesante es que, cuando la lucha… el… además fue… fue un ejemplo digamos del ayuntamiento lanzando un folleto diciendo en co… contando los dos proyectos, pero el suyo en colorines y el nuestro en blanco y negro, bueno. [18] 20:11 (62:62)[19]

First thing to note is that each of the activities - a soccer game as a form of protest, a referendum and a signature gathering – had as its basis a mobilization process in which members of the population that were affected by the project of the new avenue were informed, enrolled and involved in the struggle. Such mobilization carried with it an organized and not always visible work that consisted of different tasks such as analyzing the situation, establishing different scenarios and possible lines of action, and elaborating an alternative proposal. A second feature that is worth to note is that of the opportunity with which an activity is performed. The specific moment in which the activity is carried out is defined by surrounding events. Those events function as cues that influence the form of specific measures of pressure. In the case of the events indicated above, the Soccer World Cup appears as one of those surrounding events. Opportunity is also related to the timing of activities. It would not make sense to fight against the construction of the high-speed avenue once that it has been built. And yet there is

[18] Mobilization was very strong; many signatures were gathered; we undertook powerful actions; those were the days of the soccer world championship, in the ninth... 1984, a soccer game in the middle of the street, obstructing traffic flow; we organized a referendum in which 3 or 4 thousand people voted, OK?, and what was interesting is that... during the fight... the... ...besides... it was an example, let us say, of the city council publishing a brochure that explained in co... explaining both projects, ours and theirs, but theirs was explained with colors and ours in black and white.

[19] Notation used to identify each quotation has to be understood as follows. Considering that the identification of this quotation is 20:11 (62:62), the first two digits indicate the document to which the quotation belongs (document 20) and the two digits after the colon indicates the number assigned to the quotation. Finally, the digits included inside the parentheses indicate the paragraphs of the document in which the quotation starts and ends.
In order to maintain the integrity of empirical materials, any quotation used throughout this chapter will be kept in Spanish, their original language. Nevertheless, each quotation will include a rough translation as a footnote.

also a third observation. As long as civic activities go in a specific direction or have certain goal, they are contested. The fact that the Barcelona government published a brochure intended to underline the virtues of its project as opposed to the alternative that arose from the rejection had a double-side effect. While it appeared as an attempt to diminish the value of the alternative proposal, at the same time it confirmed that the alternative proposal was worth to be taken into account. It confirmed that the alternative had some value.

As can be seen, as a consequence of the intertwined relations between civic activities and the conditions in which they are produced, their forms and contents, and the specific positions of their producers, are highly unstable. This instability poses serious difficulties to any attempt of establishing the value of each activity at a given time. Moreover, difficulties in establishing the value of each civic activity are not only relevant for academic purposes, but also for those groups that are involved in a specific struggle.

9.3.2. Combined redundancies

At a first glance, it might seem that the balanced instability of what gets to function as a civic good, implies that the domain of civic goods is one in which innovations are being constantly produced. Nevertheless, innovations are the exception. Even a superficial look can show that civic activities are easily reduced to a few basic forms such as public demonstrations, popular consults, informative campaigns, volunteer recruiting processes and the like. What has to be stressed when referring to the state of fluctuation and openness of civic goods is the combinatorial properties of civic activities. According to these combinatorial properties, the set of well-known forms of civic activities are chained or aligned in different ways, with different contents and in different situations. As a consequence, their function as civic goods varies along with the specific combinations and produces different effects.

The former observations are crucial for our classificatory scheme because they define the limits under which such scheme should be understood. The most relevant limit can be found in the almost paradoxical characterization of civic goods as a set of repeated basic forms that, when combined, provided of content and situated – which is the only way in which they are to be found in the market –, give place to a diversity of dynamic, interrelated configurations.

According to this, two major consequences have to be stressed. First, a classificatory scheme that is coherent with the former premises not only would be helpful but necessary in any attempt to develop a detailed comprehension of participation in the Third Sector. The scheme, conceived as a tool for description and interpretation, would have to be treated as a sub-product of a system of propositions that allows us to describe and understand the market of civic goods. Second, any consideration of civic goods based on this scheme would have to be limited to a specific moment in the flow of collection, production, distribution and exchange.

9.3.3. Purposes and needs

There is a last note before offering the classificatory scheme upon which civic activities have been addressed. It is necessary to note that there are different criteria from which distinctions can be drawn. To mention a couple of examples, it might be possible to build a typology based in the conditions in which goods are produced or in the specific market segment in which they are valued. Nevertheless, the criterion applied here relies in the possibility of grouping different kinds of civic goods according to the kind of necessity associated to their demand and thus, to their function.

9.3.4. Substantive or instrumental activities

In general terms, it is possible to draw a first wide division between civic goods according to this criterion. Depending on their direct or indirect relation with the need for gaining influence in public issues, civic activities can be classified as *substantive* or *instrumental*. As can be seen, this criterion draws a distinction between those civic goods that have a value that is intrinsic to the field in which they are exchanged, and those that do not have it. In spite of being a rough distinction, it allows us to think of the difference among, let us say, *consensus*, as an outcome that is desirable because of its political implications, and *training*, that might be required by a TS entity to acquire and develop some capabilities that are relevant for its functioning.

The distinction that allows for the establishment of two great groups of activities that produce civic value requires of a further refinement through the definition of more specific classes. Such work has been achieved by means of a process of analysis and synthesis. In that process, those activities and outcomes that

seemed to fit with the relational position that defines a civic good were defined and grouped according to the needs in which their value is raised[20].

9.3.5. A third party

A third class, *liminal activities*, has also been considered. It refers a special class of civic activities: those that are located between the *substantive* and the *instrumental*. The inclusion of the third group is due to the dual character of some civic activities, that is to say that they can have both an intrinsic and *instrumental* value. The relevance of this third group will be discussed in the following pages, because its duality underlines a crucial feature of participatory practices in the Third Sector: the confusion and eventual inversion of means and ends.

The resulting classificatory scheme, which appears in Table 12, gave place to two subgroups or classes of *instrumental civic activities*, two classes of *liminal activities*, and five classes of *substantive civic activities*.

A description of each subclass and its properties can be found in the next pages. While doing so, we will emphasize the conditions in which these civic activities are subjected to exchanges. In some cases, particularly in those of *substantive* civic activities, these conditions might apply to more than one class or subclass. In such cases, the exposition might require of a greater extension. According to this, the task of finding what defines each specific form will also be helpful in advancing the bases for understanding how the civic market in which those activities acquire their value operates.

9.4. Instrumental activities

Instrumental activities are those upon which the capabilities of TS entities are founded. They allow TS entities to count on some basic conditions for their operation, and thus are crucial for the generation of value. These activities are by no means a distinctive feature of the Third Sector, though they might differ from those of the Public and Private Sectors in some aspects, particularly in their dependence on voluntary work, and in the tensions between a common-sense based approach and a professionalized, formal organization.

[20] Appendix 5a elaborates on this first division.

Table 12
Forms of civic activities

Category	Subcategory	Specific form
Instrumental	Management	*Administration*
		Facilitation
	Resources	*Equipment*
		Labor
		Training
		Facilities
Liminal	Official status (institutionality)	
	Recycling of remaining	
Substantive	Relation	*Good conscience*
		Trust and confidence
		Membership
		Identity and belonging
	Inclusion	*Informing*
		Listening
		Answering
		Confirming
		Consulting
	Compliance	*Fostering and promoting*
		Adhesion and support
		Consensus
	Knowledge	*Consultancy and advice*
		Diffusion
		Local knowledges, experience
		Understanding
	Pressure	*Complaints and protests*
		Boycott and sabotage
		Impugning
		Requests
		Agendizing
		Critics
		Proposals
		Mobilization

The most important of such activities is that of management. Management arises along with the formal constitution of an entity. It starts with the configuration of a set of procedures and structures intended to enhance its operational capabilities.

9.4.1. Management activities

Management activities include a series of administrative tasks, aimed at providing what the entity needs for assuring its own existence. This branch of management includes a wide scope of activities: formulating and communicating a coherent account of what the entity does, assuring that key members subscribe such account, getting resources of all kinds, distributing such resources, keeping track of them, developing and offering a public face, taking care of important relationships with other institutions, etcetera. The minimal expression of administration activities arises when any collective undertaking (1) solidifies a basic division of functions; (2) devotes part of its time to the distribution and assignation of responsibilities; (3) creates and sustains distinctions among those that are deeply involved in the undertaking – the core of the entity –, those whose participation is limited to specific events or tasks, and those that are potentially affected by the undertaking; and (4) takes care not only of the undertaking, but also of the arrangements by which it is performed, thus objectifying the functioning of the undertaking and creating a distinction between that functioning and the undertaking itself.

No doubt that the efficacy of many collective undertakings leads the agents involved to develop those distinctions. In fact, expectations of a greater level of efficacy are at the basis upon which administrative activities acquire their value. Anyway, what has to be underlined here is that such divisions generate an object of its own, one that requires a great deal of attention, because it implies a high volume of labor. More importantly, once those organizational arrangements are settled, they can progressively assume new undertakings because, at least partially, those new undertakings might be a condition for the preservation of the administrative activities themselves.

9.4.2. Facilitation activities

Along with their administrative branch, *management activities* also include a series of tasks and organizational arrangements intended to facilitate undertakings of agents other than those of the core of the entity. *Facilitation activities* can thus be

thought of a series of services provided on the basis of the organizational arrangements of an entity, and the resources it can count on. There are different kinds of *facilitation activities*. To mention a few, entities can offer (1) spaces for the performance of events; (2) access to key authorities through the mobilization of their networks of institutional relationships; (3) orientations on how to get funds for the performance of an event; (4) access to sources of information such as books, data bases or journals; (5) consultancy on how to manage a legal procedure; (6) representation of groups that are not institutionally constituted; and (7) the performance of administrative and coordinative tasks for special events. The tasks performed are neither strategical, nor related to the contents of the undertakings they intend to facilitate. *Facilitation activities* thus have an administrative character, but instead of being focused in the day-to-day functioning of the core of the entity, they are aimed at the fulfillment of administrative needs that other agents have[21].

9.4.3. Resources

TS activities require of different sorts of resources for its operation. In fact, most of the funds and grants that an entity manages are assigned to the acquisition or provision of such resources. Some of them can be crucial for an acceptable performance of the functions that any association intends to develop. According to our analysis, the most important of such resources are equipment, labor, training, and facilities. Besides of being conditions for the functioning of TS entities, resources are crucial because of the exchanges by which they are acquired. Such exchanges might result of negotiations in which entities agree to cover certain requisites and acquire some commitments that shape their functioning and organizational arrangements in unforeseen ways.

9.5. Liminal activities

Located in a blurred space between *substantive* and *instrumental activities*, liminal activities are those that seem to operate both as forms of building influence and gaining access to arenas of decision out of reach, and as an instrument or precondition for other activities to effectively increase the influence capacity of a given group. Moreover, the liminal character of this class of activities goes beyond their dual quality in that they introduce principles of value that are alien to those of

[21] Appendix 5b shows a case in which facilitation function as good.

the civic market. While such alien principles of value might be found as an implicit feature of some *instrumental activities*, their own instrumental character prevents or at least slows down the introduction of those alien principles in the civic market. In contrasts, liminal activities are deployed in the confusion of alien and inner principles. While being performed, these activities, which we have grouped in the categories of *official status* and *recycling of remainings*, introduce the sense of value implicit to those alien principles.

9.5.1. Official status (institutionality)

Official status is understood here as the recognition of an entity as a formal organization with certain rights and duties derived from the specific juristic form it adopts. The official status of an entity is the outcome of a process by which a group or, in some cases, even an individual, fulfill some requirements in order to become formally recognized by the State.

While the acquisition of the official status implies the proclamation of the existence of the group, along with its specific aims and concerns, the rights and duties that come along with the official status have to be carefully considered so that the final choice might be suitable for the ends of the entity. In other words, when a given collective undertaking is subjected to an institutionalization process, it might take advantage of the options enabled by its new position. Nevertheless, the new position will also impose some changes in its functioning. Some of those changes might respond to an alien logic, the pervasive effects of which are not easily predictable.

The exchanges by which an entity acquires its institutional character are by no means a 'once and for all' deal. The big step of registering an association is likely to be followed by several small steps, each of which reinforces an institutional logic of functioning and the possibility of governmental instances, and even other TS entities, to monitor some aspects of the organizational life in the association. The following excerpt belongs to an interview with the current and the former Presidents of the *ABHGU*, an old mutual aid society for retired member of the Urban Guard of Barcelona. During that moment of the interview, the former President explains how they manage to get permission for selling participations in the Christmas Lottery:

> La federación de mutualidades hace un certificado diciendo que somos una entidad solvente y reconocida oficialmente. Este papel que nos da la federación de mutualidades adjuntado a una instancia que se hace a hacienda, y otra a dirección general de loterías. A las dos entidades. Y ellos nos dan el visto bueno, diciendo que lo podemos hacer y las condiciones que tiene que cumplir eso para que lo hagamos. Una es que el fondo... darles cuenta de para qué se utiliza el beneficio, y que los décimos queden depositados... hay que justificarles dónde quedan depositados los décimos para que no hagamos más de la cuenta[22]. 14:34 (30:30)

In the account offered by the former President, three entities are involved. One belongs to the Third Sector, and the others are part of the State. The entity has to take care of these minimal steps and act in congruence with the prescriptions derived from them. In the process they acquire a specific know-how with regard to those prescriptions. In doing so, the functioning of the entity is progressively adapted to that alien logic of functioning that we have mentioned before.

9.5.2. Recycling of remainings

The recycling of remainings is maybe the most peculiar activity of TS entities, and one of their distinctive features. It consists of the collection and use of what the working life of a given population leaves behind. Remainings are understood as a pool of working time composed by the availability of individuals that the functioning of the private, for-profit enterprises and the governmental entities cannot absorb. Here, we might find those segments of the day-to-day life of an employee that are located out of his working days, but also the availability of students, individuals that are left unemployed, and retired people. Here, a logic of productivity, the centrality of work as the source of identity, and some sort of phobic attitude towards spare time, turns the Third Sector into a space that is capable of absorbing a considerable source of working time that does not meet the

[22] The federation of mutual aid societies makes a certificate that says that we are a solvent entity, officially recognized. This paper that the federation gives us is attached to a request that we sent to the IRS and to the Lottery General Office. We send it to both entities. And they give us their permission, along with the conditions that have to be met. One of such conditions is that we have to offer an account of the ways in which we plan to use the benefits, and the lottery tickets have to be kept in a deposit... we have to justify were the tickets are going to be deposited so that we don't oversell them.

requirements of the Public and Private Sectors. This is why the Third Sector is often considered as an important deposit of occupations in which those remainings can become useful.

In order to achieve its recycling function, TS entities seek to involved people with 'free time' on a regular basis, often under the label of 'volunteer'. While being a definitional characteristic of the Third Sector, the idea of volunteering implies a peculiar relation between an entity and its collaborators. The relationship in terms of volunteering is more focused on the unpaid, and yet, meaningful contents of the tasks that the volunteer is expected to perform. Besides, the link established with the entity has an individual character and the volunteer is not expected to develop a deep concern with regard to the mission of the entity. In other words, the relationships that result from the recycling of remainings are, to a large extent, based on the offering of an opportunity for individuals to get engaged in some occupation.

The growing importance of the recycling of remainings as an activity that the Third Sector performs can be understood as the result of two conditions. On one hand, the scarcity of resources under which most TS entities operate, leads them to take advantage of the opportunity of counting with a task force, even if such task force is not directly affected by or concerned with the issues that the entity addresses. On the other hand, the Public Sector, with the support of some TS entities, exerts pressures towards a more structured and professionalized 'collection' of voluntary work. Such pressures appear in the form of events specifically designed to celebrate the virtues of voluntary work, and guidelines for a better management of the recruitment and selection of volunteers. The *Volunteering Summer School 2006*, for instance, offered a workshop on the management of teams of volunteers. One of the messages that the person in charge of the workshops insisted on was that every volunteer must pass through a selection process equal to those of a standard, remunerated job. The articulation of both conditions, the lack of resources and the promotion of guidelines and procedures for take advantage of voluntary work, paves the way for the transformation of the organizational arrangements of many Third Sector entities towards hybrid forms. In such hybrid forms, principles of functioning originated in the collective undertakings conflictingly coexist with organizational forms derived from public and private organizations.

9.6. Activities of relation

As for the category of *substantive civic activities*, the first group is that of relational activities. Relational activities are those that fulfill the need for a social frame of reference in which positions of interrelated agents, including one's own position, can be specified. Such frame provides the basis upon which expectations are settled and roles are configured. Four distinctive relational activities have been included: (1) *good conscience*, (2) *trust and confidence*, (3) *membership*, and (4) *identity and belonging*.

9.6.1. Good conscience

Good conscience is the first of relational civic activities. It refers to the acquisition of a state in which individuals or collectives can ease their guilt or get the sense of being congruent with their duties as citizens or as members of their communities. This is one of the most interesting activities, because it allows TS entities and, to a lesser extent, the government, to offer something in exchange of the acquisition of resources, especially financial aid and voluntary work. There is also a variation of *good conscience* that has to be noted. When the acquisition of *good conscience* is done according to strategic interests, the exchange offers the consumer the chance of managing his public image in a positive way.

The following excerpt allows for an account of the ways in which this activity circulates and is exchanged. The excerpt comes from an interview to the President and the ex-President of the *ABHGU*. The interviewee speaks about how they get discounts when organizing trips for their members.

> X: PERO NO… QUIERO DECIR… ESTAS AGENCIAS NO… NO HACEN ALGÚN DESCUENTO DE…[23]
>
> M: Sí, sí. A la entidad le dan un pequeño beneficio que revierte para la entidad, igual que la lotería. Nos da un pequeño beneficio. 14:37 (427:429)[24]

[23] Interviewer's interventions will always start with an 'X' and appear in uppercase letters.

[24] X: BUT THEY DON'T... I MEAN... THESE AGENCIES DON'T... DON'T MAKE ANY DISCOUNT IN...
M: Yes, yes. They give the entity a small benefit that the entity uses, just as in the case of the Lottery. They give us a small benefit.

The exchange described above has as its most interesting property the silent or implicit achievement of the agreement through which it is performed. This implicit agreement, one in which the transaction is not treated as such, is a feature that can be applied to the exchange of other civic activities, as will be shown later. Besides, it is necessary to establish the ground on which the entity founds their request for that small margin of benefit, and it is in the offering of doing what is right to do that the basis for the request might be found. According to this, the sense of what is right to do seems to be an important determinant of the market of civic activities and will require further elaboration.

9.6.2. Trust and confidence

Lots of activities are intended to built *trust and confidence* among those agents of the Third Sector that keep some kind of relationship. The anticipated value of the outcome of such activities is usually greater in those cases in which such confidence has been discredited as a result of a break-up of expectations that at least one side of the relationship had. Trust and confidence are important because they settle the ground for any process that requires the involvement of agents that are located in different positions and thus have an imbalanced capacity of influence over decision making on the issues that are at stake.

In the following excerpt a technician from the *CBS* explains how hard is to build such confidence:

> ...una de las mayores dificultades es convencer a las demás que confíen en ti, que esto es un proceso participativo en serio, no como los otros, que también eran “en serio”. Es que es un reto[25]. 17:58 (128:128)

The mediator role of the Third Sector appears here as the result of its capability to build confidence. As government falls in discredit, the Third Sector turns out to be a provider of the so much needed trust. This provision of *trust and confidence* occurs through the double positioning of TS entities as legitimate representatives of the grassroots and also as a near face of Public Sector with which people can express their complaints and get involved in specific undertakings. Of course, an

[25] One of the greatest difficulties is to get other people to trust in you, to make them believe that this is a serious participative process, unlike others that also claimed to be “serious”. It is just that this is a challenge.

exchange has to be made, one in which the government has to recognize those TS entities that are capable of providing confidence as valid speakers.

9.6.3. Membership

Membership can be acquired individually or collectively. A single person might decide to become an associate of a professional body or a neighborhood association. Also, a single TS entity might consider important to take part in a federation of entities. In both cases, *membership* functions as a good when the formal ascription to an entity turns out to be desirable because of its practical implications (e.g. having a say in decisions and undertakings that depend on the entity, gaining access to information and resources that the entity can provide or being able to receive support from the entity) and specially because of the symbolic transference of the status that the entity has (an acquisition that in some cases might offer an advantage in terms of public image).

In the following excerpts, the manager of the *ACAP* explains the interviewer some issues regarding *membership*:

> La gente quiere estar asociada pero no quiere saber nada más. Paga su cuota, que son 50 euros al año, y lo que no quiere es… que ni… bueno, quiere que la [asociación] haga cursos, haga una revista, esté en todos lados, pero no quiere… quieren ir a los cursos cuando interesa, y dejar de ir cuando no interesa...[26] 15:53 (305:305)

> … la gente que sigue de alguna forma las… las directrices o la formación, la línea de formación, es… es la que se considera ortodoxa en el colectivo. Los nuevos profesionales no vinculados a la [entidad], difícilmente llegan a la… al tipo de formación que luego los centros requieren, para entrar a for… para entrar a trabajar[27]. 15:56 (341:341)

[26] People want to become an associated but they don't want to know anything else. They pay the fee, 50 € a year, and what they don't want to... is that... well, they want the [association] to offer training, to publish a journal, to be present everywhere, but they don't want to... they want to receive training when they are interested in them, and leave the courses when they are not interested...

[27] ...people that, somehow, follow the guidelines or training, our training line, is... is the one that is considered orthodox in the field. Novice professionals that are not members of the [entity] can hardly get the kind of training that is required in the centers so they can start to... start working.

Note that when referring *membership* in terms of formal ascription, we are assuming that for every case there are explicit requisites and procedures that any candidate – individual or collective – has to observe in order to become a member of the entity of his interest (in the case of a federation of neighborhood associations, the requirement made to a candidate, which consists of passing through the approval of members in the annual assembly of the federation). Accepting to go through the specified procedure and prove to cover the established requisites is thus the main compensation in the exchange. Of course, the entity can raise expectations of a minimal involvement from the part of the associates, but the exchange establishes what is mandatory and what is optional in the compensation.

9.6.4. Identity and belonging

Identity and belonging are forms of civic activities that are close to that of *membership*. Nevertheless, the value of these activities has to be found in the role that being part of association has in terms of identity. For some people, *membership* functions as a frame for defining who they are and also as the entrance to a space in which they can develop significant relationships.

The value of this activities vary according to the relative opportunities that people have to achieve social needs in spaces other than the one that is provided by an entity. In the following excerpt, a senior member of *CONEX* explains what she thinks about being part of the entity:

> ...te sientes bien contigo mismo. Yo misma ahora qué haría, estar en mi casa sentada mirando la tele, porque aunque limpies y hagas cosas, no vas a pasarte la vida, pues a las tardes adelante el sillón ahí, toda la tarde mirando la tele. ¡Pues no! Si me vengo aquí a la mañana, a la tarde no me puedo sentar en el sillón, porque tengo trabajo. Tengo que fregar, tengo que… [risas]. ¿Me entiendes? Pero bien compaginado, pues te sientes muy bien, te sientes… a ver, yo soy la señora de, y aquí soy María Gómez… soy yo. Y esto no hay quién me lo quite[28]. 19:31 (469:469)

[28] ...you feel fine with yourself. What would I do now? Stay home watching TV? You might clean and do stuff, but you are not going to spend your whole life, every afternoon on your couch, watching TV. Of course not! If I come here during the morning, I cannot sit in my couch, because I have work to do. I have to do the dishes, I have to... [laughs] Do you understand me? But if you are organized, you feel all right, you feel like... I've got it. I'm used to be the wife of somebody, but here, I'm María Gómez, I'm myself. And no one can take this away from me.

The value of what an entity can provide in terms of belonging and sense of identity is thus the result of a comparison between what people can get in their daily life out of the entity, and what the entity offers to them. In this process of assessment, informal relationships play a determinant role, because it is through them, that the experience of people already involved can serve as an attractor to potential collaborators.

9.7. Activities of inclusion

The next class of *substantive civic activities* is grouped around the need for involvement in decision making on issues that are considered of public interest. Inclusion can be reached at different degrees depending on the actions that make possible for those that are usually excluded of a decision arena to take part in it. This means that prior to any attempt to offer *inclusion* – being able to make any sort of exchange –, the agent or entity that offers *inclusion* has to create or control spaces and arrangements for decision making on issues that are of interest. Activities that are suitable to function as civic goods of inclusion are (1) *informing*, (2) *listening*, (3) *answering*, (4) *confirming*, and (5) *consulting*.

9.7.1. Informing

Informing is the first and most basic form of involvement. Note that we are not talking of information, a noun. We are referring to this form of good as a verb, because it implies a series of operations in which significant messages are built and delivered to specific audiences. *Informing* goes through different processes, from the original providers, which include those agents that are in charge of the arena of decision – its *de facto* owners –, and other related agents that are able to access, process and spread the information in a set of chains that usually emerge from government agencies and, to a lesser extent, from for-profit enterprises.

Information here is not seen as a discrete entity that remains the same through the process. Information is conceived as a mobile cloud of facts, anticipations, accounts and interpretations whose form varies according to (1) the kind of concern that makes that cloud necessary or required; (2) the interpretive schemes and abilities of agents; (3) the arrangements and properties of the settings in which they are shaped; and (4) the media by which they are delivered.

The value of *informing* is a function of different aspects. The relevance of the issue at stake is one of these aspects. It is crucial to say that relevance has to be understood not as an objective condition, but as a joint effect of different interests that are focused in the issue. Another aspect, one that is closely related with the relevance, is the degree of intelligibility of the areas of decision and of the processes by which decisions on the issue are made or, in some cases, avoided. As long as an area of decision remains relatively opaque to the eye of potentially interested agents, it is unlikely to raise concern. When an area of decision is more or less able to be thought by potentially interested agents, the value of *informing* can be expected to grow. A third aspect is that of the visibility of attempts to retain or obtrude information. These kinds of attempts take advantage of the specific contents, formats, locations and moments in which information is delivered. When noticed by potentially interested agents, these attempts generate important raises in the value of *informing*.

The materiality of *informing*, which is but a necessary aspect in the aforementioned chains of actions, can be found in a wide variety of documents such as brochures, reports, posters, letters or blog posts. As for the practices by which *informing* is embodied, informative meetings are one of the most relevant, along with non-formalized – and usually not mentioned – ways of retrieving, such as unofficial encounters and conversations.

9.7.2. Listening

Listening, as a valued activity, emerges as a response in which decision makers agree to pay attention to what concerned agents have to say. What makes of *listening* a civic good is that the situation in which decision makers and concerned agents talk has the status and form of an institutional act, a formal encounter in which distinguishable sides perform their more or less prescribed roles. In other words, *listening* functions as a good because it means that what has been said has also being heard. This institutional status is crucial for *listening* to acquire a value, because it creates a situation in which any further move from the side of those in charge of the decision requires at least a consideration of what concerned agents have said. At its minimal, such consideration implies a response, which normally includes the elaboration and delivering of justifications.

Concerned agents are in turn necessarily expected to accept the conditions that the formality of the institutional act of *listening* imposes over the process. The exchange is not exempted of risks, since the institutional character of the encounter poses a double constraint. On one hand, when concerned agents agree to deliver their message according to the rules that the formality of the encounter imposes, they unwillingly might operate a transformation in which the message resulting from their performance during the encounter can point in ways other than that of the original message. On the other hand, a break up of the rules and formalities can severe or disqualify the message.

TS entities have a key role in the fluctuations on the value of *listening*. First, they usually raise concern over those issues that might affect their grassroots. This capability, which is also crucial for *informing* to become required, settles the ground for generating positions that in turn give place to opinions. Second, as a result of past experiences, TS entities develop capabilities that are useful to shape the form and contents of the messages that are going to be delivered and to manage the encounter. Third, the presence and status of these entities constitutes a basis for a more effective request of attention. As an inherent consequence, TS activities increase the visibility of the need for being listened.

9.7.3. Answering

As for offering answers, roughly speaking, it consists of a return from the part of decision makers. *Answering* might be similar to *informing* in terms of the activities through which it comes into being. However, in terms of the place from which their value arises, these civic activities are different. *Answering* finds its value in the requirement of an explicit positioning of decision makers in front of requests, proposal and critics that concerned agents with a lower involvement in the decision arena pose. Another way of conceiving this activity is that of the need for a conversation, albeit one that is constantly delayed, in which interventions are distant, and in many occasions one of the speakers is not willing to talk.

During an interview, a member of a neighborhood association that has a long tradition in pursuing vindications on public services and facilities reiteratively exposed the need for a specific stance from the part of the local government. In the following excerpt, the interviewee challenges the idea that his association is one in which, systematically, opposition is made to every project and initiative that

the local government intends to put into practice: “nosotros… la postura no es… [risas] no es de 'no', sino que creemos que la gente tiene derecho a… a una explicación[29]”. [23:35 (216:216)]

It has to be noted that those in charge take advantage of the forms, places and moments in which such answers can be delivered. First thing to underscore is that decision makers, in this case the local government, are reluctant to offer answers. This reluctance is the cue that indicates that haggling has started, and the provider, the one that is in conditions of offering answers, seeks to raise the price of its merchandise. As for the kind of good that concerned agents – the consumers – might offer in exchange, it can be found in the conditions in which the answer is uttered. Posing a question that decision makers have to reply can be achieved in different manners. It can be done individually or collectively, through institutional channels or by other means such as the media or a public demonstration.

The kind of activity that is required in exchange can consist of an adhesion to formal procedures provided by those institutional channels or can be posed in terms of the need for dissolving a wide mobilization if it gets to threaten the span of the decision arena that the decision makers control. And yet there is a third form of activity that, to a lesser extent, might be required in exchange. Such form of activity has already been mentioned as *good conscience*. Requests for answers, according to this view, are based on the assumption that people, according to their status as citizens, deserve to know and are able to demand from their representatives a clear and solid stance in relation to their own positions once that they have been heard. Again, the sense of what is right to do and what is right to think is imperative to understand how exchanges function.

An important implication of this is that valuing civic activities, as a constitutive aspect of any exchange, has effects that go beyond any specific transaction. Any struggle to establish or redefine the value of an activity implies a movement in the market, a small displacement that later or simultaneously can be compensated or reinforced by another displacement. This is why the processes of haggling are basic to understand the dynamics of the market.

[29] Us... our stance is not... [laughs] is not one of 'no', it is just that we believe that people have right to receive an explanation.

9.7.4. Confirming

Confirming is a good that consists of decision makers asking concerned agents if they agree that a decision already made is fine. Here, the one that seeks for an exchange to happen is the decision maker, because if he gets the less involved agent to enter into activities of confirmation, he might get in exchange *adhesion* at different levels, information on the degree of support that the decision made is likely to receive, or an argument for saying that his procedure has been inclusive, participative, democratic, or the like.

What decision makers seek when providing *confirming* is not a space in which concerned agents can participate in the process of making the decision. Nevertheless, they act in response to the need of proceeding in a participatory fashion. To do so, they carefully pick the agents that are taken into account and the arrangements of the process by which *confirming* takes place.

Confirming is valued by concerned agents because it provides them with an opportunity of having a say on what has been determined out of their reach. *Confirming* is thus valued as a surrogate of a deeper involvement.

9.7.5. Consulting

Consulting differs from *confirming* in terms of the moment of the decision making process in which agents are invited to pose their opinions and proposals. Again, haggling processes are crucial for understanding how the value given to an activity is bargained and, even more, the characteristics of the activity that is finally exchanged.

In the following excerpt, a technician from the *CBS* explains the limits of *consulting* and the necessity of establishing realistic expectations since the very beginning of, in this case, a participative process of planning:

> Luego está la salvedad de decir “señores, esto es un proceso consultivo. Ha de ir al pleno, a la ejecutiva, lo han de aprobar. Las dos administraciones han de conocer este proyecto y aprobar los presupuestos que van a dar dinero. Si no lo dan, esto no se hace” O sea, pero... te supera el nivel de decisión de responsabilidad

> tuya. Entra en el ámbito de la organización política, y no es tuya[30].
> [17:74 (184:188)]

Again, *consulting* covers the need for a democratic proceeding. At the same time, when concerned agents agree to take part in such proceeding, they are also accepting the limits that the way in which the process has been conceived imposes.

9.8. Activities of compliance

Compliance is another necessity around which activities can function as *substantive civic goods*. These activities allow agents involved in specific undertakings to align the interests of concerned agents according to the goals and direction of those undertakings. Of course, being aligned is not a matter of yes or no, albeit the outcomes of aligning are usually put in that way. In spite of this tendency to view compliance in dichotomous terms, there are not only variable degrees at which aligning can be achieved, but also different forms in which it can be built. Specific forms of complaining activities are (1) *fostering and promoting*; (2) *adhesion and support*; and (3) *consensus*.

9.8.1. Fostering and promoting

Fostering and promoting are the most subtle ways of generating compliance. In general terms, they consist of doing proselytism in favor of a cause or problem. By raising awareness on the importance of a specific issue, TS entities or local government provide and spread versions on the issue at stake that match their intentions. This interested diffusion process creates the conditions for the eventual acceptation of explicit and specific attempts to deal with the issue at stake.

Fostering and promoting require the elaboration of a mixture of descriptions, explanations, assessments and proposals that are organized at different levels. While descriptions and explanations might be explicitly developed as such, assessments and proposals are often implicitly included or are presented as obvious derivations that every one should agree with.

[30] Then, there is the exception of saying “sirs, this is a consultative processes. It has to be submitted to the executive board, it has to be approved. Both administrations [local and autonomic] have to know this project and approve the budgets that will finally provide the money. If they don't give money, this won't get done” So, but... it goes beyond the level of decision of your own responsibility. It belongs to the field of political organization and it's not yours.

Now let us present an excerpt from the observation of the annual assembly of a neighborhood association. The encounter was focused in the exposition of the annual report of activities and the presentation of the plan for the next year. In the excerpt, the President explains the audience the virtues of the brand new Web site of the association:

> En cuanto a participación, [el presidente] habló de la página Web como una muy buena herramienta e invitó a los asistentes a utilizarla, a hacerla suya, aprovechando los espacios de interacción, como uno que consistía en poner una multa al ayuntamiento, como forma de recoger y publicar las quejas dirigidas a esta instancia[31]. [10:45 (82:82)]

While fostering the use of a tool like the Web site, the entity for which the Web site has been created is inviting people to participate in a campaign that intends to put pressures over the local government. As can be seen, the way the invitation is delivered excludes any explicit attempt to ask the audience if they are willing to offer their support to the campaign. As for the role that the core of an entity – its group of most involved and active members – plays, it is important to say that this has not to be understood as a deliberated proceeding, but as the result of a logic of functioning that is well rooted in organizing habits. Such logic is the practical counterpart of that sense of the right sayings and doings that has been mentioned before.

Regarding the price – the value of exchange – that *fostering and promoting* can acquire, some particularities have to be stressed. First, not every *fostering* activity gets a value of exchange. A key determinant of the possibility that specific actions of *fostering and promoting* can get to be exchanged is that of the spaces in which they can be produced (e.g. a professional body) and its relations to the spaces in which they are required (e.g. a governmental agency). When both spaces are the same, the conditions that allow for these actions to exchange can hardly appear. This is why, with respect to specific issues, government can require TS entities to play a part in *fostering and promoting* certain approaches.

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[31] With regard to participation, [the President] spoke about the Web page as a very good tool and invited the audience to use it, to make it theirs, taking advantage of its interactive spaces, one of which consisted in putting a ticket to the city council, as a way of gathering and publishing complains related to this entity.

9.8.2. Adhesion and support

Adhesion and support make reference to different activities, but they have in common an effect of endorsement, which is what allows them to acquire value.

Support has to be located in the domain of talk and can be better understood in terms of symbolic interaction. It consists of statements that express agreement on stances, opinions and proposals that others put on the table. Support can be clearly delimited and localized, because it emerges in specific coordinates, be them a moment of an encounter – a turn of talk – in which an individual speaks in the name of an entity or, less frequently, an institutional message that is repeated during a given period and through different media. A thing that is worth to note is that providing support has a triadic character. This is due to need of including at least three different agents: one agents that is in need of support, a second agent that is able to offer such support, and a third agent whose position places him as the target – the one that has to listen – of the expressions of support. This makes of support a form of activity that is exchanged not only between the Third Sector and the government, but also – and mainly – among TS entities.

As for what might be sought in an exchange for support, it is necessary to consider two different areas. The first area, which might be called 'overt', is one in which providers of support acquire the right to demand commitment from the part of the receiver on the stance that has been supported. The second area, which is conformed by implicit assumptions, settles the ground for an exchange that consists of the creation of expectations of receiving support in future situations. It is not a coincidence that this second area of exchange has a tacit character, since the kind of expectations that are raised as a result of offering support can be threatened by the ways in which participation is conceived. This leads us again to the structuring function that the senses of what is right to do and what is right to think can have.

Adhesion, in turn, belongs to the domain of procedure-based activity. It consists of a silent agreement in which agents adjust their practices to formal requirements, procedures and protocols that are provided by a third party. Locating and delimiting those practices in which *adhesion* is being produced can be difficult. This is due to the fact that conditions imposed by standardized ways of proceeding and the like are introduced as the background for dealing with specific,

and thus salient issues. While the general form of support can be found in the expression “We agree with...” in the case of *adhesion*, such expression would be “They are doing things according to...” It is worth to note the use of the third person in this expression. Since *adhesion* is produced in the background of several undertakings, its existence is more easily realized by an observer than by those who are actually adapting their activities to procedural prescriptions.

Considering that *adhesion* is consistently required, a process in which agents' dynamics are transformed is likely to appear. Since such process requires the acquisition of certain abilities and the refinement of the ways in which those agents perform the guidelines for action, concerned agents change themselves. Albeit *adhesion* settles the ground for a silent and apparently non-imposed adaptation, exceptions can arise. When efforts appear to objectify the exchange, to turn it into an explicit issue that can be discussed – a task that is hard to successfully achieve –, the adaptation process ceases to function in its ordinary form, and *adhesion* is broken. This does not necessarily imply that agents are going to refuse to adjust their forms of involvement to prescribed procedures. What happens instead is that the adjustment is marked by some sort of cynicism from the part of those involved[32].

9.8.3. Consensus

Consensus is a form of civic good that has an outstanding role in many entities of the Third Sector, both as a criterion that their processes of decision making have to meet, and as an identity treat. Reaching consensus – a usual way of referring to the process by which *consensus* is produced – consist of dealing with differences among stances upon an issue in a manner that allows for the making of a decision that every one involved in the process can subscribe. As for the value that producing *consensus* has, it has to be noted that the outcome of the process is to be found in that subscription, which implies a strong commitment with the decision taken in spite of the different positions.

In the following excerpt, the technician from the consortium explains how they reach consensus on objectives that are to be included in the annual plan of the entity:

[32] For more on adhesion see Appendix 5c.

> El consorcio tiene este objetivo, estos objetivos... plo, plo, plo, plo. En la sesión se muestran y la gente los discute. Y va añadiendo, como enmendando contenidos, fusionando objetivos, re... re-redactándolos, para que todo el mundo que va a trabajar en ese grupo comparta el mismo objetivo, porque si no, era, a ver, podemos estar o no de acuerdo en cuáles son las necesidades, porque son subjetivas... en cierta manera. A mí me molesta lo que me molesta y lo que a ti te molesta a mí no me molesta. Pero en el objetivo ha de... ha de caber todo el mundo[33]. 17:37 (88:88)

First thing to underscore is the procedure. In this case, *consensus* is produced through the manipulation of written materials. The goals on which *consensus* is required acquires a plasticity that allows involved agents to play a game of additions, subtractions and conversions. Second, this way of proceeding allows for the establishment of a line that divides what is considered as debatable, modifiable and, thus, material for *consensus* – the goals – from what is not worth or able to be treated in such terms. In order to properly work, this division has to be constantly brought into the conversations by those that provide the guidelines according to which *consensus* has to be produced. Third, along with the claims of inclusion that *consensus* enables, any effort intended to build *consensus* has necessarily to operate a reduction over the pool of opinions, positions, interests and intentions that define the universe in which it operates. *Consensus* can thus be conceived as a practice by which differences are minimized, as if they were transformed into footnotes, into subtleties that have little relevance for the average reader.

The processes by which *consensus* is achieved can vary in terms of what is behind of the resulting commitment. In order to make this clear, we might see these processes as composed by two interwoven forces. One of this forces consists of the role that arguing plays as a mean that allows different stances to be part of a conversation on the basis of the background agreements that makes any discussion possible. Arguing, as a practice that is performed during

[33] The consortium has this objective, these objectives... plo, plo, plo, plo. During the session they are shown and people discuss them. And they add, sort of amend contents, merge objectives, re... re-writing them, so that everyone who is going to work in that group can share the same goal, because if they don't, it was, let's see, we can agree or disagree on what are the needs, because they are subjective... in a way. I'm bothered by what bothers me, and what bothers you doesn't bother me. But as for objectives, everyone must be included.

conversations in which different stances are confronted, is expected to produce a shift at the level of the assumptions on which specific positions are based. The other force implies the mobilization of pressures towards the elaboration of, and ascription to a joint position, be it a general stance on wide social issues or a specific proposal on how to deal with a closer, more localized problem. Pressures towards consensus, which are marked by the need for efficacy, do not require for different stances to change as a result of the exchange of arguments during conversation. What is mandatory here is the ascription and the commitment it implies. It is not surprising to find that while arguing, debating and discussing appear as the formal, expressible requisite for *consensus*, putting pressures is treated as an effect of exterior conditions an not as an intrinsic element.

With regard to the kind of investment that *consensus* requires, time might be the most important. Entities that function as mediators between the grassroots and the government can take advantage of this. The time that the achievement of *consensus* requires offers these entities an invaluable opportunity to manage the situation towards a preferred outcome, whether it is by delaying processes through long discussions and debates or by putting pressures to work faster (e.g. by referring the proximity of deadlines or by underscoring the need for efficacy and efficiency, for being operative).

In the following excerpt, the President of a neighborhood association underscores some features of the processes and products of *consensus*:

> ...tú sabes lo difícil que es ponerse de acuerdo en las entidades. Porque…
>
> X: ./POR ESO SE LO PREGUNTABA…
>
> M: Porque cada uno tiene sus intereses y tal. Bueno, pues ahí ha sido la habilidad de muchas personas. Yo no participé directamente, pero ha habido compañeros de la asociación, que han llevado un trabajo muy directamente de intentar llegar a consenso, de limar asperezas, de volver a plantear los temas, de sumar y no de restar, y ahí ha sido el… el resultado que verás en el documento este, que está bastante interesante, y con la firma de todas las entidades[34]. 22:28 (110:114)

[34] ...you know how hard it can be to reach an agreement among entities. Because...
X: THAT'S WHY I ASKED...

First, it has to be noted the importance given to the difficulties in the process. Emphasizing the difficulties in reaching consensus serves both as an unrequested justification of pressures for ascription and as an argument that supports the claims over the high value of this activity. In this view, the process of production requires of a leading voice that has to be embodied by those that are well suited to manage both debate and pressures. In other words, when *consensus* is easy, there is no need for *consensus* and when *consensus* is hard, there are not real chances for its achievement. Second, the interviewee makes reference to the process of building *consensus* - 'to smooth things over' – in a way that diminishes diversity. In this sense, *consensus* can be seen as a procrustean bed. No matter how much it takes and how many debates are maintained to define the best length of the bed, at the end, what defines *consensus* is the exigency of adapting one's own body length to the length of the bed. This is why 'adding instead of subtracting' is not an accurate description of the process and yet, as a reportable feature, it functions as an argument of the value of *consensus* – which as in other activities fits the sense of what is right to think – and also as a measure that invites agents to put under the table the differences that have to be reduced.

Until now, we have been dealing with several aspects of the production of *consensus*, a function that depends on the providers. As for its consumers, some of them require *consensus* for its explicit virtues, and others seek to take advantage of its tacit effects. *Consensus* creates the conditions for a greater effectiveness in the pursuit of specific vindications. At the same time, it reduces the fronts in which those that have positions opposed to those that are subsumed by *consensus* had to struggle for their interests. The possibility of increasing effectiveness is what makes of *consensus* a valuable good for those involved, which in turn are able to offer their cooperation – their labor. As for the unification of opposition, it is the government who is interested in the production of a face, a location and a well delimited message or program, because this way makes easier for it to deal with dissonances.

M: Because each one has his interests and stuff. Well, it has been the ability of many people. I wasn't directly involved, but there have been fellows of the association that had led efforts to reach consensus, to smooth things over, to rethink subjects at stake, to add and not to subtract, and that has been a... the outcomes that you can see in this document, which is very interesting, and has been signed by all the entities.

9.9. Activities of knowledge

Knowledge, its different kinds and applications and the ways in which it is elaborated, re-elaborated and distributed are all elements that can be found in practically every undertaking. In spite of their imbrications with the general flows of activities – a feature that deserves to be emphasized in this case – knowledge-related activities can be analytically distinguished from such flows. TS activities are not an exception to this. There are different aspects in which the centrality of knowledge deserves to be highlighted, whether they have to be thought in terms of inputs, outcomes or activities. The way in which a group manages to develop an understanding of significant internal and surrounding conditions and events is one of such aspects, and it is worth to be seriously considered, since it implies the mobilization of previously acquired frameworks and conceptions around a given intention. These efforts of making sense out of relevant issues are likely to generate shifts, subtleties and emergent features that otherwise would not appear. At their best, what these activities can offer is the generation of alternative and contesting versions of apparently well-known issues. Also, in those cases in which little is known about an issue, attempts of making sense might result into a first, uncontested version that is likely to gain a privileged place as an interpretive resource in as much as it fills a previous void. An important implication of this is that, in the Third Sector, knowledge-related activities have to be addressed as a component for the production of other activities that get to function as goods.

Regarding other knowledge-related activities, we might underline what appeared to us as the outcomes of the efforts by which guidelines, general prescriptions and loosely defined images on how to perform certain tasks or deploy a given project are finally achieved in situated, local, day-to-day actions. This sort of adaptation implies a process in which common sense complete those guidelines by means of providing sets of operative cues that are later modulated during their performance. It is in this kind of processes that the conditions for the development of a practical form of knowledge – the know-how – are to be found. The more this know-how gets specific and subtle, the more a collective acquires expertise.

It has to be stressed, though, that, according to this view, we are not suggesting that knowledge-related processes have a different ontological status when they are developed through TS activities. What can – and in our view, should – be

carefully considered, is the distinctive ways in which knowledge is acquired and used. There are specific features in how knowledge is produced, transformed, distributed and used in the activities that TS entities achieve. Focusing on the rationale around which knowledge-related processes are organized, four forms of knowledge-related activities that function as civic goods have been identified: (1) *consultancy and advice*, (2) *diffusion*, (3) *local knowledge and experience* and (4) *understanding*. The resulting specificity is one of the conditions that allow for these forms to get to function as goods, for its production is not probable in other settings.

9.9.1. Consultancy and advice

Advice and consultancy operates by means of turning specialized knowledge into a deliverable good, one that acquires its value according to the needs that potential users consider it can fulfill. Besides of its potential to fulfill specific needs – which necessarily have the form of expectations –, what makes of *consultancy and advice* a valuable activity that can be exchanged is that their conditions of production – which includes a given degree of recognized expertise and certain capabilities required for their delivering – are located out of the reach of any potential user or have estimated costs of production that are considered greater than the need they are intended to satisfy.

Advice and consultancy vary according to the matters they deal with and in terms of the specific formulations given to the knowledge they provide. The matters upon which *advice* might be required can be directly linked to the thematic specificity of a given undertaking (e.g. in the context of a neighborhood assembly, *consultancy* in urban development for a better understanding and discussion of a project on a new avenue proposed by local authorities) or can be required because of their instrumental nature (e.g. dealing with subtleties and variations of procedures that an entity has to follow in order to apply for funds).

At one side, we can find the provision of specific prescriptions, that is, sets of more o less organized guidelines for action that, once executed, are expected to produced a desired result. At the other side, *advice and consultancy* are intended to generate insights and provide significant orientations aimed to stress previously unconsidered factors and question long-held assumptions. This helps concerned agents to make an informed decision, because those general orientations serve

as the basis for a better understanding of aspects that are being considered during the decision making process. It has to be said, though, that from the point of view of an external observer, it is not always clear the extent to which these two formulations can be distinguished when they are delivered. What makes the distinction possible – and thus what makes it worth it – is the shaping function of expectations on what *consultancy and advice* should offer. When negotiated and mutually adjusted, expectations from both the providers and consumers of *consultancy and advice* establish a framework in which the deliverance is understood, performed and received as prescriptions that have to be followed or as observations, comments remarks and sets of questions and answers that have to be included in the discussion.

TS entities are both producers and consumers of *consultancy and advice*. As producers, some TS entities take advantage of their history of struggles and past undertakings. The experiences that are generated in such undertakings – which, from this point of view are at the same time learning processes – are susceptible of being reflexively organized into more o less coherent bodies of ideas or recommendations. The attribute that enables these bodies to be exchanged is their communicability, their readiness for being shared. But these aspects, which along with the recognized expertise and the capability for delivering allow for clarifying the basis for *consultancy and advice*, does not offer a complete account of what makes of this an activity that can function as a good. The key for the completion of the account has to be found in the existence of a user, an individual or collective agent who considers that a given TS entity is in condition of offering the kind of guidelines or orientations required to fulfill his needs. This is important because a high percentage of TS entities do not considered the possibility of offering advice as one of their explicit functions. When, for any reason, an entity receives requests for *advice* or *consultancy* from individuals or organizations, the meaning of those activities by which experiences are organized and learning is achieved is displaced. It is moved beyond its original place as an adjunct element – one that has value because of its being related, subordinately, to a substantive area of activity – and acquires a relevance of its own.

Of course, there are many examples of TS entities that, from their very beginning, have considered the possibility of providing *advice and consulting*. In fact, in some cases, this function had already been included at the core of their mission. In such

cases, the market, the presence of potential users is more important than in the previous cases, for it has been the realization of the existence of a niche that has lead to the idea of creating the entity.

As consumers, TS entities require *consultancy and advice* as a result of realizing that there are some areas of activity – especially those in which decisions have to be made – in which forms of specialized knowledge are required. When facing such needs, TS entities might take different routes. One possibility consists of seeking for an external provider of knowledge every time it is required. Another route implies the acquisition or incorporation of the conditions that allow the entity itself to generate the knowledge it requires.

Before addressing the next civic activity of knowledge, an observation has to be made regarding the centrality of relationships between lays and experts. These relationships are based on a distinction that underscores an asymmetry capable of generating the value given to *advice*. But their implications go beyond the layer in which the market of civic activities is located and will require further elaboration in the next chapter.[35]

9.9.2. Diffusion

Some TS entities devote much of their time to spread what they consider as important and valid knowledge upon the matters they deal with. There are different forms of achieving *diffusion*. (1) A news conference on how estate mobbing operates in a given neighborhood; (2) distributing informative brochures that explain what domestic violence is; (3) an exposition of drawings of an endangered historical building and (4) a meeting with members of parliament in which representatives of an entity explain what they considered as the best model for early childhood attention, are all examples of the ways in which *diffusion* is addressed. At first glance, these examples show *diffusion* as the result of a complex mixture of a message, some specific media, a target, a messenger – who does not have to be the one nor the only interested in the delivering of the message – and the performance through which the message is delivered. Nevertheless, such representation of *diffusion* activities is grounded in modern daily life objectifications of discourse. A more careful look might lead us to depict *diffusion* as a broad discursive process, one in which the imprecision and

[35] For more on consultancy and advice, see Appendix 5d.

ambiguity with which objects of wide conversations – those that occur across several places and moments – acquire or confirm the debatable character and the familiarity of such objects.

For some entities, *diffusion* is understood as spreading knowledge and making sense of certain issues while others call it 'sensitizing'. Its contents can range from well-delimited guidelines, descriptions or explanations of local events, situations or conditions to wide perspectives on grand social concerns. In any case, *diffusion* usually implies a multilayer deliverance in which descriptive and prescriptive plains are not only intertwined, but depend on each other. Whether the evaluative plain is or is not explicitly posed as such is not as important as the attempt of positioning the view that informs the message as the basis upon which the target should make sense of the objects addressed. In doing so, *diffusion* activities sustain processes that objectify events.

As for its rationale, in spite of the variety of forms in which it can be achieved, *diffusion* functions as a mean for getting others to know something in a certain manner, in a situation in which these 'others' have not asked for such knowledge. This does not mean that TS entities do not face demands for doing *diffusion*. What occurs here is that requests come from third parties. Mass media, governmental agencies and educative institutions are frequent requesters of the kind of *advice* that TS entities can offer. Nevertheless, the target of *diffusion*, the segment of the population to which a *diffusion* activity is addressed is not the requester of *diffusion*. This is maybe the most important difference between *diffusion* and *advice*. This difference has necessarily a major place when trying to understand how *diffusion* acquires its value, how this value is modified, and how being evaluated have effects on the basis upon which *diffusion* is produced.

The emergence of the exchangeability of diffusion is built through different practices, most of which necessary take place well beyond the span of action of a given TS entity. It is by means of such practices that: (1) the activity or outcome that gets to function as a good is objectified, received boundaries and can be distinguished from the day-to-day flow of actions, acquiring the status of event; (2) the need for the good – demand – is shaped as something that is desirable and that can be obtained from an outer source; (3) the possibility of providing the good – offer – is made conceivable when the need for the good is brought into

conversations by those who are able to produce it; and (4), encounters for exchanges are performed through existing channels among entities or individuals. Exchangeability is thus the result of effective exchanges. This means that activities and outcomes that get to function as good acquire this property through the practical deployment of the property itself. Simultaneously, the value of an activity is generated through the same practices.

According to this perspective, the possibility of finding activities that function as goods even when there are no consumers – neither groups nor organizations different from those that produce the activity – should be discarded. Nevertheless, these kind of situations are produced, and not as an exception, but as an extension of the same logic in which the acquisition and distribution of civic activities arise. The role that the Web sites of many TS entities play in the relationship between the core and the grassroots is rooted in this logic.

The following excerpt includes one of those situations. In it, the President of a neighborhood association explains why the core of the association has to get their grassroots – the neighbors – to think of long-term, more general issues:

> ...siempre hemos de potenciar este interés, porque, a veces, eh… no se da esta… este nivel de conciencia colectiva por parte de los vecinos y vecinas del barrio. Sino que hay que potenciarlo, ¿no? Pero a veces, ves que la cosa da fruto. Por ejemplo, en el tema de patrimonio, mmm… hace unos cuatro años era un tema completamente ausente, y en este momento, el tema de Can Ricart, por explicar un ejemplo concreto, ya todo mundo lo sabe, lo conoce, lo ha vivido de alguna manera. Esto ha sido un trabajo no solamente de la asociación, sino de muchas entidades, de la plataforma () que se ha creado. Eh… en otros casos, el tema surge con una cosa muy concreta que afecta a los vecinos muy directamente. 'tonces claro, ahí sí que son los vecinos lo que te pinchan para que les des soporte, para que les hagas de puente con el distrito, y ahí sí que es la... el interés de los vecinos. Puede ser el tema de las vibraciones del metro, o el tema de las grietas por unas obras, o el tema de unas molestias o de unas fiestas de jóvenes que hay en unos barrios en concreto. O sea, este es el tema que diríamos preocupa de más inmediato a los vecinos porque suele ser un tema muy concreto y que a veces, cuando se

> resuelve, desaparece ya la inquietud, por otras cosas. O sea, intentamos de que, sin dejar de lado estos temas concretos, haya una preocupación general por el barrio a nivel de equipamientos, movilidad, servicios, etcétera, ¿no? Y esto es más difícil[36]. 22:21 (94:96)

In this case, *diffusion* is conceived as a task intended to raise interests in non-urgent, non-immediate or non-salient matters, at least from the point of view of the general population that the entity is supposed to work for. Such a tasks requires of a joint undertaking, one in which the cores of several entities are engaged in a process of collaboration. This means that those cores recognize that the goal of raising interest cannot be attained by a single entity. But the most important implication can be found in what can be put as an effort of transferring a particular look. Being member of the core of an entity implies an orientation to long-term issues, based on a global view. *Diffusion* has a key role because it seeks to put people in contact with this long-term view, so that the issues it purports and the kind of look it implies can be introduced as common subjects of conversation and natural forms of making sense of those subjects, respectively.

As for the economic properties of this task, they can be found in the idea of investment. Transferring to the grassroots that long-term, wide perspective and the issues that only through this perspective are worth to be thought has an effect on the status of the issues. They gain the place of important matters that deserve collective attention. *Diffusion* works as an investment because the efforts and resources it takes generates conditions for future involvement of people from the neighborhood in undertakings regarding those matters. If these conditions are

[36] ...we should always try to encourage this interest, because, sometimes, hum... from the part of people from the neighborhood... this... level of collective conscience does not appear. It rather has to be fostered, OK? But sometimes, you see that it is worth it. For instance, about the issue of cultural patrimony, hum.... four years ago it was a completely neglected issue, and right now, about the case of Can Ricart, as a specific example, everybody knows what's going on with it, somehow, everybody is aware of it and has lived it. This has been a labor of many entities, not only the neighborhood association, of a platform that has been created. Hum... in other cases, the issue arises as a very specific thing that directly affects neighbors. Then, sure, there, the neighbors are the ones that ask you for your support, so you can function as a bridge with the district, and sure that is where... is of interest to the neighbors. It can be an issue related to subway vibrations, or chaps caused by constructions, or some disturbances or youth parties in some particular neighborhood. The thing is that this is a subject that, let us say, people is concerned about in a more immediate manner because it is a very specific issue and usually, once that is solved, interest in other things disappear. So, what we try to do is to raise a more general concern on the neighborhood at the level of equipments, facilities, services, transport, an so on, without letting unattended those specific issues, right? And this is more difficult.

effectively produced, entities can expect the grassroots to offer *labor* and *adhesion* to measures taken[37].

9.9.3. Local knowledges and experience

Local knowledges can be thought of as the concretions of common sense, a conception that underscores a key attribute of day-to-day practices: their particularization in terms of contents – the objects that those practices shape and act upon – and forms – the distinctive ways in which those objects are addressed. As day-to-day practices are deployed in specific coordinates, their strategical urges are recreated in certain moments and places, so that recognizable situations can emerge. This recreation adds something to the strategical urges that are at their origin: a feeling of familiarity with the world around. The recreation, the practices through which it is performed, set the conditions for an immediate, usually non-reflective apprehension of surrounding events and territories, including the belonging of agents to those lived worlds and their positions in ongoing events.

It is possible to deal with *local knowledges* at two different levels. On one hand, they can be considered as a series of interwoven activities through which this familiarity with the world is elaborated, attained, and sustained. On the other, it is possible to think of *local knowledges* as those partial, disperse, incomplete outcomes or fixations of such activities. As for the outcomes o fixations, we can consider them as the traces of activities that produce *local knowledges*. These traces offer a more manageable way of dealing with the peculiarities that define *local knowledges* because they are, metaphorically speaking, the footprints, wastes, tools and pieces of craftwork that activities of *local knowledges* left behind.

Traces of *local knowledge* are found as specific marks: a dispersed, non-systematized collection of objectifications of daily life in specific settings. They serve as cues that can be selectively used whenever a situation requires to be elaborated so that agents involved can make sense of it. But their presence in daily life goes beyond these specific uses. Traces are repeatedly brought into conversations for they are capable of invoking the feeling of familiarity that marks agents' belonging to certain worlds. It has to be said though, that the capability of

[37] Appendix 5e is devoted to explore the specificities of diffusion as a civic good.

traces for invoking the feeling of familiarity does not come from their contents, but from their being ritualized. It is the form of the ritual – which comes out from repetitions – what makes of traces of *local knowledges* recognizable patterns that create the feeling of being at home. As for their specific forms, traces include those common places – repeated and repeatable expressions –, popular characters and tales, labeled public spaces, issues frequently brought into conversations and costumes that a newcomer has necessarily to be drawn into as a part of his socialization process in the place.

It has to be said though, that the relationship between traces and activities of *local knowledges* is not unidirectional. Addressing this relation as if it was unidirectional would lead the observer to an oversimplification in which the activities would be conceived as producers of traces that remain independent of such traces. What occurs instead is that there is a bidirectional relationship. While the activities are more complex than their traces and include more aspects, they are well rooted in the traces they produce.

The functioning of *local knowledges* is tacit. Its property of being non-declarable reaches at least two aspects of them. First, its ongoing achievement escapes from objectification because it is through the same achievement that objectifications are built, maintained and, eventually, reorganized. Second, between the functioning and their traces, there is a mediating by-product that also escapes from objectification. This mediating by-product can be conceived as a practical sense, a set of principles or schemes upon which the relevance and meaning of surrounding events and conditions are based, and the necessity, opportunity and adequacy of actions are assessed. The operation of this practical sense remains out of the domain of thinkable matters because of the self-evident character of the practical orientations it produces. The representations that are embedded in these practical orientations – whether they are representations of the self, the others or the world – are attached to the composition of any practical urge in those familiar worlds in which agents have to do something in some direction. This is not to say that actions are previously defined; what the practical sense generates is the expectation, the feeling that it is necessary to do something and, simultaneously, the direction or general aim that has to be pursued. The strategical urge does not prescribe specific behaviors. Instead, it establishes the framework in which projected or effective behaviors acquire its meaning. In other words, the

strategical urge is contextual because it produces the conditions on which its own meaning is founded.

Relationships among *local knowledges* and other forms of knowledge are complex. If we address, for instance, the links between local and professional, disciplinary forms of knowledge, we might find that, while the latter is often put as a more advanced, more precise and biases-free kind of knowledge, the former is always required in order to provide the terms and frames in which professional-disciplinary knowledge acquire their meaning and gets to be connected with specific cases and situations with all its practical implications. From a long-term perspective, though, some productions of professional-disciplinary knowledge can be selectively translated and assimilated by *local knowledges*. This displacement can also be thought of as the outcome of *local knowledges* making sense of affirmations that are raised in and belong to a professional domain. For a thing like this to happen, *local knowledges* have to provide a frame for highlighting such affirmations, which means that there has to be some bridges or common grounds have to exist between local and professional forms of knowledge so that affirmations can be recognized as significant by lay persons.

Encounters in which local knowledge and professional-disciplinary knowledge dialog are made possible when they deal with similar objects. Such objects – the project of a new avenue, a rare disease and its treatment, early childhood attention, public security, and so on – are the axis of multiple versions, varied representations that might belong to different fields and obey different rules of production and circulation. It is in their being linked to common, recognizable objects – a recognition that relies on common sense and everyday forms of talk as its conditions of possibility – that such representations can circulate out of their own fields and be significant or meaningful for those agents involved in the conversation.

As for the role of *local knowledges* in the making of TS, its presence and implications can found in practically every undertaking. Think, for instance, in the processes by which most TS entities arise, especially those in which the territory prevails over the subject. First, we might find collective undertakings that are well rooted in *local knowledges*, in the familiar worlds they made possible and in the common concerns that bring individuals to start thinking of them in terms of

groups or communities that can get to work over the issues their concerns are related with. As institutionalization processes takes place, other forms of knowledge are expected to gain presence and relevance. Nevertheless, *local knowledges* cannot be excluded for they are the basis for keeping strong links with the grassroots and the territory.

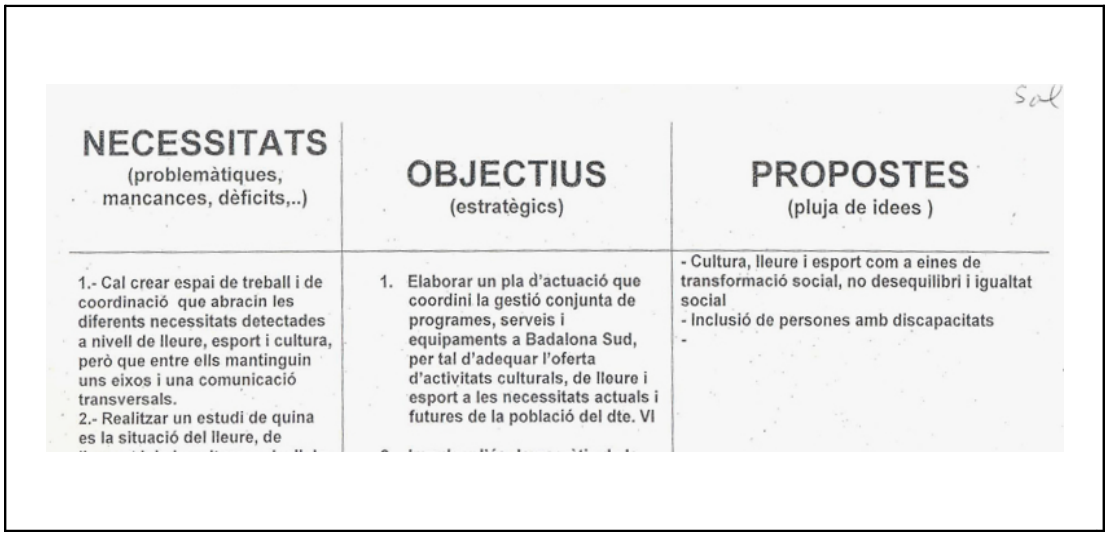
Besides of working as the basis upon which collective undertakings are enabled, *local knowledges* offer many required inputs for a TS entity, whether they are treated (1) as significant information for making sense of wide problems; (2) as key requisites for achieving procedural legitimacy during a specific activity or decision making process, or (3) as clues for formulating or re-formulating the strategical framework of the entity so that it matches the reason for being and the connection with the grassroots can be kept. In all cases, pieces derived from *local knowledge* are literally collected – and in some cases even cultivated – so that they can be later processed into something different.

For this uses of *local knowledges* to happen, there has to be an explicit recognition of their value. “No les puedes decir 'conoce tu casa'[38]...” 17:36 (88:88). This is what a technician from the *CBS* said about their position in relation to that of neighbors that had been invited to participate in the process of diagnostic and planning for improving the quality of life of the zone. In such process, people involved in local entities were invited to take part in work groups that dealt with different areas – health, immigration, culture and leisure, education, etcetera – in order to define needs and objectives that later would be refined, ordered according to their priority, selected, and finally included in the first draft of the annual plan of the consortium. Figure 10 includes a detail of a table according to which participants were asked to put the needs, goals and suggested actions they considered important according to the subject that each group was intended to address.

What has to be underscored in any case is that *local knowledges*, besides of being interwoven in TS activities – to a large extent in an explicit manner –, are selectively delimited, collected, used and transformed. It is as if the Third Sector put pieces of *local knowledge* to work in specific directions or according to certain

[38] You can't tell them 'know your home'.

priorities. In this sense, TS entities do not only function as consumers, but also as refiners of *local knowledges*.



NECESSITATS (problemàtiques, mancances, dèficits,..)	OBJECTIUS (estratègics)	PROPOSTES (pluja de idees)
1.- Cal crear espai de treball i de coordinació que abracin les diferents necessitats detectades a nivell de lleure, esport i cultura, però que entre ells mantinguin uns eixos i una comunicació transversals. 2.- Realitzar un estudi de quina es la situació del lleure, de	1. Elaborar un pla d'actuació que coordini la gestió conjunta de programes, serveis i equipaments a Badalona Sud, per tal d'adequar l'oferta d'activitats culturals, de lleure i esport a les necessitats actuals i futures de la població del dte. VI	- Cultura, lleure i esport com a eines de transformació social, no desequilibri i igualtat social - Inclusió de persones amb discapacitats -

Figure 10.
Detail of a table used in a planning process

But transformations of *local knowledges* are not exclusively achieved by means of activities like those described above. As has been mentioned earlier, many TS entities arise as a result of collective undertakings largely dependent upon *local knowledge*. With regard to the displacements through which *local knowledges* eventually get to meet institutionalization, attention has to be paid to the fluctuating spaces between under-sectorial and sectorial activity. In the following excerpt, the President of the neighborhood association from *La Prosperitat* talks about how his neighborhood can be distinguished by its long tradition of involvement, participation and fight:

> ...tendrías que ver en cada barr… distrito, qué ha pasado, ¿no?, en el nuestro, históricamente, hay una… una tradición de participación que es no sólo porque hay más movimiento social organizado, sino también porque [chasquido], o sea, ha pasado historias, ¿no?, o sea, hubo una… un momento en que, relativamente, nos quisieron barrer a las asociaciones de vecinos del barrio, con un concejal que era muy idolatrado del partido socialista, pero que era un… un cacique. Y yo creo que ahí hubo

> un pulso gordo, y al final yo creo que lo conseguimos ganar nosotros[39]. 20:38 (187:187)

As common concerns join agents and create a space in which collective action can be deployed, specific undertakings appear. Such undertakings allow agents to gain *experience* about the issues they work with. The process of acquiring *experiences* leaves their traces in the form of collective tales and a practical mastery regarding to forms of activity that cannot be considered as belonging to daily life. *Experiences* are thus a form of knowledge that, while being rooted in local knowledge, get to be distinguishable from it because of both the unintended story making on non-day-to-day events and the practical specialization produced by sustained attempts to meet certain ends. As for their position, *experiences* do not always have to function as a bridge that allows for the translation of institutional into non-institutional forms of knowledge or vice versa, though they are always located in the space between. In this sense, as knowledge in use, *experiences* are constituted by means of conjunctive activities, those that articulate local knowledge with particular or specialized forms of knowledge through current undertakings.

Experiences are thus a form of knowledge, the production and use of which occur simultaneously through salient activities. This implies that traces of *experiences* are expected to appear in changes that affect the way concerned agents develop their practices, including their conversations, writings, transformations of their surrounding spaces, and incipient organizational arrangements. How successfully can *experiences* be transferred depends on these incipient organizational arrangements, specifically on the extent to which they enhance or increase the chances for (1) a guided practice to be deployed and (2) subtle objectifications of *experiences* to be made and shared through conversations.

Let us now consider an intervention[40] that was made during an assembly of *FEDER.* The intervention took place during a discussion on how to launch a self-

[39] ...you'd have to see what has happened in each neighb... district, right? In ours, historically, there is a... a tradition on participation, not only because there is a more organized social movement, but also because [tongue click], let's see, there have been situations, right?, let's see, there was a... a time in which, relatively speaking, they wanted to sweep our neighborhood associations away, when we had a city counselor that was worshiped by the socialist party, but also was a tyrant. And I believe that there was a huge challenge and, at the end, I think that we got to win.

[40] 13:51 (92:92)

help group. A representative of a federated association said that she did not believe that a self-help group would necessarily require professional guidance from a psychologist. She explained how her association had managed to create one of such groups by its own and then she finally asked the audience of the assembly if hiring a psychologist was expensive.

Note that, as in the intervention described above, concerned agents talk about *experiences* using first person. This is why tales or stories, with all their implications in terms of identity, are the preferred form for objectifying *experiences*, while features associated to the acquisition of skills tend to remain tacit. And yet, considering that *experiences* are the consequence of, and not the requisite for collective undertakings, they always leave a breach for doubts. This breach functions as a disposition to get engaged in conversations, especially in those in which stories as well as doubts around common concerns can be shared by those involved.

Conversations are crucial for understanding how *experiences* can function as a good because it is through them that *experiences* acquire their value. Conversations allow speakers to recognize that they have common concerns, and such recognition settles the ground for exchanges. But there are other elements that have to be present. A key requisite for exchanges is that at least one of the speakers had taken part in a specific undertaking strongly regarded with the common concern, so that the possibility of telling a story or offering a comment based on a story about the undertaking can be considered. The role of conversations with regard to exchanges of *experiences* is of utmost importance since it is through talk that (a) the exchange is practically achieved, and (b) *experiences*, the goods that are exchanged, are elaborated so that the exchange can be performed.

There is still a final observation to be made with regard to the exchangeability of *experiences*. When exchanges of *experiences* are performed through non-institutional channels – encounters and conversations that take place beyond the planned or intended activities of an entity – providers of *experiences* are usually consumers of *experiences* as well, for the same form of civic activity is offered and demanded. These kinds of exchanges are performed in a way that is free from attempts to convert stories into systematic guidelines on how to achieve certain

tasks or attain certain goals. Exchanges that take place through institutional channels are in turn more likely to adopt the form of guidelines deliverance, specially when a third party – whose interests are more centered in the celebration of the exchange than in what is finally exchanged – is involved. In both cases – exchanges made through institutional channels or through non-institutional channels – the conditions in which the exchange is performed not only determine the form of the exchange, but also the form of what is exchanged. When exchanging *experiences*, the forms might range from vivid, first-person narrations to more aseptic, well-organized suggestions for practice. This last form of exchanged *experiences* is closer to *advice* provision.

9.9.4. Understanding

Understanding is a special form of civic activity because it is usually subordinated to the achievement of other kinds of activities that get to function as civic goods. Its wide presence and its subordinated character are some of the most interesting attributes of *understanding* and maybe the most important ones in any attempt to clarify the ways in which it functions. While both attributes – subordination and wide presence – impose some difficulties in the task of delimiting the specific practices by which *understanding* is produced, they are crucial for the valuing and exchange – the marketization – of this form of activity.

Let us start by pointing out a few situations in which the functioning of *understanding* plays a part:

(1) an intense process of debate held by members of the board of the *FABV* and representatives of federated neighborhood associations, aimed to select and re-elaborate proposals for the *PAM* or *Plan de Actuación Municipal*[41];

(2) in the context of the same entity and counting with the same kind of participants, the celebration of a special meeting for assessing the *Pla d'Equipaments*[42] and the conference in which it was delivered;

(3) a series of meetings in which members of the UCCAP tried to figure out how to face important delays in the signature of their annual contracts with the autonomic government;

[41] Municipal Action Plan.

[42] Facilities Plan.

(4) the regular celebration of benchmarking sessions in which members of the same entity (*UCCAP*) are expected to share their experiences and ideas on how to deal with problems with the management of the centers they all have in common, such as waiting lists and the relation with other childcare facilities and services;

(5) a careful assessment of needs through which members of the board of the neighborhood association from *El Clot-Camp de l'Arpa* sought to determine the number of facilities and services required by the neighborhood according to the study of European ratios of inhabitant per outpatient health centers and kindergarten facilities;

(6) the insistence with which the President of the neighborhood association from *La Prosperitat* points out the need for a meaningful, long-term social project capable of integrating specific request and demands made by inhabitants in a coherent manner, and, finally

(7) the process by which thematic small work groups integrated by technicians from the *CBS* and representatives of local TS entities sought to establish their most important needs and formulate the correspondent objectives so that those needs could be addressed by the Consortium's next annual plan.

In all cases, there are efforts driven by the need for making sense out of problems, opportunities, events and surrounding conditions that are relevant for agents because they are linked to the reason for being of the entity to which they are members. These efforts, which constitute what here has been conceived as *understanding* activities are linked to specific undertakings, so that their direction and the outcomes they are intended to generate are conditioned by the purposes of the undertaking in which they play their part. *Understanding* activities are always linked to foreseen moves and positions held on the issues they address because their outcomes allow concerned agents to (1) create a common version of the situation in which the issue at stake is rooted, (2) clarify their further steps with regard to that issue and (3) develop arguments that can help them to support their positions, including the critics and proposals that belong to those positions. In this sense, *understanding* implies deliberate attempts to make the case for

relevant issues along with the positions held about them. Also, it is by means of pondering upon such issues that they are simultaneously shaped or re-shaped[43].

As for their value, *understanding* activities and their outcomes have different users, being the more immediate that of the grassroots. There is a sort of double exchange by which people located in the grassroots delivers raw materials – mainly in the form of complaints -, some of which might get to be turned into mobilizing questions that later give place to specific outcomes such as public statements, reports, press conferences, etcetera. By seeing their complaints transformed into specific outcomes, the grassroots are expected to adhere to the positions intrinsic to such outcomes and take part in activities derived from them. There are different, not necessarily evident, calculations or estimations intrinsic to these exchanges. Some are made by the grassroots on the basis of the anticipated capacity of the TS entity to appreciate and effectively manage delivered complaints and on the basis of the congruence and anticipated efficacy of the outcomes that the core of the entity produces. Other calculations, made by the core of the TS entity, find their criterion in the pertinence and political potential of delivered complaints.

Another user is that of opportunistic agents. Depending on the kind of outcomes and on the status of the producer – the position of the TS entity – governmental agencies, opposition parties and other TS entities can express their adhesion to such outcomes or can use them to support their own positions. The kind of exchange that public adhesion or use of specific outcomes of *understanding* generates is such that it creates a sense of compromise, very much in the way that have been developed in the previous section of activities of compliance.

In both cases, potential users – the grassroots and opportunistic agents – take advantage of specific outcomes of *understanding*. And yet, there is a third group of users whose interests are not focused in specific outcomes of *understanding*, but in the performance of certain undertakings in which *understanding* activities are central. Such group, one that might be called 'procedural promoters', is concerned with the production of *understanding* in the first place and with the application of certain guidelines and conditions during the production in the second place. Such segment can be found in the government and, to a lesser

[43] For more details on the elaboration of understanding see Appendix 5f.

extent, in some TS entities, the functioning of which seeks to fosters certain principles on how TS entities should operate. The Volunteering Summer School, organized by the *Servei Català del Voluntariat*[44], is one example of this missionary work. This event is celebrated on a yearly basis. In it, professional providers of training offer courses and workshops on how to effectively manage an entity largely based on voluntary work. While specific mechanisms to assess the actual application of offered guidelines are not usual, participation in activities intended to train members of TS entities are likely to be rewarded with institutional acknowledgments and might open the door to further collaborations.

9.10. Activities of pressure

Activities of pressure are those that get to be valued because of their capability for creating breaches through which concerned agents can have access to decision arenas. These activities are at the core of the Third Sector. In fact, other categories of civic activities are usually linked to some activity of pressure. The value of a pressure activity is regarded to its anticipated or actual capacity for gaining or exerting collective and public influence in arenas of decision in which agents producers of pressure are excluded. While this effect is likely to be attained by different means, *activities of pressure* find their specificity in that they are basically focused on the production of such effect. Through the analysis, we have grouped these activities into seven subclasses: (1) *complaints and protests*; (2) *boycott and sabotage*; (3) *impugning*; (4) *requests*; (5) *critics*; (6) *proposals*; and (7) *mobilization*. These subclasses vary in terms of their scope and degree of elaboration.

9.10.1. Complaints and protests

Complaints are the rawest form of pressure. They include expressions of disagreements, unease, unpleasant experiences and troubling situations that the grassroots of a given organization share in different kinds of encounters. From denunciations on bicycle riders that go too fast through the sidewalks to references made to delays in the construction of a healthcare center, these expressions are more or less related to the subjects the TS entity deals with according to its mission or purpose. As expressions of individual experiences,

[44] Catalan Volunteering Service.

complaints are normally located in daily life and thus have a well-localized origin that makes of them particular cases.

While the conditions in which *complaints* emerge do not pass through organizing activities, their delivering in collective spaces do, specifically in those that TS entities provide[45]. In such spaces, – which have the form of a meeting – *complaints* are expressed and, after their expression, they can get silently discarded or they can originate a larger conversation when they get acknowledged from the part of those in the meeting[46]. Discarding *complaints* implies the collective performance of an explicit, polite hearing along with a tacit lack of responses. The complainer is allowed to share his or her uneases but the audience does not engage into a conversation and passes to another subject. In such cases, expressed *complaints* remain as an individual concern. When expressed *complaints* get to generate conversations, they raise responses in the audience. Such responses might consist of confirmations or statements of agreement, the delivery of similar *complaints* – different cases of the same problem in a sort of snowball effect –, attempts of explaining the situations that are at stake, acknowledgments of the troubling situations along with different accents with regard to the source or axis of the problem, and so on. What has to be underlined here is that *complaints* enter into an elaboration process, one in which they get tempered, reformulated, and linked with wider issues. Complaints get to generate mobilizing questions and find their place in current undertakings or give place to new ones.

Complaints are thus related with immediate, felt situations, and they seek to find their way out in the middle of meetings and encounters, disregarding the

[45] It is difficult to determine whether complaints pass through reflective work or not, thought their recognizable form, the one that makes them distinguishable as complaints, suggest that such reflective work is absent. Anyway, the conditions for their emergence do not include standardized organizing activities. In fact, most of them are delivered under an emotional form of talk. The immediacy of the relation with the issues that complaints are related with makes of their expression an activity capable of generating some sort of cathartic effect. This is why the emotional form of talk with which complaints are expressed tends to disappear in as much as they follow an indirect delivery, one in which representatives receive original complaints and then pass them to other instances.

[46] With regard to the criteria or basis in which the discarding or further elaboration of a given complaint is based, let us remember the sense of the right sayings and doings in a given situation, in this case a meeting or encounter. This sense is the practical, located, tacit concretion of the mission or reason for being of a given entity, filtered through the purposes of the encounters and the patterns that they use to follow.

pertinence and opportunity of his expression. The following excerpt is part of the observation of a meeting on neighborhood facilities at the *FAVB*. It describes how a representative of a neighborhood association tried to make clear her discomfort with the process by which the project of a sports center had been announced and executed. Despite of attempts made by the President of the *FAVB* to adjust interventions to the agenda, some assistants insisted on expressing their concerns:

> Ante la última intervención, una señora intentó continuar en la misma línea, preguntándose qué pasaba con el tema de los presupuestos asignados según resultados electorales, pero antes de que pudiera continuar, [la presidente] le pidió, haciendo extensiva su petición a todos los asistentes, que se centrara primero en las jornadas de equipamientos y la valoración de las propuestas. La mujer, sin hacer mucho caso, habló con indignación visible de cómo en su barrio se había tirado adelante el proyecto de un polideportivo con reuniones participativas a las que la asociación de vecinos nunca había sido invitada ni avisada[47]. 9:9 (22:22)

As can be seen, despite of attempts made by a member of the core of the entity – the President – to keep interventions according to the purposes of the meeting and the explicit agenda, one of the assistants insisted on complaining about a lived situation that she considered unacceptable. It is worth to note how before expressing her concerned with the project of the sports center, the woman started by supporting a previous complaint, the one about public budgets conditioned by electoral results. Besides, the issue around which the complaint about the sports center arises is not incompatible with the kind of matters the *FAVB* deals with, and yet, it results inappropriate for the ends of the meeting. As for the way the President dealt with the situation, it can be said that her attempts of sticking to the agenda did not get to the point of obtruding expressions of *complaints*, but they were capable of making assistants go back to the agenda after such expressions.

[47] Regarding the last intervention, a mistress tried to continue in the same line, asking herself what was going on with the matter of budgets assigned according to electoral results, but before she could continue, [the President] asked her, extending her request to every assistant, to focus on the meetings on facilities and the assessment of proposals. The woman unattended the request and spoke with visible indignation of the way in which a project of a sports center had been carried out in her neighborhood, with participatory meetings to which the neighborhood association never had been invited nor warned.

Though complaining is an activity with low value, it has potential, as a raw material. In fact, the capacity of a TS entity for generating spaces in which *complaints* can be expressed and delivered serves as a good sign of the currency of its reason for being and of its connection to the grassroots. TS entities are supposed to turn *complaints* into specific undertakings and count on the involvement of the grassroots in such undertakings.

While complaining is individually performed, usually in meetings that single TS entities organized, protest in turn are collectively achieved through different sorts of public demonstrations. *Protests* make reference to public expressions of disagreement that do not follow institutional channels. Protest might be originated in the confluence of common *complaints* around specific issues, but they acquire their shape through an organizing process intended to turn the disagreements that they are willing to express into a visible, public event, the nature of which is well understood in the expression 'sortir al carrer[48].'

The process by which *protests* are organized requires of the elaboration of a simple and clear message and of the election of a form, a time and a place or set of places for delivering the message. The timing of *protests* is crucial for their success, because it defines the opportunity with which they are performed.

The value of protest depends upon (1) the coverage they can get in the mass media; (2) the acknowledged legitimacy and rationality of their claims; (3) the recognizability of the issues that are at stake, the expressed disagreements and the specific requests as matters of common concern by their potential audiences; (4) the relative importance or salience of each protest with regard to other ongoing *protests*; (5) the impressions of representativeness they are able to generate – which is related with the dimensions and kinds of entities and social movements involved in them –; and (6) the relative success of prior *protests* conducted by the same entity or entities.

In terms of the calculations by which the value of a given *protests* is anticipated, the probability of a massive support – which is related to the impressions of representativeness the demonstration can generate – is one of the most important aspects. In this sense, some *protests* imply the making of a risky bet; public demonstrations with low participation are likely to generate an effect opposite to

[48] Get out to the street

the desired one. This is why the coverage of a protest that gets to enter in the mass media usually includes a confrontation on the number of participants, one in which the numbers offered by organizers of the demonstration are greater than those offered by the police.

9.10.2. Boycott and sabotage

It refers to activities that, purposefully, obtrude any sort of undertaking, project, condition, or functioning that is considered as harmful and contrary to the interests or wellbeing of a group or segment of the population. The distinction between *boycott and sabotage* can be found in two closely related features: its active or passive character and its legality. While *boycott* operates by means of abstention, *sabotage* implies an active obstruction. As can be advanced, the passive character of *boycott* allows it to normally operate under a legal framework, a condition that is not always found in *sabotage*. Many TS entities have the capabilities required to organize and increase the impact of *boycott and sabotage*. This is why both get to function as a good that the Third Sector can provide. The value of *boycott and sabotage* can be positive or negative, depending on the relative positioning of agents. For those that support the undertaking that is threaten or targeted, the value is usually negative, while for those whose interests are menaced or damaged by the undertaking or condition, *boycott and sabotage* have a positive value. Such value is expected to fluctuate according to the ways in which the obstruction is announced, the impact it gets on the media and, finally, the reaches of its effective execution. As in other cases, anticipated value and resulting value do not have to be coincident.

Now let us consider a specific situation. The *FAVB* faced a difficult situation when the City Council announced its intentions to open a small number of facilities in which health care professionals could offer to people addicted to drugs a medically supervised administration of doses[49]. According to what the President of this entity said, such announcement raised contesting voices. Some of those voices were willing to support the announcement. Other voices had not adopted any position and were able to listen and discuss the matter. And yet other voices were particularly concerned with what they saw as a danger for their own

[49] These facilities are widely known as 'salas de venopunción' or 'narcosalas'. The election of the term that is used to refer to them can be considered to some extent as an indicator of the position assumed in front of the issue.

neighborhoods. This third group assumed a closed, simplistic position that consisted of rejecting the location of the aforementioned facilities inside or nearby the neighborhoods of its members. As tension increased, the *FAVB* organized and celebrated an encounter in which specialists and people from cities with similar services could offer substantial information and share their points of view. The purpose here was clear: considering that undesired facilities are usually troubling but necessary, it was important to settle the ground for establishing a common position, and this required at least a good informational basis. What happened later, during the first moments of the encounter, was that people belonging to the group with a closed position tried to *sabotage* the event. This '*sabotage*' attempt, which basically consisted of yelling slogans and interrupting speakers, did not exert an effect in the audience, though. As the rest of the assistants deliberately ignored these disturbances, obtruding actions finally ceased and the meeting was successfully carried out.

First thing to note is that *boycott and sabotage* do not work exclusively against the government or for-profit enterprises. They are also used against undertakings that belong to TS entities. An observation has to be made, though. In these cases, the targeted undertaking is more likely to be found in the activity of a coordinative-representative entity. Here, the double face of the Third Sector, as the organized voice of the grassroots and as a bridge to government, reveals its potential implications.

Before addressing other forms of civic activities, it is important to underline that, in terms of exchange, *boycott and sabotage* functions in the limits of the rules and channels of the legal market. In a way that is similar to that of other civic activities of pressure, *boycott and sabotage* can be well received by opposition parties that can take advantage of them for their own interests. Nevertheless, since the legality of the forms in which obstruction is achieved can be questioned, it can be expected that any form of support from opposition parties to those that effectively organize the obstruction take place in a veiled manner. By pointing out the conditions for veiled exchanges to happen, we can find a way to deal with what might be called 'gray' civic market.

9.10.3. Impugning

Impugning consists of taking advantage of the possibility of using institutional channels and procedures to express disagreement and point out failures, incongruities or omissions. As for the levels at which it is performed, *impugning* follows a similar path at different scales, from individuals presenting their disagreements to grassroots entities, to conglomerates of coordinative-representative entities pushing the government through institutional channels. An announcement or publication is made and a period for allegations is fixed. Allegations are delivered following certain conditions with regard to its form, contents, and time and places for delivery. After the delivery, an answer to each allegation should be received by those that made it in the first place. Whether the result is favorable or not according to the interests of those that made the *impugning* is not as important as the fact that the possibility of *impugning* is available for those that are not satisfied with a given decision and, as long as they receive an answer, the procedure is considered effective, disregarding the contents of the answer[50]. *Impugning*, in its own terms, might not always get concerned agents to exert influence on the matters they are interested in. Nevertheless, it is useful in that it sets a precedent of the ineffectiveness of institutional channels. Such precedent serves to legitimate further actions, most of which might follow non-institutional paths.

A situation in which *impugning* occurs at a larger scale can be found in a particularly interesting case: the attempt of saving a historic group of industrial buildings known as *Can Ricart*. Aligned with other entities by means of the platform *Can Ricart,* the neighborhood association from *Poblenou* took legal measures against an urban development plan in which, among other things, the demolition of a group of industrial facilities built during the industrial revolution. Figure 11 shows a detail of the cover of a document through which one of such measures was pursued.

The document – the first of four – contains a set of general allegations to the urban development plan and was signed by 26 entities of the area and by 264 individuals. Again, as in the case of *protests*, numbers are important and the signature of many entities is likely to be used as an indicator of the

[50] Appendix 5g elaborates on the legitimating effect of *impugning*.

representativeness in which the document is based. The core of its contents is conformed by a series of statements and arguments that criticize the proposed plan – a modification of a previous version –, underscoring the lack of an authentic participatory process before and during its elaboration, and the lack of social sensibility in its contents, the foreseeable implications of which were more negative than positive for most inhabitants of the area. The measure taken, well ascribed to legal normative in force, was not an isolated one. It was a part of a greater set of actions, some which were not limited to the use of available institutional channels. Despite of their minimal effects, the public status of the documents offered a mean for diffusion about the situation, with the possibility of gaining support from other entities and from the general population.

Figure 11.
Detail of the cover of the first section of allegations presented by TS entities of Poblenou and surrounding neighborhoods against the urban development plan that contemplates the demolition of Can Ricart.

Regarding the conditions that allow agents to take advantage of *impugning*, it is worth to note that they vary according to the relative positions that allow us to distinguish among the kind of agents involved, positions that simultaneously are founded on such conditions. Agents that provide the channels for *impugning* include decision makers – owners of the decision arenas, whether they are public or private – and stewards – administrators of the procedures through which *impugning* should be pursued. As for those agents that seek to exert influence in decisions from which they are excluded, we might find groups that are affected by those decisions, and individuals or teams – usually members of the core of a TS entity – that take the responsibility of managing the *impugning* as representatives of the affected groups.

Decision makers - politicians, business men and lobbyist in large scale matters – should be in conditions of calculating or anticipating potential losses caused by *impugning*. Their most useful tactic to avoid or minimize potential losses is that of the timing, especially that of the announcement or publication of decisions made and that of the effective application of those decisions. By means of delays and tight deadlines, decision makers can make difficult for potential allegations to be well organized and developed. Considering that *impugning* is a process that passes through highly standardized administrative steps, delays turn out to be particularly crucial, because they can render the result of *impugning* irrelevant.

With regard to affected groups, the basic condition that allows them to pursue *impugning* is the possibility of sensing a threat or, to a lesser extent, an opportunity, in decisions made in arenas in which they have a restricted access or no access at all. Sensing a threat or an opportunity requires more than access to information with regard to those decisions. Besides of having information on such decisions, affected groups require to think of their implications in a collective manner – one that depends on available spaces of encounter – so that the explicit formulation of the threat can be stated and ascribed by the group.

In spite of its necessary character, sensing the threat is not enough for starting a process of *impugning*. At some point, the possibility of fighting the sensed threat through *impugning* has to be considered, alone or in coordination with other measures. It is through this consideration that the value of a specific *impugning* process, which is based on expectations of direct or indirect gains, arises.

Moreover, because of the highly procedural character of *impugning*, know-how on procedures and legal matters is required, whether it is consolidated, still in process of acquisition or based in access to professional advice. The cores of TS entities are expected to fulfill these conditions.

There are two interesting links between the role of affected groups and the role of the core of an entity in the emergence of the possibility of *impugning*. First, the core of an entity might play an active role in the formation of the sense of threat in front of a given decision or announcement. By providing information to the grassroots – and here it has to be noted that the core of an entity is more likely to gain earlier access to such information – and by accompanying the delivery of such information with explicit statements of threat, the core of an entity can raise general concern so that it can count on its grassroots for further actions, *impugning* included. Second, the core of an entity might be accountable for the preparation, delivery and follow up of a specific allegation, but since it manages to previously clarify the chances of success, its responsibility in front of the grassroots is limited to keep the people informed of the state of the process.

A final observation is regarded to the value of *impugning* for those who attempt to exert influence in decisions from which they have been excluded. The outcomes of *impugning* are uncertain. In spite of those outcomes, concerned agents might seek to raise the value of *impugning.* In order to do so, agents might seek to insert *impugning* into a network of activities that share the same purposes, and use it as a mean for increasing the coverage of current undertakings.

9.10.4. Requests

Requests refer to the formulation and delivery of specific demands on a wide variety of issues. Some of those demands are intended to solve needs of the grassroots - new public facilities of all kinds, a tighter control of night clubs, an increased presence of the police in certain areas, funds for equipment in private centers that provide public services or interviews with members of the government, to mention but a few -, and others are aimed to cover needs of TS entities - funds for their operation, training, facilities, etcetera.

The core of TS entities, particularly of those of the coordinative-representative kind - have a key role in formulating and delivering such demands because of a progressive acquisition of practical knowledge, key relationships and status.

Based on these resources, *requests* prepared and delivered by entities are more likely to be effective than those directly managed by the grassroots. Among other things, such resources allows members of the core of an entity to better define the request, to make a case for it in a manner that fits their potential interlocutors, to target the right interlocutor at a given time and to arrange the delivery[51].

As for the nature of the exchanges through which *requests* acquire value, a distinction should be made between (a) the aspects upon which the making of different *requests* might be distinguished – the object of the *requests*, the specific requesters and providers, the intervention of mediators, the form of the delivery, the outcomes, etcetera – and (b) the aspects that all *requests* have in common or, more precisely, that allow to recognize them as such – the framework in which the aforementioned aspects are linked one another, in spite of their specific embodiments. This last form of addressing *requests* – an analytical construction based on the former approach – allows us to deal with its practical logic and its implications.

The exchanges through which *requests* gain value can be located at different levels and among different agents. Between the grassroots and the core of a TS entity, *requests* are delivered in a raw form, so that the core of the entity takes care of elaborating an adequate formulation and defining an effective delivery. While the work of the core might increase the probability of success of the request, the process implies a certain degree of conformity and *adhesion* from the part of the grassroots. An often implicit acknowledgment of the capabilities of the core of the entity consolidates the need for its existence. The core of the entity, in turn, has to assure that the results it is capable of producing are positively distinguishable as better than those that the grassroots could reach by pursuing the request by their own means – in a direct or non mediated manner – or by means of the work of another entity.

Between a TS entity and the institution, organization or group that is in conditions of providing what the request seeks to obtain – often located in the Public Sector –, the exchanges by which *requests* acquire their value are framed in the actualization of an asymmetric relationship. In such relationship, the object of any

[51] For more details on the conditions in which the effectiveness of *requests* is founded, see Appendix 5h.

request is thought of as out of the reach of those who require it. Whether the experienced impossibility of self-provision is founded on normative matters – it is the duty of the government to provide "X" – or on 'realistic' calculations[52] – it is impossible for us to produce "X" – is not as important as the effects that such asymmetric relationship generates. It is because of the actualization of such framework every time *requests* are made that the positions of agents involved are consolidated, including the distinctions upon which they are based. Providers, requesters and mediators confirm their capabilities – or the lack of –, the legitimacy of such capabilities – or the lack of –, including relationships and exchanges based on them. This consolidation excludes other possibilities in a manner that renders them unthinkable or simply non-sense.

Besides, the framework for *requests* requires of a minimal confirmation, one in which agents involved should actively – and not deliberatively – participate. By keeping the framework untouched, such minimal confirmation also preserves agents' positions. From the part of providers, the minimal requisites for confirming the framework are to be found in the necessity of offering an answer to every request. Some of those answers have to be positive so the role of provider can be maintained. In the case of negative answers, the answers have to be accompanied by an explanation based on the role or current situation of the provider in front of the specific request.

A situation in which a negative answer was justified according to the role of the provider was explained by the former President of the *ABHGU*. During an interview, the former President said that in the late 90's he tried to convince a city councilor to give them grants for organizing activities for retired urban guards, as the local government used to in the old days:

> Antes colaboraba el ayuntamiento, pero, me sabe mal decirlo, así como nosotros nos adaptamos a la democracia, ajustando nuestros estatutos a… a la nueva época, el ayuntamiento también se ajustó, pero al revés, quitándonos la subvención. Yo personalmente fui a hablar con el concejal que se encargaba de eso, y le dije "Oye, si nos estaban dando una subvención que nos iba muy bien, sobre todo para los ancianos, llevarlos de

[52] Although such calculation is usually based upon objective differences in access to resources – here the label of 'realistic' –, it is but a form of making intelligible such differences.

> excursión", llevábamos cada excursión cuatro autocares, o sea, doscientos. Ahora llevamos uno, y se lo pagan ellos, a precio reducido porque ya se preocupa el presidente de que las agencias nos hagan unos precios acordes con nosotros, ¿no? Y me dijo el concejal, dice "No, es que la ley nos lo prohíbe, porque dice que las entidades de previsión social se tienen que nutrir de sus propios ingresos, de las cuotas de sus socios". Me dijo eso, "y por lo tanto hemos eliminado esta ayuda". Yo le dije "sí, muy bien, pero no podrías darnos otra subvención para ayudar al bienestar y mejorar las condiciones de los jubilados, que lo estáis haciendo con aquella asociación de vecinos, con el barrio de la mina, con el otro, lo estáis haciendo, ¿por qué no hacéis lo mismo con nosotros? Además somos del ayuntamiento, del cuerpo". [53]. 14:29 (353:355)

An outstanding aspect of this excerpt is that of the consequences of past experiences in which requested resources have been granted. Those experiences set a precedent that, in front of changes, creates difficulties for TS entities, especially in those cases in which the reception of external resources gets to be considered as the norm. In such cases, a strong relationship of dependency is maintained. When the basis for the maintenance of such relationship is broken – basically because the owner of the resources does not get anything valuable from a positive answer to *requests* – the formerly beneficiary entity might face important challenges in finding new ways of acquiring the resources it needs or in minimizing the effects of letting the need unattended.

[53] Previously, the local government used to collaborate, but, I don't like to say it, as we adjusted ourselves to democracy by adapting our statute to the new times, the local government adjusted itself too, but in the opposite direction, taking the grants away from us. I myself went to speak to the councilor that was in charge of that, and I told him "listen, if you were giving us a grant that was helpful for us, especially for old people, to take them out to short trips", in each trip we had four buses, that is, two hundred persons. Now we only have one bus, and the people pay for it, a special price, because the President takes care of getting discounts with travel agencies according to us, OK? And the counselor said to me "No, the law prohibits that, because it says that mutual aid societies have to get their own incomes by means of fees that their associates pay". He told me so, "and consequently, we've eliminated this grant". I said to him "Yes, all right, but, could you give us another grant so that we can improve the well being and conditions of retired persons now that you are doing the same thing with that neighborhood association?, with La Mina neighborhood, with the other, you are doing it, why don't you do the same with us? Besides, we belong to the city government, to the body".

Nevertheless, the most interest aspect in the extract is that of the arguments that are faced to sustain both positions, the one of the counselor and the one of the former President. On one side, the then President appeals to: (1) past collaborations between the government and his entity; (2) the ways in which the requested grants are going to be used and their impact on the well being of retired urban guards; (3) positive answers given by the government to similar *requests* made by other entities and (4) the fact that retired urban guards are also part of the government, in an attempt of underscoring an attribute that the requester and the provider have in common. The counselor, on the other side, reiterates his negative answer by appealing to (1) the law, which clearly excludes the kind of collaboration that the President of the *ABHGU* is asking for; (2) the possibility of acquiring resources by other means, an idea included in the mention of the law and (3) the categorical character of the decision made. What is worth to note in the reasons offered by each side is the congruence among each set of reasons and the positions from which they are made. The observation of this congruence is what maintains the frame and the relationship untouched, in spite of the results of the request. Besides, it has to be underscored that in the account offered by the former President, there is not any consideration of an alternative way of acquiring the required resources.

There is something to add to the attributes that the position of provider has in its relationship with requesters. The President of *RACAMERS* explained in an interview[54] that when he asked a middle-official from the *Generalitat* to gave them funds for the organization of a special event, he finally get a small fraction of the requested amount. Along with the concession, he was warned, as in other occasions, that his association should only address cultural matters, avoiding political issues, especially those regarding immigration. Here, the effects of control derived from *requests* become evident.

According to what has been exposed, agents' positions around *requests* should be synthetically reduced to three: providers, requesters and mediators. While providers are expected to offer some sort of answer, even if it consists only of a reason for justifying a negative response, requesters are expected to accept the response, insisting on their necessities by further *requests* or renouncing to further

[54] 27:9 (28:28)

attempts. Mediators in turn are expected to enhance the chances of a positive answer and, in a less evident way, they are also expected to add intelligibility to the outcomes of the process, offering plausible explanations of them. By acting according to the roles prescribed by their positions, agents involved preserve the frame in which such positions are rooted.

As for the possibility of breaking the frame in which the exchangeability of *requests* generates value, there are some interesting experiences of self-provision of the required resources or activities. During an interview, a member of the neighborhood association from *El Clot-Camp de l'Arpa* talked about the presence of *okupas* in his neighborhood. The following excerpt, explains how *okupas* managed to provide the neighborhood with a so much expected library:

> Hace ocho años que reivindicamos la biblioteca del barrio del Clot. Som… hay sesenta mil habitantes, entonces los okupas, lo primero que han hecho en la casa okupada, es una biblioteca, una biblioteca para el barrio, o sea, han limpio la casa, la han… mmm… puesto las luces, eh… han ido a… a las editoriales, han recogido libros, han recogido mesas que estaban por la calle, y ahora hay una biblioteca del barrio. Y el otro día, eh… se inauguró, ¿no?, entonces, los jóvenes, eso lo ven… oye, eh… hace tanto tiempo que esperamos una biblioteca y son los jóvenes que se hacen su () [golpea la mesa]… es fuerte. Y… y se publicó en… eh… [risas] El País, ¿no?, un artículo que hizo el presidente de la asociación, y se… y explicando el hecho, ¿no? Ahora estos okupas, pues, están en juicios, ya sabes cómo va… en juicios y… y resulta que tienen una pila de actividades, ¿eh?[55]. 23:72 (398:398)

It is worth to mention the surprise that causes in the member of the neighborhood association the fact that, after a long waiting for the desired library, the *okupas*

[55] For eight years we've been fighting for a library for El Clot neighborhood, then the okupas, the first thing they have done in the occupied house, is a library, a library for the neighborhood, that is, they have cleaned the house, the have... hum... put lights in it, hum... they've spoken to publishers, they've gathered books, tables left in the street, and now there is a library for the neighborhood. And the other day, hum... it was inaugurated, right?, then, young people see that... hey, hum... it's been so long since we've been waiting for a library and it is the young people that make themselves their... () [hits the table]... it's huge. And... and it was published in... hum... [laughs] El País, OK?, an article written by the President of the association, and it... and explaining the fact, OK? Now these okupas, well, they are in court, you know how it goes... in court and... and it turns out that they have several activities, right?

decided to provide the neighborhood with it. Here, an alternative path to the usual request of the needed facility to authorities is drawn. In the process, the current way of thinking about how to get resources, facilities and services required for the neighborhood is challenged as the possibility of alternative forms arises as something that can be thought and discussed. As alternative paths arise – and the process is anything but free of difficulties – the frame and the positions that are founded on it are necessarily revisited, thus changing, at least at a local level, the sense and the rules of the game.

9.10.5. Agendizing

Agendizing is referred to efforts intended to raise general concern about certain situations. *Agendizing* puts those issues on the table as matters that require some sort of resolution. Therefore, *agendizing* succeeds when thinking and saying that somebody has to do something about certain issues get to be usual. *Agendizing* can address several kinds of issues. Whether it is focused on difficulties in finding employers for people with disabilities, the growing presence of real estate mobbing, the lack of attention paid to some diseases due to their low prevalence, or the loss that the demolition of an historical group of buildings would imply, *agendizing* consists of turning concerns about such situations into public issues.

The following excerpt belongs to an interview with the manager of the *UCCAP* and the *ACAP*. The manager explains how both associations seek to keep key decision makers aware and well informed of the issues the associations deal with:

> ...anualmente se hace un informe, luego te lo doy, donde un poco analizamos la atención que se ha dado durante el año, con cifras, se hacen… propuestas, se desempolvan temas sin resolver, (), y este informe se hace llegar a los parlamentarios de… de /cualquier color político/, luego nos entrevistamos con ellos, eh… con el objetivo de… bueno, de intervenir en el tem… ayudar y dar argumentos de nuestro trabajo y de nuestra () a todas las facciones políticas, o sea, pensando de que se puede hacer un trabajo importante tanto desde el gobierno como desde la

> oposición, lo importante es que estén informados…[56] 15:40 (241:241)

For the *ACAP* and the *UCCAP*, the task of raising concern about the need for providing early childhood attention is a permanent one. The periodical performance of the activities by which such aim is pursued is but a sample of this. Taking advantage of the outcomes of analysis carried out by members of the associations, members of the core of both associations seek to keep relevant decision makers informed of the current situation of early childhood attention. The task is achieved through two institutionally framed encounters: the first one consists of the delivery of a report and the second consists of a conversation in which doubts can be addressed and key details of the report can be underlined. The formal attributes of the information that is delivered is crucial in the process. According to their institutional character, both entities present sets of well organized data that serves as evidence of the issues that the entities want to discuss. Besides, the insistence in clarifying that the ACAP and the UCCAP seek to speak with all parliamentarians, in spite of the political parties to which they belong seems to have a double function. On one hand, it allows the entities to present the issues they deal with as matters that deserve attention beyond any political position, thus legitimating their public status. On the other, by keeping both the government and the opposition informed, the associations settle a condition for the emergence of conversations on the subject without their direct participation. As a result, the issues that are finally put into the agenda are likely to serve as a topic about which the government has to assume explicit positions and made decisions, while the opposition can take advantage of the opportunity of proposing alternative approaches or criticizing such decisions.

There is more about the institutional character of the encounters between representatives of the ACAP-UCCAP and parliamentarians. Getting access to significant encounters with key members of the government is by no means a simple task. Here, the institutional status of both associations and their

[56] An annual report is made, I'll give you one later, in which we analyze the attention given throughout the year, with number, proposals... are made, unsolved problems are brought up, (), and this report is sent to parliamentarians of all /political colors/, then, we have conversations with them, hum... with the purpose of... well, of intervening in the sub... help and offer arguments in favor of our work and our () to all political parties, that is, thinking that there's a important work to be done, both from the government and from the opposition, the thing is that they have to be informed.

recognition, juridical and professionally speaking, allows their representatives to gain the position of experts, authorized sources of information on early childhood attention. As such, they are in a better position for being heard than the average citizen.

It has to be said though, that TS entities can look for the inclusion of an issue into the agenda through different channels. Besides of attempts of raising concern over an issue by exposing arguments to key members of government, TS entities can undertake informative activities directed to some sectors of the population. This kind of activities can range from local events to presence in the mass media but, in all cases, they can be depicted as efforts of raising public awareness over the issue at stake, so that the government or, more specifically, those who have access to the decision arenas in which the issue can be tackled are obligated to deal with it.

Examples of *agendizing* activities focused on different targets can be found in attempts made by TS entities from *El Clot-Camp de l'Arpa* neighborhood. By means of a coordinated work, these entities tried to raise awareness on the importance of the *Torre del Fang*, the demolition of which had been announced as a result of the construction of the railway for the *AVE.* One of such activities consisted of children drawing the house with some adults explaining to them the history of the building[57]. By contrast, other activity, directed to a broader audience, consisted in the elaboration of a short documentary, supported and distributed by DVD, in which experts in local history explained the history of the house[58].

Agendizing thus depends on a limited capability to be heard, to introduce those concerns into key conversations, to assure that they gain interest and finally get to be included into relevant arenas of decision. In front of other sectors, Third Sector's *agendizing* efforts have a relative efficacy because the conditions in which their capacity is rooted are not equal to those of the government or large corporations. Access to media and expenditure capacity of Public Sector and some for-profit enterprises are greater than those of the majority of TS entities. Nevertheless, based on their status, some TS entities have proved capable of putting some issues into the agenda despite of their restricted access to resources

[57] 23:62 (354:354)

[58] 23:61 (346:346)

or their lack of relationships with key agents of government or of the mass media. Status then appears as a crucial source of capability for being listened and might be required to conduct or to offer support to some attempts of introduction of issues into the agenda. In fact, with regard to some issues, the kind of status that a TS entity builds over time can be equal or even more important than resources and access to the media. This is why, for *agendizing* purposes, Public and Private Sectors sometimes create TS entities as extensions of them.

9.10.6. Critics

Critics are forms of pressure that consist of the production and distribution of statements that intend to indicate fissures or uncover disguises regarding proposals and undertakings about issues of public interest. The distinctive character of criticizing, the basis upon which it acquires value, is to be found in their capacity for (1) underscoring inadequacies, failures, incongruities or unintended effects; and (2) unveiling hidden agendas, non-legitimate interests or illegal activities. As for the objects of *critics*, issues of public interest include all those undertakings, activities, projects, decisions, positions and principles, the authorship of which is based on a noticeable position from the Public Sector. Besides, private undertakings and statements that have repercussions important enough to be considered as matters of public concern can also be objects of *critics.* According to this, when any object – a set of statements, a proposal, the announcement of a project, or a series of activities – receives *critics* from the part of collective concerned agents – the Third Sector and social movements –, its status as a public issue is intrinsically confirmed.

The bases or rationale upon which *critics* are elaborated might belong to different domains. Whether they are technical, ethical, juridical, or political, to mention but a few, the bases for criticizing establish the limits and logic under which any critical statement should be formed. This does not mean that for a given public issue, *critics* and responses are necessarily rooted in only one domain. Instead, it is usual that the exchange of statements include enunciates elaborated from different bases. A critic based on the doubtful ethical nature of a measure announced by a governmental agency might be accompanied with cautions with regard to technical or operative requirements that are not taken into account. Responses to such critics might in turn be based in a political ground,

underscoring the attributes of the decision making process through which the announced measure acquired its legitimacy.

Beyond their localization and their links with specific issues, *critics* can be thought of as particular utterances that are a part of mediated, long, broad discussions held across several places. According to this, specific debates – such as that of the platform *l'AVE pel litoral*[59] in front of the announcement of construction of a subterranean railway under some Barcelona neighborhoods – are also particular performances of longer and broader discussions – a case of NIMBY[60] and the doubtful legitimacy of making a counter-proposal that affects other people without taking that people into account. In each performance, old formulas and pre-configured schemes guide the elaboration of interventions in a reproductive manner. Nevertheless, the combination of conditions under which the specific debate is held is likely to add some novelties to the grand debate. Besides, while grand debates occur through those specific discussions, there is more at stake in each localized debate than the grand debate. Grand debates provide agents a frame for picking and addressing their concerns, but there are aspects that belong to each particular setting: (1) the specific terms of the utterances, (2) the interrelated positions of agents, (4) the interests that each agent pursues, (4) the conditions under which the confrontation is held, and (5) the practical consequences of the localized debate.

Once that the former preventions have been made, the links among localized discussions and grand debates are crucial for understanding some properties of criticizing in terms of an economic activity. *Critics* are more than expressions of disagreement because they require to be supported by arguments and evidence according to the rules that define the domains to which the issues that are at stake belong. Here, the capabilities of a TS entity for producing well founded arguments and evidence become crucial because they allow the entity to sustain its *critics* in a manner that cannot be simply rejected by the targets of the *critics* as a futile expression or even as an emotional reaction. And yet, there is a curious way in which capabilities for producing arguments and evidence can exert their

[59] The name of the platform literally means 'The High-Speed Rail Line (must pass) Through the Coast Line'.

[60] The acronym for 'Not In My Back Yard'.

supporting function. The status of a TS entity can reach a point in which its capabilities are taken for granted by members of the community in which it is located. When this happens, *critics* are likely to be sustained, at least at a first moment, by the status of the entity itself, which includes the presumption of the entity's mastery in the domains to which the issues at stake in the *critics* belong.

The requirement of certain capabilities for criticizing leads us to the question of the efficacy of *critics*. *Critics* are effective in as much as they create the need for a response from the part of the targets of the *critics*. *Critics* require to mobilize the conditions that obligate the targets – agents responsible for the undertakings or statements that are criticized – to response by answering to the *critics*. As can be advanced, the need for a response requires from the *critics* a formulation based on a partial mastery of the forms of talk that characterize the field to which the point of view intrinsic to the *critics* belongs. But there are other key requisites that a *critic* should meet in order to be effective. On one hand, potential authors of the *critic* require to be aware of the event that leads them to the necessity of criticizing. On the other, once elaborated, *critics* have to be listened or, in other words, they have to reach their audiences[61].

In the following excerpt, a member of the neighborhood association from *La Prosperitat-Camp de l'Arpa* explains some details on the elaboration of evidence for criticizing information offered by the government about matters of public security:

> ...había preocupación de la… sobre la seguridad, el tema de seguridad en el Barrio, ¿no?, y entonces dijimos “Bueno, pues, hacemos una comisión, que venga eh… primero venía la policía armada, ¿eh?, un teniente de la policía armada. El… conseller de… de… de seguridad ciudadana que hay en el ayuntamiento, y después uno de la guardia urbana, y luego… y luego… cinco o seis vecinos. Hacían una comisión, y entonces eh… iba todo muy bien. Van… van… pues casi tres años… casi cuatro años llevamos, ¿no?, entonces todo lo que pasa en el barrio pues eh… recogemos las denuncias, o sea, las… los vecinos se han acostumbrado a traernos las denuncias porque hacían… salieron

[61] Appendix 5i elaborates on the different roles and position in the production and delivery of critics.

> encuestas, que decían “Bajo… bajo nivel…” o sea las “la seguridad ha bajao de… de tensión”, ¿no?, y nosotros decíamos “en nuestra zona, no; hay tantas denuncias” , ¿eh?, y de esto, de asaltos a… bueno[62]. 23:78 (418:418)

First thing to note is the configuration of a space of interaction in which members of a community develop a well delimited relationship with authorities so that their concerns about security can be listened and, eventually, attended. Here, the neighborhood association use its knowledge and mobilizes its contacts with certain areas of the local government. As can be seen, the space of interaction is organized in the form of a commission with specific purposes and its functioning gets to be established on a regular basis. Once that the commission is well settled and operative, the issues that the neighbors are concerned with are progressively shaped. In the process, some devices to produce evidence on the state of those issues are adopted or developed (e.g. individual neighbors providing information on denounces; the neighborhood association processing and integrating such information; etcetera). In front of statements made by public authorities, such devices are used to support counter-versions on the state of the issues of concern.

The role of the neighborhood association is crucial, because it (1) takes up the concern of its grassroots; (2) provides the capabilities, relationships, and status required to create channels and procedures through which the issues of concern can be addressed; (3) mobilizes individuals that belong to the grassroots so that they can provide information required to support counter-versions; (4) integrates and elaborates the information received so that it can effectively serve as a mean for exerting pressure over authorities; and (5) manage to deliver the counter-version and the information that serves as evidence of that counter-version to relevant audiences, including authorities and the grassroots.

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62 ...there was concern about... about security, issues of security in the neighborhood, right?, and then we said "Well, then, we form a commission, we get, hum... first, the police came, right? a lieutenant of the police. The counselor of... of... citizen security in the city government, and then one of the Urban Guard, and then... and then... five or six neighbors. They formed a commission, and then hum... it was working well. It's been... well, almost three years... almost four years since we've been doing this, OK?, then, all what happens in the neighborhood, well, hum... we pick complaints to the police, that is, the neighbors are used to bring us the complaints, because some surveys appeared that said "Low... low level..." which means "security is less problematic", OK?, and we said "not in our area; we have this number of complaints", right?, and of this... of robberies... well.

In the process, several concessions are made by each party. The grassroots – at least some individuals – have to provide information; members of the core of the neighborhood association have to 'speak' the language of the authorities; and authorities have to respond to counter-versions delivered by the neighborhood association. Besides, once those emergent organizational arrangements crystallize, they have both enabling and constraining effects. While the commission allows the neighborhood association to pursue its goals in an organized, participatory manner, it also imposes certain conditions, particularly those regarding the timing (e.g. long periods of response and chronic delays) and the *de facto* requisites that individuals involved should meet (e.g. availability and certain practical knowledge on procedures). Concessions made by concerned agents and the enabling-constraining interplay of organizational arrangements are thus key elements in the series of exchanges by which criticizing acquire its value, for they conform the framework in which cost-benefit estimations are rooted.

Criticizing is related to other value generating activities. Some of those relations are of alignment while others are of subordination and yet others are of concatenation. Of course, the form of the relation will be a product of the specific undertaking to which the activities are attached – as with *protests*, *requests*, and *impugning*. Nevertheless, some relations are more stable. *Understanding* is perhaps the most obvious of such activities, because it allows the core of a TS entity to produce the arguments and evidences that sustain the *critics*. *Diffusion* is also important, because it creates channels that enable the circulation of the *critics* and their further discussion from the part of their relevant audiences. *Diffusion* is also important because *critics* are likely to be transformed throughout the delivery process[63].

9.10.7. Proposals

Proposals, as activities by which pressure can be exerted, are the result of building and, more important, delivering recommendations or suggestions to agents involved in relevant arenas of decision. *Proposals* find their distinctive character in their practical nature, which means that, in contrast with *critics*, they are always action-oriented. Besides, *proposals* differ from request in that they do

[63] A case in which the relation between critics and diffusion is developed appears in Appendix 5j.

not consists only of a series of necessities that have to be taken into account by the pertinent authorities or by other agents in conditions of providing what is required. Along with the needs of a given sector of the population, *proposals* include the specification of the means and activities that can fulfill such needs.

Proposals vary according to their scope and degree of elaboration. Activities as: (1) asking the city government to publish a list of their real estate properties[64]; (2) promoting an evaluation of those participatory processes by which the local authorities claim to assure the involvement of the neighbors in the making of decisions that affect them[65]; (3) developing an alternative, yet technically viable plan for saving an historical building from demolition without changing the route of the high-speed railroad as it was originally designed[66]; and (4) delivering a series of urban intervention plans developed by the inhabitants of a given neighborhood[67] are only a few examples of the diversity among *proposals*. According to this diversity, each proposal can be located in a range that goes from single ideas on isolated actions to complete and detailed plans. An important effect of the development and delivery of *proposals* is that it creates the conditions for a reflection on the capabilities of the TS entity, and for their further enhancement and development[68]. As long as a *proposal* gets to be seriously attended – and here the mastery of the forms of talk of the administration is crucial –, unconsidered or alternative pathways are put on the table. Once those *proposals* are on the table, the need for responses from the part of those with access to decision arenas becomes inexcusable. This is why the development and delivery of *proposals* is capable of generating value.

Now, let us explore how the networks in which TS entities are positioned function as a catalyst for the development and delivery of *proposals*. The following excerpt belongs to an interview with a member of the neighborhood association from *El Clot-Camp de l'Arpa*. The interviewee describes how the associations from his

64 9:17 (40:40)

65 9:35 (88:88)

66 23:55 (322:322)

67 10:43 (80:80)

68 The development of capabilities by the making of proposals is elaborated in Appendix 5k.

neighborhood managed to design a detailed program for the progressive development of the facilities required by that area of the city:

> ...se editó un libro, en las primeras hojas, se ponen todas las entidades que han participao, incluso personas individuales todos, ¿eh?, y entonces… eh… hace como un balance de la situación del barrio, ¿eh? y después la segunda parte es como un programa a corto-medio plazo, de los equipamientos que hacen falta en el barrio, ¿eh?, pero una lista… eh… dijéramos… yo diría modesta, ¿eh?, modesta. Y entonces, claro, nos reunimos la asociación de vecinos y llegamos a esa conclusión. Fuimos a la federación y… allí se lo tomaron más… más a pecho [risas]. Entonces, hicimos tres sesiones. La primera hi… hicieron un preámbulo entre un técnico sociólogo, ¿eh?, un arquitecto urbanista y un economista. Entonces, esas tres personas, eh… nos ayudaron a… a hacer un plan para ir haciendo propuestas donde cupieran las propuestas de los barrios y tal, ¿no?, entonces, hacer también valoraciones de prioridad, ¿eh?, y entonces, eh… nos ayudaron bastante, entonces, nos reunimos, tres veces. La primera… la segunda también lo hablamos en la asociación de vecinos y tal, entonces, eh… se elaboró también un PAM, que lo tenemos por escrito, te lo pueden dar[69]. 23:23 (144:144)

The excerpt starts with the interviewee's mention of the book edited as a result of the first stage of the process. This is a relevant element of his intervention, because documents seem to materialize the elaboration of a proposal in the form of a tangible product that constitutes an important achievement. Besides, the emphasis made on the recognition of the authorship of each of the agents

[69] A book was edited, the first pages include the name of all of the organizations that participated, even individuals, everyone, right? and then... hum... it makes a balance of the situation of the neighborhood, right? and then, the second part is sort of a short-middle-term program, of facilities required by the neighborhood, right? But a... I would say moderate list, right? Moderate. And then, sure, we, the neighborhood association, met and arrived to that conclusion. We went to the federation (the FAVB) and... there, they took it more seriously [laughs]. Then, we had three sessions. In the first one they m... made a preamble with a sociologist, an urban architect and an economist. Then, the three of them helped us to... to develop a plan so that we could make proposals according to the proposals of the neighborhoods and stuff, OK? then, to establish priorities, right? and then, hum... they helped us a lot, then, we met, three times. The first... the second time we also talked about this in the neighborhood association and stuff, then... a PAM was made, we have it in a document, and they can give it to you.

involved – collective and individual – in the cover of the book serves both as a measure for recognizing the collaboration of each participant, and as a mark of adhesion and compliance with regard to the contents of the proposal.

As for the functioning of the process by which the proposal is elaborated, the organizational arrangements through which the grassroots' ideas and requests are picked and transformed act as a filter and as an assimilating device. In the process, apply specific skills. Some of these skills might have been previously acquired, while others are developed along with the proposal, and yet others depend on access to professional advice.

Agents in a position that makes of them the target of *proposals* from TS entities can get some benefits from the mere reception of a proposal. Disregarding the authentic consideration of the *proposals* from the part of those that have access to the decision arenas – not all of the *proposals* are seriously taken into account –, the reception-response exchange has a legitimating effect over the decisions they made. The price is small. Authorities or agents capable of pursuing undertakings of public interest just have to listen and, eventually, offer an answer, in order to get the opportunity of presenting the decisions they make as the result of a participatory process. In fact, agents with access to decision arenas are in conditions of strategically using their prerogatives when deciding what to do about each proposal according the anticipated benefits, which is to say, according to their interests. On one hand, they might deliberately ask for *proposals* whenever important benefits are expected. On the other hand, they might just ignore unrequested *proposals* when reduced benefits or no benefits at all are anticipated.

9.10.8. Mobilization

Mobilization is a wider process in which single forms of pressure are articulated as parts of a wider undertaking. When articulated, those pressure activities are mutually strengthened and gain greater efficacy. While the specific form in which single activities are articulated might vary, there is always some sort of coordination effort based on the presumption of a common purpose.

A case in which the articulation of different activities appears is that of the neighbors from *El Clot-Camp de l'Arpa* and their attempts of avoiding the demolition of the *Torre del Fang.* In the following extract, a member of the neighborhood association from that area of the city mentions the activities through

which the associations involved in the process tried to fight against the demolition of the building:

> Mientras tanto pues, qué hemos hecho, pues hemos hecho… un… un dvd de la historia de la casa, ¿no?, hemos llamado a historiadores para ex… que explique a la gente la historia de… que… que tiene ¿no? es muy… muy bonita, y después eh… hemos hecho pegatinas, ¿eh?, pegatinas "Salvem la Torre del Fang", ya las verás, y después, hemos hecho las alegaciones, ¿eh?, y… ¡ah! Nos proponemos, claro, no sé si llegamos a tiempo, entonces eh… porque esto va muy de prisa[70]. 23:61 (346:346)

Members of the cores of entities located in the area promote and organize the performance of activities of different nature. In doing so, the cores of entities act as a centralizing entity in which each activity is placed as a part of a wider framework, assuring a minimal coherence and mutual adjustment, at least at the operative level. Besides, in order to be capable of performing each single activity, the cores have to foster the implication of the grassroots. Without such implication, the core of the entities could not count on a pool of voluntary work. Therefore, whether intended or not, some degree of centralization has to be reached, as implicit or explicit strategies that bring order and direction are deployed.

As can be seen, *mobilization* is a complex activity, because it implies dealing with multiple, numerous voices and points of view. This is why, along with the unfolding of certain degree of centralization, some tactics aimed at the reduction of internal breaches might also appear. Besides, the position of those that articulate activities and seek to engage the grassroots is a demanding one, because they have to manage the expectations of the grassroots in order to get their adhesion and voluntary work. The expectations have to be managed in a way in which at least some individuals anticipate some degree of success in the undertaking or some other form of benefit derived from their engagement as, for instance, the experience of belonging to some significant group.

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[70] Meanwhile, what have we done?, well, we have prepared... a... DVD with the history of the house, OK? we've invited historians to ex... to explain to the people the history of... that it has, right? is... a very... very beautiful history, and then we've made stickers, right?, stickers "Save the *Torre del Fang*", you'll see them, and then, we've made the allegations, right?, and... ah! We are planning to... sure, I don't know if we'll have enough time, so hum... 'cause this is going too fast.

In the following excerpt, the President of the neighborhood association from *La Prosperitat* explains some difficulties in getting people involved in wide mobilization processes.

> ...desde mi punto de… mi punto personal es que ahora tenemos poca capacidad para… o sea que esto es una jugada… una… una jugada mal hecha por parte del ayuntamiento, nos ha estado mintiendo y tal, pero bueno. Pero que por otra parte tú tienes… tú tienes poca capacidad en estos momentos de movilizar, para defender esto, ¿no?, y en parte un poco… bueno, ¿no?, él plantea…
>
> X: ./¿POR QUÉ?
>
> A: Por… mira, porque las cosas… [chasquido], una de las experiencias que es un poco desalentadora en la lucha de barrios es que la gente se moviliza, primero cuando se siente agredida. ¿Vale? Ah… es más fácil que movilices cuando te sientes agredido y con las movilizaciones se tiene un componente… muchas veces emocional, por ejemplo la lucha ésta de los semáforos estalla en el momento en que una… un chico se muere. Y después las luchas seguirlas… entonces, las luchas son más de planteamiento… yo puedo tener planteamiento, pero la gente no lo tiene tan claro, ¿no?[71] 20:15 (74:78)

According to what the interviewee says, the ways in which members of the core of an entity address problematic issues is easily distinguishable from that of the grassroots. While the core of an entity develops a long term view and seeks to elaborate a structured formulation of the problems and a plan, the grassroots are more concerned with those situations that affect them in an immediate manner, and want to solve them by direct, isolated actions. As the former perspective

[71] In my... my personal view, right now, we have little capacity for... that is, this is a move... a wrong move from the part of the city government, it has been lying to us and stuff, but, well. But, nonetheless you... at the time, you have little capacity for getting people actively involved, for making a stand on something, OK? and, at least partially, it poses...
X: ./Why?
A: Because... look, because things... [tongue click], one discouraging experience in the neighborhoods' fights is that people get actively involved, first, when they feel threatened. Right? Hum... it is easier for you to get mobilized when you feel you've been threatened, and mobilizations frequently have an emotional component, for instance, this fight about the traffic lights breaks out when a kid dies. After that, the fights... keeping engaged to them... then, the fights have more to do with proposals... I can have proposals, but people don't see things clear, right?

intends to 'look at the wider picture', it usually raises attempts to transform the latter perspective. In other words, the core's perspective depicts the grassroots' perspective as a problem that has to be treated. The task is hard to achieve, because each perspective, along with its forms of engagement, is rooted in a particular position in what may be described as a network of relations. It is not just a problem of functional literacy, educational level, or civic values, as some agents say, but a set of conditions that result from the principles and urgencies defined by, and acquired through those positions.

When facing the need for a wide mobilization, the core of an entity should try to estimate the degree of response they can get from those potentially affected by the issues at stake. An important implication of this is that people's responses – particularly the grassroots but also members of other entities – become an object that has to be carefully assessed and managed, an operation that, while being crucial for making the right decisions with regard to the mobilization, reinforces the gap between the core and the grassroots. Indeed, the extent to which a given entity or group of entities can count on the implication, collaboration and support from their grassroots, can be – and sometimes is – taken as an indicator of its potency.

9.11. Crossing the borders or changing the limits

So far, we have passed through a long and detailed run over each of the activities by which TS entities seek to gain a major influence in public issues. Each activity constitutes an attempt of changing the peripheral position of concerned agents with regard to those decision arenas that affects them. Those attempts imply the transformation of different raw materials such as complaints, day-to-day interactions, local knowledge, experiences, and spare time, into a series of conditions and outcomes that favor the capacity of those concerned agents to exert some degree of influence into those decision arenas.

9.11.1. Getting inside or expanding the border

The challenge is complex and demanding, because the involvement of the Third Sector in public decision making is normally circumscribed to relatively innocuous issues. As the President of the neighborhood association from *La Prosperitat* said during an interview:

> lo que nunca hay espacio de negociación gorda en los grandes proyectos que te vienen... no sé, lo del campo del Barça, pues ahí, no se va a negociar con el vecindario y el Barça, ¿no?, negociará el Barça... y bueno, después si hay mucha protesta social igual... igual la protesta social generará un cambio de proyecto, pero de entrada el proyecto este... no se ha discutido, ¿no?, no se discute el Forum, ni se discute el núcleo central de... ()/ en cotxera/ o de Casernas de Sant Andreu y tal, ¿no?, esto se negocia con el capital privado, con los grupos de poder[72]. 20:35 (166:166)

Concerned, affected agents have to build some basic conditions so they can meddle in those areas in which they have been excluded, and TS entities, their organizational arrangements, and their functioning, can be understood as a series of progressive attempts to overtake the borders that keep them out of those arenas. This does not mean that those organizational arrangements and their functioning have to be considered as the only way of overtaking those borders. And here, the coupling and decoupling between TS entities – as formalized, institutionally sanctioned forms of organization – and social movements, lead us to depict the activities of TS entities as located in a gray market. This gray market is developed as a result of the conflict between those forces that seek to gain influence by introducing the TS entities inside of the borders in which important decision are made, and those that seek to redefine and expand those borders, thus changing the rules and the principles that define who is in. In other words, TS entities' functioning is the result of the conflict between the necessity of acquiring the conditions necessary to be considered as a legitimate agent in those areas of decision, and the necessity of changing the current principles of legitimacy.

9.11.2. Emergent practices: changing the territory?

Yet, there are other important implications of the engagement of TS entities activities in that gray market. Along with those attempts of changing the rules and boundaries of decision arenas, the links between the Third Sector and social

[72] There's never a space for important negotiation in new big projects... I don't know, that of the Barça Stadium, there, they don't negotiate with the neighborhood and the Barça, OK? the Barça will negotiate... and well, later, if social protests arise, maybe... maybe social protests will get a change in the project, but in the first place, this project hasn't been discussed, OK? The Forum hasn't been discussed, nor the central core of... () /cotxera/ or the Casernas de Sant Andreu, right?, this is negotiated with the private capital, with the groups of power.

movements is also regarded to the emergence of alternative spaces and practices. Such spaces and practices are developed around the idea of self-provision. Despite of having a limited scope these spaces and practices are crucial in that they represent the possibility of building other paths to participation. Though they are not uncontested (e.g. the legal measures taken against some communities of *okupas*), their emergent, innovative character points out the plausibility of important changes in the economical model in which the production and exchanges of civic activities generates value.

9.12. Principles of value

Throughout the whole exposition of civic activities, we have made emphasis on the ways in which they acquire value. Besides, we have reiteratively stated that such value is to be found in the expectations of gaining a major influence in issues of public interest, whether by changing the definition and status of such issues – turning some of them into a public matter – or by seeking to gain access to relevant decision arenas. As for their final attainments, in almost all cases, specific undertakings aimed at producing a major influence do not result in a direct, effective and regular involvement into the targeted decision arenas. Indeed, their success often passes by indirect forms of influence. This means that, when effective, most civic activities gain influence over decision makers, and not over the decision arenas. As a consequence, their value is not exclusively based on the expectations they raise in the grassroots, but also in the ways in which they are judged by those decision makers.

Two major implications can be drawn from this indirect functioning. On one hand, the gateways through which TS entities deliver the outcomes of their activities become crucial. On the other, alien principles and logics of functioning are introduced in the process.

9.12.1. Gateways

With regard to the gateways, a collective undertaking that follows the path of the Third Sector in order to participate in issues of its interest requires of the progressive establishment of links with key agents in the decision arenas. Whether such decision arenas are public or private, the expected capabilities of a TS entity for establishing new gateways, along with those gateways already established are included in the calculus by which the value of specific activities is

assessed. Needless to insist in the variations that the positions of agents involved generates over such calculus. According to such positions, access to information, wider or narrower scopes, and even specific interests, introduce some shifts in the resulting expectations. Nevertheless, the principles in which the calculus is based are, *grosso modo*, the same, because they define the rules of the domain in which the decisions are made, and, simultaneously, their knowledge, whether tacit or explicit, is a condition for taking part in the domain.

Most gateways are fragile. Some of them are affected by changes in the government, particularly when specific individuals, to whom the TS entities can address their requests, critics, and proposals, leave their current positions. In front of such changes, TS entities face the highly demanding tasks of reconstructing part of their networks. Nevertheless, as many gateways are based on institutional relations (entity-to-entity), the reconstruction of the networks does not necessarily have to start from the beginning.

The fragility of gateways is also related to the mediated character of many of them. Many TS activities exert pressure through activities that involve the media or other institutions. This mediated character implies the subordination of the exchanges that define the relationship to the interests of those agents that act as mediators. The subordination, in turn, can impose severe constraints to what actually passes through those gateways. Moreover, TS entities themselves arise and function as mediator with regard to their grassroots. In consequence the relationships in which they act as mediators are also exposed to that subordination.

9.12.2. Hybrid logics

As for the introduction of alien principles and logics of functioning, which is itself a product of the gateways established by a TS entity, their most important implication can be found in the configuration of a hybrid, conflictive set of principles by which the value of civic activities is estimated. Along with the need for efficacy, and a series of contested claims of representativeness and legitimacy, principles such as formality, efficiency, and popularity are added to what seems to be a loosely defined equation. Besides of including different principles, such an equation also confers different meanings to the same principles according to the position of those that made the estimations of value.

Besides of being a central concern for TS entities, the need for efficacy is clearly rooted in the grassroots' expectations on any undertaking to fulfill the purposes in which has been originated. Nevertheless, the specific meanings and the practical implications of efficacy are different in each case. While in the day-to-day forms of talk what passes as efficacy is understood as an acceptable level of attainment of certain goals, other forms of talk that are frequently practiced in TS entities address efficacy in terms of political impact. It is not that a satisfactory attainment of goal is left behind in the TS entities. What happens is that the attainment is introduced into a large and more complex framework, one in which different undertakings are hierarchically organized and specific measures of success are introduced.

As for representativeness and legitimacy, both are an area of debate for the Public and the Third Sector, with a peculiar participation of the Private Sector. Those debates originate discussions at different levels – some of them are general and other are regarded to specific public issues – that seek to authorize or de-authorize, according to the interests of agents involved, perspectives and undertakings in conflict. What is at stake in these attempts of authorizing or de-authorizing is more than the value of a given activity. These attempts are also measures aimed at the preservation or transformation of rules of the game, the principles of functioning of the civic market.

Efficiency and formality are principles introduced along with the institutionalization of any collective undertaking in the form of a TS entity. The process by which such principles are introduced in the equation can be seen as if the collective undertaking had progressively assumed the manner of the public administration in order to be considered as a valid speaker. The more a TS entity manages to establish meaningful gateways with the administration and, to a lesser extent, with private enterprises, the more it adopts the functional features that characterize the organizational arrangements of the Public and the Private sectors.

Finally, with regard to popularity, their introduction as a principle of value is to a large extent a result of the role of the media as a mediator in some crucial gateways. That mediator role poses some constraints with regard to the kind of issues that are of 'public interest'. Here, the conception of public interest has more

to do with the necessity of maintaining or increasing the audience than with concerns over public issues in their own terms.

The loosely defined equation in which popularity, formality, efficiency, efficacy, representativeness, and legitimacy are included as the variables that define the value of a civic activity is an outstanding example of how the complex network in which the activities of TS entities are deployed poses important constrains over such activities. The loose character, the ambiguous definition of its terms and their relations, creates a ground in which struggles are not only possible but indispensable. According to the ongoing development of such struggles, particularly with regard to critical events, TS activities might be valued in different ways. Moreover, these struggles push back and forth the precarious autonomy of the specific areas of the market of civic activities in which TS entities find their reason for being, thus risking the peculiarities of its functioning and the potential innovations it might produce.

9.13. Competitors and changing strategies

The production of activities intended to increase the influence that excluded agents can exert over issues of their concern is by no means exclusively achieved by TS entities. On one hand, non-institutional forms of collective undertakings, some of them regarded to social movements, take a part in the civic market, often by means of performance of unorthodox forms of activity. On the other hand, from an orthodox position, the public administration has also a key role in the production of such goods. The implication of this is that TS entities' competitors are found not only among other TS entities, but also in the Public Sector and in under-sectorial forms of activity. Here, TS entities are forced to react to changes in the strategies pursued by those competitors, particularly those of the Public Sector. As the Public Sector has by far a greater access to decision arenas, changes in the ways in which it organizes the channels through which opportunities of participation are provided are likely to have an important effect over TS entities.

During the last years, TS entities from Barcelona and nearby have witnessed important changes with regard to the 'participation mechanisms' provided by the local government. In the process, those inter-sectorial arrangements that resulted from a process of struggles from the part of many social movements, along with

the characteristics that the public administration developed with the arrival of the democratic system are being challenged by the public administration itself. A well settled distribution of the functions that each of the sectors is expected to assume is currently being subjected to a considerable reorganization process.

9.13.1. A market niche

TS entities have gained a major place as retailers with regard to the provision of spaces of participation for specific sectors of the population. Whether thematically or territorially defined, those segments of the population are expected and, in some degree, used to take advantage of the position, knowledge, and relations developed by TS entities in order to find their way into those decision arenas of their interest. The government in turn seemed to be limited to play the role of wholesaler. Instead of dealing with each single complaint or petition – raw materials –, authorities had to provide certain conditions for allowing TS entities to establish a number of gateways for the delivery of questions, requests, critics, and proposals.

An important part of the process by which that distribution of functions was configured is doubtlessly related to the discovery of a market niche by the part of TS entities. It also could be said, beyond any attempt of playing with words, that it was the market niche the one that discovered the Third Sector, or at least the potential of the Third Sector to fulfill the needs of the niche. As certain collective undertakings were transformed into formal organization, their capabilities for attending other concerns and serving as effective gateways with the public administration were enhanced. Once that they counted on such capabilities, those concerns that did not seemed to find their way into the arenas of decision of their interest sought to take advantage of already existent organizations or conformed organizations of their own. In the process of creating new organizations, existing organizations served as a model, and their configurations were, to some extent, reproduced.

No doubt that the process by which functional arrangement between the grassroots, the Third Sector, and the public administration was conformed was far more complex. Nevertheless, our account is just an attempt of underlining the meeting of demands and offers through which TS entities grow and gained their current position.

9.13.2. The state: from wholesale to retail

Nowadays, the public administration is seeking to reorganize those well settled arrangements in order to assume part of the functions traditionally granted to TS entities. In other words, the government is currently deploying a series of measures to assume the function of retailer. Such measures can be found in those recent efforts intended to foster the individual participation in, for instance, the *Municipal Action Plan* (PAM). Here, those debates over the principles under which civic activities gain their value seem to acquire greater importance. Indeed, the extent to which proposal delivered by some influential TS entities are representative is becoming a growing area of discussion.

In front of arguments that pose doubts on the representativeness of TS entities, there are voices – most of them rooted in the core of those entities – aimed at exposing the limited character of direct participation of individuals. Those voices point out how individual contributions often lack of a collective process of reflection and discussion through which consensus in any position could be achieved. Such arguments constitute the particular form in which the TS entities seek to make the case for their contributions as shapers of forms of participation that otherwise would hardly exist. The debate is thus one in which the Third Sector struggles for the preservation of its market niche, and against what might be the formation of a monopoly.

9.14. Value acquisition and organizational arrangements

In this chapter, we have developed a detailed account of TS entities as a peculiar kind of industry in a peculiar kind of market. By means of the activities that this kind of industry performs, raw materials such as complaints, concerns, spare time, local knowledge, needs, requests and desires are jointly subjected to a process of extraction, refining, manufacturing and distribution. The outcomes of those activities include different kinds of products, from well structured proposals, to wide processes of mobilization. Though most of the activities are intended to generate or increase the influence that some sector of the population can exert on decision arenas of public matters, some seem to have an instrumental nature, and yet other seem to have different aims.

But the effects of the production of activities in the Third Sector go beyond. On one hand, those activities are, to a large extent, the living tissue of the market in

which they operate. On the other hand, the activities shape the form of the entities in which they are produced.

TS entities seek to overcome the constraints imposed by their scarcity of resources and their peripheral position with regard to the decision arenas in which they intend to gain influence. In order to do so, they have to acquire certain capabilities (e.g. mastering the forms of talk of the public administration) and develop different kinds of relationship (e.g. gateways to the government and clusters or joint ventures with other TS entities). Consequently, the organizational arrangements and the functioning of TS entities are to a large extent a response to those constraints.

While this chapter has been devoted to offer an account of the coupling between TS activities and the civic market, the following chapter will address the functioning and organizational features of the entities in which such activities are produced.

10. A physical map: inside the machinery of actions and relations

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the physical map of participation in TS entities. By means of the analysis of organizational activity in terms of relationships among different agents and sets of practices, we offer a detailed account of the formation, development, and functioning of TS entities. The focus of the chapter is to be found in the imbrications between *participation*, as a requisite and as a source of arguments, and the organizational arrangements of the TS entities.

The first section of the chapter includes the premises under which the results have been produced, particularly those with regard to the central levels of analysis, and the synchronic and diachronic frames in which different areas of the map are located. The second section addresses the areas around which the organizational arrangements of TS entities are developed according to the needs, expectations, and pressures they face. The third section elaborates on the processes of formalization by which many of those arrangements come into being. The fourth section presents the notion of *apex*, a rationalizing intentionality that, once embodied by the core of TS entities, functions as a 'domesticating' instance that constrains and shapes the grassroots' concerns and practices. The fifth sections deals with the enactment of participatory encounters and decision making, along with the nondecision processes they convey. The sixth and final section of the chapter elaborates on the characteristics of some cases in which organizational arrangements follow, at some extent, alternative paths.

10.1. Organizations as an ongoing achievement

The idea that this map is physical comes from its specific focus on the organizational properties of TS entities in terms of the activities by which these

properties are produced and maintained. Here, we have based our organizational approach in a look that gives preeminence to those day-to-day activities through which each organization is enacted. According to this view, elements such as organizational structure – hierarchies and functional divisions included –, boundaries, mission, and goals are but some traces of organizational activity that have a part in the life of the organization but are not capable of offering a full account of such life. In others words, instead of thinking of organizations as well-delimited 'boxes' that contain well-defined mechanisms, our approach seeks to describe and understand those activities by which the experience that there is an organization is sustained, along with those relationships and representations that take a part in it.

10.1.1. A meso-micro level of analysis

The layers at which the map is located required an analysis focused in the meso and micro levels of analysis. Throughout the chapter, emphasis is made on the local character of the ongoing accomplishments by which the structural properties of the TS entities and the traits of the agents involved in them are objectified and used. The macro level is taken into account as a network of positions that provides the organizing principles under which those practices and relations that sustain TS entities are produced.

10.1.2. Synchronic and diachronic patterns

The resulting physical map can be seen as the outcome of the juxtaposition of a series of small sketches. A first group of sketches – the synchronic ones – offer a transversal cut of certain aspects of the organizational functioning of the TS entities once they have been conformed. The rest of the sketches - the diachronic ones – are focused on the progressive configuration of those organizational aspects.

Our approach has been developed with the specific purpose of identifying, describing, and understanding patterns in the organizational functioning of TS entities. Needless to say that the patterns themselves are but a device intended to serve analytic purposes. Nevertheless, their elaboration was crucial because each pattern, whether diachronic – the progressive configuration – or synchronic – the actual functioning – was understood as the deployment of a specific direction.

Those specific directions were addressed in terms of organizing trends or intentionalities with distinctive conditions of possibility and particular effects.

10.2. Organizational arrangements

This section is focused on the aspects around which organizational arrangements are produced. Organizational arrangements are to be understood as a relatively stable configuration of a situated set of functions and dysfunctions deployed by a dynamic tissue of practices, conceptions, and relations. This tissue has an explicit side, mainly in those arguments through which agents involved make sense of their organizational activities. Besides, it has a tacit side that is composed by those impersonal intentionalities or rationalities in which the direction and meaning of the set of functions and dysfunctions is rooted. The stability of the configuration depends on the partial capabilities of its functioning for (1) its own self-sustainability, and (2) the assimilation of alien elements.

The set of functions (the things that work in a proper manner) and dysfunctions (the things that do not work according to their purposes) define the organizational arrangements of a TS entity. This set does not come out of nowhere; it is raised as the result of the interplay between an overall, ambiguous conception of what being an organization means and the experience of certain needs or requisites derived from the deployment of such conception under specific circumstances. Here, I would like to make reference to an idea that might be synthesized as 'the package of being a TS entity'. This imaginary package is conformed by some interrelated concerns experienced in an unspecific manner by agents involved in an undertaking in the process of becoming a formal organization. Among such concerns we can find (1) the need for efficacy and efficiency; (2) the lack of resources; (3) the need for aligning agents involved; (4) the deployment of administrative tasks and routines; (5) the development of an adequate timing; and (6) the acquisition of specialized knowledge. As these concerns come with 'the package of being a TS entity', they are hardly unavoidable as subjects of conversation. In fact, the lack specificity of such concerns favors the immediate experience of opportunity or necessity. This is why these concerns serve as axis around which organizational arrangements are deployed.

10.2.1. Efficacy and efficiency in Third Sector entities

The ideas of efficacy and efficiency are progressively held as key principles around which the need for certain organizational arrangements of TS entities is raised and justified. Consequently, both ideas are crucial for understanding how those organizational arrangements are made. The relevance of efficacy and efficiency lies thus in how they are performed and in the consequences of those performances. In both cases, we can depict certain lines of development of the ways in which the concerns associated to the ideas are shaped in conversations and translated into specific attributes of the functioning of each organization. *Grosso modo*, such lines of development find their starting points in a series of concerns based in a common sense understanding, that is to say in (1) the search for effective actions in order to carry on an specific undertaking; and in (2) the necessity of taking advantage of available resources of any kind so that the undertaking gets to be successful.

The starting points are to be located in collective, non institutionalized efforts that are committed to a specific issue. Along with the changes that those collective efforts pass through, concerns and ideas with regard to efficacy and efficiency change too. The process of institutionalization itself – the registration and formal configuration of the collective undertaking as an association or foundation – is frequently initiated as a response to expectations regarding a greater effectiveness[73]. The need for efficacy, in turn, is also subjected to changes. It goes from being focused on the achievement of a specific issue, to being conceived as a desired property of the already constituted formal organization.

Something similar happens with efficiency, an expectation that gains importance as a response to concerns regarding scarcity of resources and lack of means, but progressively acquires its own status as the right way of doing things. In the following excerpt, a technician from the *Consorcio Badalona Sud* explains some difficulties in the management of meetings with representatives from TS entities and public services in his district:

[73] The creation of a TS entity might be motivated by other reasons, such as break ups that resulted from conflicts within an already existing entity or the dissolution and renewal of a former association. Nevertheless, in all cases, there is an expectation of greater effectiveness.

> Las primeras... las reuniones iban así: decíamos lo que el consorcio había hecho en este campo, tan tan, tan tan, tan tan; se hacía una presentación de todas las entidades o servicios; minuto por minuto, muy contadito, para que todo el mundo se conociera; se conoce el consorcio, se conocen las entidades, y vamos a operativizar. Cuando vas a la parte de operati... operativizar, la gente dice 'ah, pero podíamos... decir no sé qué!. Caemos en las discusiones... pam, pam, que es muy interesante, pero cuando se te va la reunión de madre, tienes que decir 'o llegamos al final, o qué hacemos'[74]. 17:68 (152:152)

From the point of view of the technician, the meetings are spaces in which time should be used wisely. There are some goals to achieve, and a schedule to follow. Therefore, the technician is responsible for assuring that at the end of the meeting those goals have been fulfilled. In congruence with his responsibility, the technician has thus to assure that the meeting is performed according to the plan. In order to do so, the technician manages to make some interventions intended to cut off what seems to be a series of 'interesting', yet non-productive conversations. Here, some features of ordinary encounters are taken as dysfunctions, but it is the very performance of the need for being operative the one that produces the dysfunction.

What might be at stake in encounters like the meeting described above is the crash of different practical meanings of efficiency and efficacy, each of which is rooted in the positions and interests of agents involved. In the technician's account, both efficiency and efficacy appear as two sides of the same coin. The need for efficiency – in this case for being operative – is raised as a key requisite for the attainment of previously specified goals. From the point of view of the technician, such requisite might be even more important than the contents of the meeting themselves:

> A todas las entidades participantes, invitadas al proceso, ante una... eh... una... reconozco que ha habido una selección previa

[74] The first... meetings were like this: we said what the consortium had done in this field, tan tan, tan tan, tan tan; each entity or service was presented; minute by minute, very controlled, so that everybody could know each other; the consortium is known, the entities are known, and we are going to be operative. When you go to the part of operativ... of being operative, people say 'oh, but we could... say I don't know what. We fall into discussions... pam, pam, which is very interesting, but, when the meeting is going nowhere, you have to say 'we have to get to the end, or what else we do?

> por [baja la voz] () hay que... ¿a quién invitamos? Derecho tienen todos, pero posibilidades, pues no siempre. Todas estas entidades han sido llamadas con un propósito concreto: ser operativas[75]. 17:34 (88:88)

From the technician's point of view, participants (in this case, representatives from local TS entities and public services) are expected to work in a proper manner. Here, being operative is both the main objective of the meeting – at least for the technician – and a criterion for determining who is invited. It has to be noted that the position of the technician implies that efficiency and efficacy are at some extent autonomous with regard to more substantive concerns. Organizational arrangements provide the conditions that make possible and necessary a dissociation among substantive, specific concerns – those that are easily recognizable in a collective, non institutionalized undertaking –, the need for achievement, and a rational use of resources. Efficacy and efficiency are thus progressively objectified as autonomous areas of concern.

As said before, concerns about efficacy and efficiency are progressively molded through organizational arrangements and vice versa. But the path that the organizational arrangements follow – and thus the particular development of concerns about efficacy and efficiency – is not unique. There are practices, a few, based on a loose, open, and wide conception of how an entity should function. In those cases, the dissociation in the development of concerns about efficacy and efficiency is somehow prevented. Nevertheless, the mainstream path still follows the other direction, in a manner that seems to be, to some extent, informed by the functioning of governmental institutions and for-profit organizations.

In this view, the presence of the terms 'efficacy' and 'efficiency' or others alike in the conversations among members of entities, particularly in non-ordinary events such as assemblies an the like, can be considered as an indicator of the degree at which organizational arrangements have gain the status of issues that are given attention by their own right.

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[75] All of the entities involved, those invited to the process, in front of a... hum... a... I recognize that there has been a previous selection because [speaks in a whisper] () we have to... ¿Who's invited? Everybody has the right to, but no one is able to. All these entities have been invited with a specific purpose: being operative.

This is not to say that concerns with regard to efficacy or efficiency in the TS entities are shaped and addressed in a manner equal to that of the Public and Private Sectors. What happens instead is that those guidelines and schemes under which organizational arrangements of TS entities are deployed convey what might be thought of as the hegemonic practical conception of efficacy and efficiency. TS entities, through their development, translate at some extent that hegemonic conception into a different environment. The translation is crucial, because it might require transformations in the translated concerns, but also in the environment to which the concerns are being translated. In all cases, the resulting concerns about efficacy and efficiency give place to a series of practices (pleas, arguments, justifications, images of organizational arrangements, expectations, and other sayings and doings) that imply a considerable change of the functioning of the collective undertaking. In this view, this chapter can be thought of as an analysis of the conditions of possibility, development, and effects of that translation.

10.2.2. Dealing with scarcities and shortage

One of the most important areas around which organizational activity in TS entities is deployed is that of the lack of resources. There are different kinds of resources that a TS entity needs for a proper functioning. The need for resources might be regarded to specific, substantive undertakings (e.g. putting issues with regard to early childhood attention into the agenda, getting certain public services and facilities for the neighborhood, or gaining access to key authorities for talking about rare diseases). Nevertheless, there are other aspects that raise the need for resources. On one hand, the functioning of a TS entity requires an important amount of resources that are not directly regarded to specific undertakings, but to the sustenance of organizational arrangements (facilities, equipment, maintenance, and, in some cases, employees). On the other hand, the multiplication of participatory spaces on highly specific areas of the public life requires from TS entities to multiply their presence in such spaces.

In all cases, the lack of resources, which is partially a result of the organizational arrangements by which a TS entity seeks to make a better use of resources available, originates specific practices of organizing. In the following excerpt, a

technician from the *CBS* explains how the consortium manages to select proposals for its further implementation in the form of a plan:

> Las propuestas son fundamentales, pero no todas pueden ser reconocidas técnicamente en el presupuesto, por lo tanto deberían de haber () grupos de trabajo también tenían la misión de marcar prioridades. De seis, marcar tres, o de seis marcar un, dos, tres, cuatro, cinco, seis, dependiendo. Luego de esas prioridades se ponen en común en el mismo grupo de trabajo y se decide cuál se acepta[76]. 17:11 (22:22)

Here, the lack of resources for substantive undertaking requires a selection process by which some requirements made by representatives from grassroots entities are included, while others are put aside. The lack of resources is treated by means of a process in which priorities are settled. The process has to be conducted in a way that assures that the establishment of priorities is not arbitrary, and thus, the participatory character turns out to be necessary in terms of legitimacy.

As for resources required for the functioning of TS entities, scarcities might be partially solved by funds granted by public or private organizations. Nevertheless, this way of acquiring resources creates a state of dependency that threatens the stability and autonomy of TS entities. The next excerpt includes a comment made by a senior member of *CONEX* about recent reductions on the amount of funds granted by the Catalan Government:

> C1: Bueno, la Generalidad, una parte de esto, antes era más espléndida. El año pasado se restringió muchísimo y la Diputación nos da algo[77], 19:21 (262:262)

The same interviewee explained later how they had to leave their former facilities after the death of the owner of the building. The building had been borrowed to the association, free of charge, but the heir decided to get some benefits by selling or

[76] Proposals are fundamental, but not all of them can be technically recognized in the budget, in consequence there has to be () work groups that also had the mission of defining priorities. [they had] To pick three out of six, or one, two, three, four, five, six out of six, depending on the case. Then, those priorities are shared in the same work group and a decision is made on which one is accepted.

[77] Well, the Government of Catalonia, a part of it, used to be more generous. The last year, it was very restrictive, and the County Council gave us some aid.

renting the building. As a consequence, the association had to leave the building and look for another place.

Besides of the state of fragility created by the dependency of third parties, access to funds might have other consequences, such as the development of new necessities. While obtaining funds might enable a TS entity to develop more projects or enhance its functioning, once that the entity is configured so it can take advantage of those resources, the reduction of funds leaves a void that has to be filled. This apparent paradox implies that access to resources can also create the conditions for the need of those resources.

It is not surprising to see that many individuals involved in TS entities consider that self-sufficiency with regard to resources is the ideal state. In the following excerpt, the president of the ABHGU explains how hard is to cover their basic needs:

> V: La financiación tendría que ser en principio, sería lo ideal, la autosuficiencia, ¿no? O sea, que las cuotas del personal eh... se pudiera tirar pa'lante la sociedad, pero no es así porque las cuotas ya hemos dicho que son bajas, el edificio solo son dos millones de mantenimiento al año, eh... después hay los gastos de teléfono y tal y tal. Hay muchos gastos y se tiene que en principio... [el anterior presidente] luchó como nadie para obtener la subvención pero no se las dieron por... por eso que hemos dicho antes, que era mutualidad. Entonces ¿qué hicimos? Rompernos el coco, él, en muchos años, y yo ahora, para ver cómo hacemos los ingresos, la lotería[78] 14:38 (431:433)

In spite of the president's attempts to 'make ends meet', the conditions in which the association operates is such that the solely survival of the entity – its economic viability – seems to be the main concern of the core of the entity. The functioning of the entity and its facilities require far more attention than the undertakings it intends to facilitate. Here, the entity is far from being conceived as a mean and its preservation requires most of the work done by members of the core.

[78] As for financing, it should have to be, ideally, based on self-sufficiency, right? That is, that the fees from members were enough to keep the association working, but things are not like this, because, as we said, the fees are reduced, the conservation of the building requires two millions a year, hum... and then there's the phone bill, and stuff. There are many expenses and first, we have to... [the former President] fought like no one to get some funds, but they didn't give it to him because, as we said before, we were a mutual aid society. Then, what did we do? We burned our brains out, he, during many years, and right now, me, in order to see how to get incomes, the lottery.

The multiplication of specific spaces for participation, as another area that raises necessities, is referred to the growing provision by the government of specific programs or instances the participatory claims of which require from concerned agents to take part in them. When collective undertakings acquire the status of TS entities, the also acquire certain non-written duties, such as their being expected to participate. The president of the FAVB made her point about this situation[79]. During an interview, she said that the high number of community planning processes has overwhelmed people involved in them. Still, the local government intends to establish those community planning processes on a regular basis, something that, from the point of view of the president of the FAVB is not sustainable.

As for the kinds of resources required by TS entities, it is not accurate to think of them in terms of isolated categories. In fact, the different kinds of resources might be seen as a network of needs. In such network, one need – knowledge, for instance – might pass through another need – personnel. Moreover, the network of needs carries with it the way in which TS entities objectify their lacks. This is very important, because the way in which the needs are depicted entails, at least partially, a specification of the resources that are expected to fulfill the needs. A basic representation of that network of necessities should include: (1) people; (2) knowledge; (3) money; (4) time; and (5) facilities. What is crucial about these categories is that they are, to some extent, interchangeable, because they can be used as arguments for justifying the sense that there is always a lack of something. The plasticity derived from the lack of specificity with regard to scarcities has another relevant consequence. As the nature of the needs is at some extent fluctuating and nonspecific, it is the offer of resources of different kinds the one that determines the specificity of the needs.

Regarding attempts of specifying the needs of a TS entity, it is easy to advance that the most important ones are those regarding to people. In almost every TS entity the lack of people is a frequent subject in conversations. But there are different configurations of this need: volunteers, collaborators, personnel, members, partners, participants, or concerned groups are more than different labels. Each configuration implies a different framework for understanding the

[79] 21:16 (47:47)

necessity of people involved in a TS entity, as well as the kind of relationships established between these people and the entity. The need for personnel, for instance, arises only in entities that acquire certain dimensions, whether in terms of size (e.g. coordinative-representative entities) or with regard to the volume of resources the entity manages.

A particular case is that of a *continuum*, the extreme sides of which can be found in the individual volunteer on one hand, and the concerned group on the other. Throughout the *continuum*, there is an assumption that the work done has a voluntary character in that it has not the kind of compensation that fits to the idea of payment. Nevertheless, the frameworks for the relations between people and TS entities are different. While the implication of concerned groups is based on a collective interest and a sense of 'property' based on the proximity of the issues at stake, the implication of volunteers is based on a general claim for solidarity, a temporarily delimited relation, and a focus on the task each individual performs. The deepness of the involvement is different in each case, and so are its consequences: "...nos falta personal... personal que no podemos sustituir por funcionarios o por lo que sea, porque no podemos pagar ninguna nómina[80] 14:47 (507:507)", said the president of the ABHGU. Here, the core of the entity understands the needs regarded to people in terms of a task force that cannot be paid for its work. In a similar way, the following excerpt includes the view of the delegate of *AjA* in Catalonia on the role of volunteers:

> al final... bueno, "...los medios son los que son, ¿no?, y tampoco no podemos desplazarnos demasiado, pero sí que trabajamos mucho con grupos de voluntariado, o sea, para nosotros el voluntariado es una pieza muy importante de trabajo, sin el voluntariado muchos de estos proyectos que te dijo de sensibilización sería imposible llegar, ¿no?[81]. 16:24 (200:206)

Here, 'el voluntariado' (volunteering or the volunteers) is an impersonal pool of labor, required, as in the former excerpt, for the operative development of certain

[80] We have a lack of personnel... personnel that we can't substitute by civil servants or the like, because we can't have a wage packet.

[81] In the end, well... you have the resources you have, right? And we cannot travel a lot, but we do work very much with volunteer groups, that is, for us, volunteering is a very important part of our work, without volunteering many projects like those of sensitization I've told you before would've been impossible, right?

tasks. As such, the recruitment, incorporation, and management of that pool of labor become crucial for the organization. Moreover, given the characteristics of the link between the volunteers and the entity, the positions occupied by volunteers require to be replaceable by newcomers.

The president of the FAVB, in turn, stated that those small groups that have been working for a long time, and thus have reached a solid, wide understanding of the issues they work with are hard to be substituted by younger people[82]. Here, the kind of involvement required has a collective character and passes through an important commitment with the undertakings that the association carries out. Besides, this form of involvement fosters the acquisition of specialized knowledge and the development of certain capabilities that are closely related to the nature of the undertakings in which those groups participate. These capabilities would hardly be developed by means other than that deep, long involvement.

As for other kinds of resources, their location into a network of needs help us to understand how a general state of scarcities is depicted. In the following excerpt, the president of a neighborhood association offers his view on the state of the neighborhoods movement:

> Lo que ocurre es que el movimiento vecinal es el pariente pobre de la democracia. Los sindicatos han conseguido su legalización y su estatus con horas sindicales y... para llevar a cabo su labor; los partidos políticos no digamos... ya con pleno reconocimiento y labor democrática, pero en cambio las asociaciones de vecinos estamos pues con unas infraestructuras muy débiles, y con... un trabajo... plenamente voluntario[83]. 22:4 (18:18)

Scarcity, weaknesses, lack of recognition, and unequal conditions with regard to other social agents are labels that concerned agents, particularly those that are part of the core of TS entities use to describe the conditions in which they operate. Once that this objectification of needs has been produced, the core of the entity has to deal with it. The lack of time, facilities, equipment, people, and funds

[82] 21:11 (28:28)

[83] What happens is that the neighborhoods movement is the poor relative of democracy. Unions have been legalized and have a status with union hours and... in order to do their work; political parties even better... they are well recognized (along with his) democratic work, but neighborhood associations in turn have infrastructures to weak and the work they do is completely voluntary.

conform a network of precariousness and members of the core are expected to take measures intended to minimize the pitfalls and constraints it conveys. Nevertheless, since the origin of such measures is often disregarded to the coverage of specific, well-delimited needs, it is the opportunity (the offer) the one that ends up specifying the needs.

The implications of the network of needs cannot be overestimated. The importance that is given to scarcities is such that even when an entity has managed to acquire the resources it requires for its proper functioning, the menace of future scarcities – which is another side of the vulnerability that dependencies create – keeps the function of acquiring resources – specially people and funds – as a key area of the organization. The value of technical knowledge regarded to procedures for getting funds is but a sample of this.

10.2.3. Managing conflict and fragmentation

As in every organization, TS entities have to deal with actual or potential confrontations among opposite interests and points of view. Nevertheless, unlike the public and private, for-profit organizations, the conditions in which conflicts arise are far more numerous, mainly because of the relations between each entity and its grassroots. This is why efforts to reach a minimal consensus on current undertakings and also on some organizational features are crucial. Besides, along with the need for managing conflicts, the core of a TS entity has to prevent fragmentation. Fragmentation is referred to divisions that appear with regard to specific undertakings and to the way things are done in an entity. The outcome of such divisions is the configuration of new groups, undertakings, and entities that fit the interests and points of view of those that considered that the previously existing entity was not paying attention to their concerns.

The next excerpt belongs to an observation made in the *FAVB*. It includes a series of commentaries made by the technical manager of the *FAVB* with regard to the creation and further inclusion in the *FAVB* of new neighborhood associations:

> ...cuando una asociación quería ser parte de la FAVB, primero se proponía y luego, en la asamblea general, se sometía a aprobación su inclusión o no como entidad federada. Dijo además que era frecuente que aparecieran asociaciones de un barrio en el que ya había una asociación federada, y que esto se debía a que

> cuando surgía un conflicto con la asociación precedente, algunos de los implicados, por sentir que no se les hacía caso, se montaran su "chiringuito"[84]. 8:7 (30:30)

Fragmentation can be seen as the opposite of aligning, because the divisions that are produced as a result of the impossibility of articulating different stances give place to several undertakings that have small magnitude and different directions. Considering this, the functioning of the federation, starting with the procedure that a neighborhood association has to follow in order to become a member, provides some conditions that seek to minimize fragmentation. In general terms, the effectiveness of the measures that seek to avoid fragmentation depend on the capability of the entity for shaping interests, perspectives, and expectations that are opposite or divergent. By means of procedures that fall under the realm of participation – it is the assembly who decides if an associations gets to be part of the federation or not –, the *FAVB* seeks to articulate the diversity of its members around the axis of a minimal consensus.

10.2.4. Enabling administration

Administrative tasks are to be found in TS entities as well as in non institutionalized collective undertakings. Nevertheless, the amount of time required, the objects, and the specific functioning of such tasks are different in each case. At some point, any collective undertaking has to establish an explicit, widely accepted version of his purposes and direction. Besides, it has to perform some planning and organizing activities. But these tasks are always subsidiary of the particular undertaking, in a way that makes hard for an observer to distinguish between conversations about the issues at stake and conversations about goals, plans, or specific activities explicitly addressed as such. In other words, the issues of interest and the tasks implied in undertakings regarding those issues constitute a unit.

A different thing occurs when a collective undertaking has been institutionalized. TS entities face some demanding concerns originated by their own status and functioning. Moreover, these concerns are not intrinsic to the specific undertakings

[84] ...when an association wanted to be part of the FAVB, it made a proposal in the firs place, and later, during the general assembly, its inclusion as federated entity was subjected to approval. She also said that it was usual that new association appeared in neighborhoods in which a federated association was already been created, and that this happened because, when conflict arose with the precedent association, some of its members, feeling that they were being unattended, created their own association.

the entity is engaged in. As seen above, such demanding concerns include: (1) issues with regard to efficacy and efficiency, (2) the need for dealing with scarcities and lack of means, and (3) the interest in avoiding fragmentation and managing conflicts. Consequently, TS entities have to develop some capabilities to properly manage such concerns. The acquisition of such capabilities is thus what enables the administrative function of TS entities.

Administration can be thought of a set of practices that, roughly speaking, consist of different operative activities intended to sustain the activity of the organization. The operative branch that administration adds includes a myriad of fluid, diverse, punctual activities that have sense in terms of specific, short term goals and the day-to-day functioning of an entity. This activities, together, compose was can be better described as an everyday office environment.

In the following excerpt, the manager of the *ACAP* offers a brief description of the day-to-day activities of the association:

> Un día común... ahora mismo, desde la ACAP, estamos mmm... llevando a cabo varios cursos, estamos organizando varios cursos y ultimando detalles. Pues desde... ha habido una fase primero de mucho llamar por teléfonos, informar de que para tal curso si hay plazas o no hay plazas, dónde me inscribo, todo. Cuando luego hacen la inscripción, pues... está Mercé () controlando las inscripciones, eh... preparando detalles del local, lo que necesita (). Esto por un lado. Simultáneamente, se está haciendo... también... ultimando la aparición del último número de la revista científica, que sa... coincide a final de año. Vienen los artículos, los mandamos al comité científico, te lo devuelven, te lo... o lo traes, negociar con la imprenta los plazos, sobre todo, mmm... que siempre se retrasan, lo que tenía que estar el lunes no está hasta el otro lunes, entonces (), bueno, es así[85]. 15:34 (221:221)

[85] An ordinary day... right know, in the ACAP, we hum... are offering several courses, we are organizing several courses and finalizing details. Well, since... there was a first phase in which we made a lot of phone calls, informed of available places, enrollment place, everything. When they came for the enrollment, here's Mercé () keeping track of enrollments, hum... arranging the classroom, all the things necessary (). This is one side. Simultaneously, the publication of the last issue of our scientific journal is being finished, which comes at the end of the year. We receive the articles, we send them to the scientific committee, they send them back to you, they... or you you bring them back, you negotiate the deadlines with the printing house, which always have delays, and what had to be ready on Monday is not ready till the other Monday, so (), well, it's like this.

The manager describes a series of tasks that are performed on a regular basis. The position of manager, which is different from that of the president or any other member of the board, allows the interviewee to offer a detail account of such tasks. This position functions as a bridge between general concerns, aims, and projects on one side; and specific activities on the other. In other words, the position of manager is expected to assure the translation of a set of general statements about the kind of things that the association does into an operative language. Simultaneously, the position assures that each of the tasks performed on a day-to-day basis are meaningful with regard to the overall vision of what the association does.

The description that the manager does underlines a side of the administrative function that can be understood in terms of a service provided to the grassroots of the association. In this sense, as seen in Chapter 9, this type of administrative practices can be seen as a form of facilitation. The other side of the administrative function – one that is absent in the account of the manager – is aimed at the sustainability of the association itself.

Some features of administrative practices are: (1) a sense of routine and continuity that serves as a basis for dealing with contingencies; (2) their role as the space in which routines are linked to current events; (3) their functioning as points of contact that work beyond of formal interaction settings and, simultaneously, extend the formality of those settings to the day-to-day activities; (4) their being grounded in day-to-day activities; (5) their functioning as conditions of possibility for special, non ordinary events; and (6) their coordination and, in some cases, execution by those that are part of the core of the association.

One of the most interesting features of administration in TS entities is that, despite of the fact that it is usually referred to as *management*, it has little to do with strategical initiatives. According to this, administration is basically the operational deployment of reactions to initiatives originated in places other than those of the TS entities. While some of these reactions might appear as forms of resistance to those initiatives, others might well serve as an extension of them. As this operational deployment establishes their own routines, it also generates administrative needs of their own that require of more administration. In this

movement, administration changes its focus from reactions regarding concerns to administration itself.

Enabling the function of administration is thus one of the major implications of organizational arrangements in TS entities. The set of routines that compose the administrative function shape the day-to-day activities of each entity in a way that provides the conditions required for specific undertakings to be effectively carried out. Simultaneously, these activities impose some constraints on the undertakings they are intended to facilitate. Among such constraints, the timing that the set of routines consolidate deserves to be underscore because of its implications in the functioning of TS entities.

10.2.5. Time: putting participation into a clock

Organizational arrangements of TS entities raise a peculiar sense of timing. This sense of timing is raised as a response to the scarcity of time, the relative currency of public issues and concerns, and the interplay between rushes and delays with regard to specific undertakings. The sense of timing is a key feature of the functioning of an entity, because it serves as a basis for (1) shifting priorities according to the situation, (2) defining the right moment for performing certain actions, and (3) establishing the amount of time that should be spent in some activities, particularly in those regarded to encounters between the core and the grassroots of an association.

Time is one of the greatest constraints for TS entities. They can hardly adjust their response capabilities to the rhythm of Public and Private Sectors, either because some processes go too slow or because others go too fast. This is why the sense of timing relies upon a more or less accurate image of the cycles and processes in which the organization is engaged. But this image never gets to be fully functional. The locus of the fields in which TS entities are involved is systematically found out and far from the TS entities. Consequently, the time of TS entities depends upon initiatives that emerge in other places. This made extremely difficult any attempt of TS entities to reach a minimal synchrony with the Public and Private Sectors. The timing of TS entities is thus marked by a persistent arrhythmia.

With regard to processes that go too slow, TS entities might have to initiate activities regarded to procedures that are controlled by the public administration. As many of these procedures (e.g. impugning, requesting an interview with an

authority, making an appeal to the court, etcetera) are complex and pass through many instances, delays are more than probable. TS entities have to take care of anticipating such delays. The outcomes of some activities might lose their relevance whenever the situation regarding the issues at stake has changed over time.

As for processes that go too fast, most of TS entities live under a persistent deficit of time. This deficit is often the reason for a constant pressure for being operative, a pressure that goes against open and unlimited discussion about the issues that an entity is trying to cope with. Deadlines, most of which are established out of the Third Sector, are not the only reason for not having enough time. On one hand, the multiplication of spaces for participation requires from TS entities to make efforts for having presence in such multiple spaces. On the other hand, the scarcity of time is also produced by the residual status of most of the time that people involved devote to the activity of its association. According to this, participation is, to a large extent, built upon the remainings of daily life and, consequently, TS entities are expected to get the most of those remainings.

The following excerpt includes some comments of the president of a neighborhood association about the difficulties his entity faces when trying to take a part in the multiple participatory encounter to which the entity is invited:

> ...a veces nos podemos encontrar y nos encontramos que la participación nos ahoga. O sea, eh… hay diferentes vías de participación; o sea, el distrito por ejemplo o el ayuntamiento, eh… te manda convocatorias para asistir a plenos de distrito, a audiencias públicas del distrito, a reuniones sectoriales del distrito, a consells sectorials, a consells de ciutat y tal. O sea, órganos de participación, diríamos, institucionalizados, son muchas reuniones. Eh… y te encuentras que las posibilidades de recursos humanos del movimiento vecinal son escasas, son las que son. Y además que nuestra participación tiene un ritmo que es el de las entidades, que es… eh… nos cuesta llegar a acuerdos, el proceso es largo porque concretar una reunión y otra y otra pues, a veces, para un tema, quiere decir un tiempo de mínimo, pues necesario para… para llegar a este acuerdo, el tiempo es el tiempo limitado de las tardes noches… y el ayuntamiento tiene un ritmo cada vez más tecnificado, más rápido, más acelerado, más pam pam pam,

> ¿no? Y… eh… nos encontramos que esta convocatorias institucionalizadas, si quieres acudir a todas para decir “vamos a participar”, pues a veces, te desenganchas de la realidad del barrio, de los problemas cotidianos que tienes en el barrio. Y tienes que priorizar[86]. 22:34 (148:150)

The interviewee underlines that the spaces of participation that overflow his entity are offered by institutional organisms of participation. As those organisms depend on the government, their number, paces, and scopes are alien to TS entities. In consequence, the core of TS entities experience their being invited to those spaces of participation not only as an opportunity for exerting influence in issues of their interests, but also as an imposition. The absence of a representative from the association in those institutional participatory spaces might serve as an argument for undermining the legitimacy of the association's undertakings with regard to the issues treated in such spaces. These institutional spaces for participation are not sensitive to the conditions under which the invited entities operate: 'the available time is that of the night or that of the late evening', as said the president. Besides, they enable a logic of participation the practices of which are not compatible with those of the neighborhood associations. The activity of neighborhood associations, which is usually marked by attempts for deploying long debates, building consensus, and keeping a constant interaction with their grassroots, is subjected to pressures. The situation is one in which an institutional, procedural conception of participation originated in governmental initiatives is colonizing the space occupied by other conceptions and their respective practices. The timing of TS entities is the widest gateway for this colonization.

[86] ...sometimes we find ourselves overwhelmed by participation. That is to say, hum... there are different participatory channels; for instance, the district or the city council, hum... ask you to assist to the plenary sessions of the district, to the districts public hearings, to the districts sectorial meetings, to sectorial councils, to the city councils, and so on. That is to say, participatory bodies that are, let's say, institutional, there are a lot of meetings. Hum... and you find that the possibilities of the neighborhood movement in terms of human resources are short, they are what they are. Besides, our participation has the pace of the entities, which is... hum... it is hard for us to reach agreements, the process is long because having on meeting, and other, and other, well, sometimes, for a given matter, it requires of certain time in order... to reach this agreement, the available time is that of the night or that of the late evening, and the city government has a progressively more technified time, faster, accelerated, more 'pam pam pam', right? And... hum... we find that this institutional calls, if you want to assist to each of them so you can say 'we are going to participate', well, sometimes you get disengaged from the neighborhood's reality, from the day-to-day problems you have in the neighborhood. And you have to establish priorities.

10.2.6. Shaping local knowledge

Knowledge of the territories or the fields a TS entity is involved with is based, to a large extent, on daily life and thus has a strong local character. Professional associations are not an exception, because their members are concerned with issues drawn from their day-to-day situated experiences. TS entities have to take advantage of that knowledge in a way that implies the transformation of such knowledge into something else. The transformation functions in a manner that seeks to translate collective concerns into administrative operations and their correspondent forms of talk, which are based on categories such as needs, goals, actions, and budgets. This transformation has to be understood as a response to the need of speaking with the instances in which initiatives emerge.

But the transformation of local knowledge goes beyond the acquisition and partial domain of this sort of administrative forms of talk. As seen in Chapter 9, collective concerns themselves might raise the need for dealing with issues that require of some degree of specialized knowledge. Specialized knowledge can be acquired by members of the core through a process of learning that can take years, or can be provided by advisors that have some expertise on the fields of interest. In all cases, part of the activity of a TS entity consists of creating bridges between local knowledge and other forms of knowledge.

The functioning of the bridges between local knowledge and other forms of knowledge can be addressed at the level of the daily life of a TS entity. Here, the relation between organizational arrangements – a particular form of knowledge – and day-to-day interactions in one of necessity and conflict. Organizational arrangements have to reach a practical level which is only possible through an enactment composed by small concatenations of actions that bring a specific order to the relations among agents involved. These actions take place beyond the organization on paper, the rational, structured scheme that specifies how the organization should function. There is a practical impossibility of offering a rational prescription for every possible step required for a given functionality to properly work. Albeit day-to-day activities based on a common sense knowledge often poses threatens to the scheme of organizational arrangements they are expected to enact, these activities are indispensable.

10.3. Formalization: the realm of the procedure

Formalization is the process by which a collective undertaking acquires the status and characteristics of a TS entity by adopting a juristic form and, more important, by developing a particular kind of organizational arrangements. According to this, formalization has to be understood as a part of institutionalization, one that is focused on the internal life of an entity, including the activities that sustain the entity, and the experiences in which the engagement of agents involved is based. The process usually goes from a loosely defined form of self-organization around a common concern to an explicitly structured form of organization. The starting point is to be found in the experience of an ambiguous, yet suitable thinking of what has to be done. In the process, the diversity and the specific features of the collective initiatives are progressively built as objects that need to be administered. Moreover, such objects compete with those that result from the creation of the formal organization, which is, to a large extent, the result of copying existing models and following certain prescriptions. Some prescriptions are specified by the law, and others – including the consideration of the need for creating an association – are simply conceived as the right or obvious path to follow in order to get the undertakings ahead.

Formalization can be addressed in terms of practices. This approach is crucial because the intentionality in which formalization is based is never satisfied. This means that formalization is always incomplete. Moreover, the more formalization advances, the more it appears as incomplete and thus necessary. By focusing on the practices by which formalization is deployed, the incompleteness of formalization as a process becomes one of its intrinsic features. Practices of formalization convey the restriction of variations in the development of TS entities by means of (1) the ordering of activities, spaces, and time into typified sections; (2) the standardization of organizational arrangements according to a few wide spread formulas; (3) the enabling of procedures as the practical concretion of the ordering and standardization of organizational arrangements; and (4) the introduction of marks intended to underscore the seriousness of the activities carried out by the entity, so that those activities can be distinguished from non-serious (i.e. spontaneous, improvised) activities. Formalization is materialized in a series of documents, most of which include devices such as charts, diagrams, and schedules. As the formalization process advances, documents gain importance as

the proof of the viability of a TS entity. Besides, ICTs and their conception as a key tool for being efficient reinforce the process of formalization. The most important effects of formalization include the functional tangle of means, ends, forms, and contents, and the functional inversion by which ends and contents – as an ambiguous, proper thinking – are progressively engulfed by available instrumental notions. While the actions that compose practices of formalization are to some extent overlapped, the practices remain distinguishable in terms of their senses of direction.

10.3.1. Starting points, constraining varied patterns

Third sector organizations do not appear suddenly; they arise through a series of processes in which common or similar concerns settle the ground for the discussion and further elaboration of an intelligible, open, and, to some degree, accepted version of the situation which in turn - and simultaneously - makes possible for those involved to depict and consider different ways of action. At some point, the possibility of creating an association is seriously considered. What follows is the attempt to effectively conform the association and if the attempt succeeds, the association finally comes into being along with a series of expectations.

The process of course can hardly be as simple as it has been described here. There are many possible variations and there is always the chance that alternative paths that lead the process to an outcome other than something recognizable as a third sector organization appear. The shapes of common or similar concerns are several. For instance, in some cases the common concern is recognized in situations of coincidence (think for example in the waiting room of a health care facility that deals with a decease that has a low prevalence) and creates the basis for further encounters in places other than the original one. Nevertheless, in other cases, the idea of creating an association can be the very common concern that groups those interested in a specific issue.

What has to be underlined here is the fact that, at some point, almost every collective undertaking has to seriously consider the idea of constituting itself into a formal organization. In other words, it is as if the formalization of collective undertakings arose as the obvious next step to take and not only as an option.

In the following excerpt, the project manager of the *CBS* offers a brief account about the work that the consortium intends to do with regard to women groups of the area:

> ...entidades que eh... entidades que, bueno, grupos que no están construidos, ¿eh?, que no tienen un formato jurídico propio, pero que eh... tienen claro que trabajan por una determinada necesidad que ellos han identificado en el territorio, ¿eh?, y que de una manera informal se agrupan para... para, bueno, para aportar alguna solución a este tema. Muchas veces lo hacen desde el voluntarismo, la mayor parte de las veces, y muchas veces por las relaciones personales que tienen, suelen conseguir y incluso hasta recursos, ¿eh? porque estamos hablando de personas que son del mismo territorio, con lo cual no les vamos a enseñar cuál es este tipo de necesidad, si la han identificado y si además ha generado que se agrupen para afrontarla, ten claro que ya tienen la suficiente legitimidad como para sumarse a un grupo de trabajo. Quizás no para resolverlo solos, no creo en el poder absoluto, ¿sabes? pero sí para sumarse a un grupo de trabajo que pueda aportar soluciones u opiniones a lo que significa mejorar el espacio público en mi barrio, en el barrio. No puedes dejar de contar con ellos[87]. 18:23 (104:104)

The relevance of the attempts made by the *CBS* to invite non instituted groups to follow the path of formal organizations is to be found in that such attempts are but one of the ways in which the obvious or natural character that formalization has is sustained. According to the perspective that informs these attempts, the formal/informal divide functions as a dichotomy the meaning of which is associated to other dichotomies such as organized/unorganized, serious/light, professional/amateur, etcetera.

[87] ...entities that hum... entities that, well, groups that are not conformed, right?, that don't have their own juristic form, but that hum... are convinced that they are working on a given need that they have identified in the territory, right? and, in an informal manner, they group themselves in order to... to, well, to offer some solution to this subject. Frequently, they work in a voluntary manner, most of the time, and frequently because of the personal relationships they have, they even manage to get resources, right? because we are speaking about persons that belong to the same territory, which means that we're not going to teach them which kind of necessity is this, when they've already identified it, besides of creating a group in order to cope with it, you can be sure that they are legitimate enough to become member of a work group. They might not be able to solve it by themselves, I don't believe in absolute power, you know? but they can get involved in a work group that can offer solutions or opinions with regard to the enhancement of public spaces in my neighborhood, in the neighborhood. You can't stop counting on them.

Considering the meaning of such dichotomies it is not surprising to see that, implicitly, the recognition of the right of these women groups to participate in the planning processes of the consortium is also the recognition of their lack of competence for a fully productive implication. Local knowledges and non institutional undertakings are thus silently regarded as handicapped when compared with undertakings that are carried out through formal organizations. But the lack of competence is not an absolute attribute. It is relative to the dominant trends and the forms of organization that define the Third Sector. And this dominant trend counts on mechanisms that assure the reproduction of its forms and, simultaneously, the naturalization of its status as the right or obvious path to follow if a given collective undertaking wants to gain effectiveness.

10.3.2. Ordering activities, spaces, and time

Formalization acts upon the situations through which a collective undertaking is sustained. First, the formalization of the undertakings conveys the introduction of a typification of those activities by which the functioning of the entity is going to be enabled. Second, spaces and time available for the functioning of the entity are segmented and distributed according to the typification of activities. Typified activities are thus assigned to each of those segmented spaces and moments.

The ordering to which activities, spaces and time are subjected is basically informed by the offer of formulas that match those preconceptions of how a TS entity should operate (the 'package of being a TS entity that has been mentioned before). This ordering is particularly accentuated in those TS entities of considerable dimensions, such as the coordinative-representative. Facilities that include a reception, meeting rooms with different dimension, working spaces for members of the board and hired personnel, and shared areas with shared equipment, to mention but a few, are hard to describe without making reference to the activities to which they are assigned. Along with this distribution, time arrangements are also settled, including the establishment of working hours, the periodicity of certain tasks, and the definition of the right moments for performing non-ordinary events. With regard to issues of timing, it is not only that formalization implies the establishment of routines, but that formalization itself, through its ordering, is established as a routine.

The ordering of organizational life implies the establishment of a hierarchy and the compartmentalization of flows of activity around a given undertaking. Once established, the ordering is crucial in that it functions as a filter that includes some kinds of practices and agencies while excluding others. Activities are linearized, and specific targets take the place of that ambiguous, proper thinking in which the transformation of the collective undertaking into a TS entity was based. As a consequence, participation gets caught in this ordering. The practices by which it is achieved are shaped and delimited according to certain typified activities. The practical deployment of participation, which was originally regarded to the expression of common or similar concerns in ongoing encounters, adopts the form of a property that can be present or absent depending on the implementation of certain procedures.

10.3.3. Standardizing organizational arrangements

Formalization cannot be conceived without certain degree of standardization of the functioning of TS entities. While the ordering of organizational life establishes particular targets, the paths to reach those targets are still to be defines. Standardization, which implies adjusting organizational arrangements to a norm, shapes the day-to-day activities in a way in which singularities and distinctive features are diminished, and favors certain wide spread organization formulas. Those formulas are crucial because their presence or absence in the sayings and doings of a TS entity serve as basis for assessing the capabilities and, moreover, the seriousness of the entity.

The formulas for organizing are better understood as protocols or generic paths that are settled as instances that have to be observed in the prosecution of any goal. The need for these formulas is initially drawn from that collection of ambiguous requirements included in the imaginary 'package' of being a TS entity, but their concretion is defined by the offer. Some components of these formulas are copied from other TS entities, which serve as examples of the concretion of that imaginary 'package'. But standardization goes beyond that initial concretion of expectations regarded to the right thinking on making a TS entity. Acquiring an official status generates certain obligations that the core of the entity has to fulfill, most of them regarding the requisite of being accountable for certain aspects of the functioning of the entity. Besides, pressures based on the relation of

dependency with the Public Sector catalyze standardization. The state of dependency of TS entities – mainly regarding the locus of the fields in which they are engaged, but also with what has to do with resource acquisition – puts pressures towards the introduction of alien organizing formulas. Dependency opens the door to a series of progressive concessions, each of which advance the standardization of the entity. And yet there is another force that pushes towards standardization. The promises derived from efficiency as an autonomous area of concern pass through the necessity of acting according to certain procedures and guidelines. Such procedures and guidelines have a generic nature, and thus can be seen as patterns that are imported to TS entities that are inceptive or immerse in a process of organizational change.

10.3.4. Procedurization

Procedures are the last step in the particularization of the ambiguous, proper thinking on how to be a TS entity. They settle down protocols into specific, situated prescriptions for action. According to this, the introduction of procedures can be seen as the final step to the other side of the gap between the ambiguities of the generic 'package' of being a TS entity and the particular, day-to-day activities of a given entity. Procedures, as the counterpart of that proper thinking on how to be a TS entity, are a concretion that is necessarily based in the adaptive copying of prescriptions available in the market of civic activities. In other to make this point clear, it is worth to elaborate on the idea of the ambiguous, proper thinking on how to be a TS entity, and the way in which its properties lead concerned agents to the adoption of what might be referred to as clichés for action.

The proper thinking on how to be a TS entity is an activity that goes through a network of diffuse notions, an ambiguous, plastic sense of project, constrained only by the *zeitgeist* in which it is rooted. The function of that proper thinking does not required nothing but its own passing. In this sense, the function is fulfilled in the act of thinking itself. The ambiguity of this thinking is tacit, because the thinking makes sense by itself. The contents that are thought are not relevant, because they cannot be but diffuse images. The proper thinking makes sense because it is good for agents to think that they are thinking those ambiguities as a project, as an apparently defined, yet tacitly undefined wish. Procedures are crucial because they convey the translation of that non specific wish into the realm

of the executive. But the translation is not precisely the result of the progressive specification of the wish. Instead, it is the outcome of a jump from the ambiguity to the specificity of already established forms. As said above, these forms are to be found in the market of civic activities as sets of effective solutions that matches the diffuse thinking. The need for effective action lead concerned agents to the place of the instituted as the source of specificity in which actions are founded. The instituted responds as the source of an overwhelming offer that fulfills the indeterminacy of a wish that, in spite of its ambiguity, is good to be thought. Here, instituted forms of action take over the ambiguous wishes in which effective action is needed. It is not that instruments and means substitute strategical directions, because such direction have never been traced. *Participation* is not alien to that jump. The vague notions in which the desire of being participative as something that is good to be though is founded are finally put aside in favor of already established procedures. In this sense, procedurization narrows down the wish of being participative to a number of instituted formalities.

This is why procedures seem to be of great importance for TS entities. In such settings, procedures operate as an inexhaustible source of arguments. The emphasis made on rules and guidelines is but a sample of this. Normalization, which can be depicted through those assessments and value-loaded observations over what other entities do, works through a process of co-supervision by which instituted forms are promoted. The promotion is based on the principle that procedures The insistence of the core of the *FAVB* in promoting the introduction of a set of 'good practices' in the neighborhood associations is a fine example of how these forms are promoted in what seems could be considered as a marketing strategy[88].

The introduction of procedures can thus be conceived as the final, yet always incomplete stage of formalization, a process that is defined by the adaptive copying of well settled paths for action. Depending on the composition of the entity, and of its position in the network of organizations that define the space of the Third Sector, the adaptive copying operates at different paces. Moreover, the adaptive copying leads TS entities to the complete engulfment of indeterminate wishes by the deployment of operative concretions, or to the progressive

[88] 6:9 (23:23)

dissolution of both the indeterminate wishes and the operative concretions. In each case, the concretions erode and assimilate the vague ideas in which their necessity is raised. Though they think they do, concerned agents do not know what they wanted in the first place, and yet, they know that they are ending up doing something different.

10.3.5. Being serious

The ordering, standardization, and procedurization of a collective undertaking cannot be disregarded to the necessity of being serious. Taking things seriously, an idea that also comes within the 'package' of being a TS entity, is though of as a criterion for distinguishing collective undertakings in terms of the level of commitment of their members with the aims they are intended to achieve. According to this, being serious is often introduced in conversation as an element of arguments in which judgments about one's own entity and other TS entities are made. As seriousness is necessarily a loose criterion because of its indeterminacy, these arguments can take different direction regardless of the information in which the judgments are based. Moreover, the looseness of seriousness as a criterion often results in the experience of the need for more measures of formalization. This is why the need for being serious opens the door for the introduction of those alien paths of organization – their adaptive copying – that circulate in the market. The necessary ambiguity of the way in which the need for being serious is thought (as a proper thinking) hold those paths as both the form of achieving that seriousness and its visible proof. Moreover, as seriousness is also regarded to consistency, the need for being serious also paves the way for bringing uniformity to day-to-day activities and forms of talk in TS entities. Being the opposite of seriousness, forms of action that are considered as non-controlled, spontaneous, improvised, inconsistent, or disordered are discouraged.

Seriousness is thus deployed by forms of action that allow members of the core of a TS entity to claim that they are doing things the right way. Measures such as the performance of procedures required by the public administration, as the former president of the *ABHGU* said[89]; the elaboration of well-edited annual reports, a common practice referred to by the manager of the *ACAP* and the *UCCAP*[90]; or

[89] 14:33 (391:395)

[90] 15:18 (109:109)

the requisite of writing a formal request so that the project manager of the *CBS* could extend an official petition so that my access to the entity could be granted[91] are but a few sample of the forms that an entity underscore in order to make visible their seriousness. In the following excerpt, the treasurer of *UNANIMUM,* an association of students, offers some judgments on the performance of the entity:

> ...como soy muy crítico en esas cuestiones, pues yo creo que se vio la buena voluntad, pero no llevó a cabo las cosas en muchos ámbitos, ¿no?, o sea, el powerpoint se vió la intención de informar, pero no era muy informativo. No se mandó el powerpoint, como se había dicho por e-mail. Luego, la página Web pues era un buen intento, pero no daba información realmente, es decir, era como… "Esto existe pero no… no explicamos bien lo que es", ¿no? Faltaba mucha información en mis criterios[92]. 28:1 (42:42)

According to the interviewee's point of view, things were not well done in his association. While intentions might be good, they were clearly not enough for doing things well. This assertion is crucial for understanding how the need for being serious reinforces the adaptive copying of concretions and pushes forward for yet more adaptive copying. Disregarding the aims of the entity, the realm of the executive demands more and more attention in its own terms. Seriousness is thus characterized by the need of achieving a satisfactory degree of mastery over the copied practical concretions by which the tissue of day-to-day activities is progressively composed. Here, professionalization, as a special know-how with its own forms of talk is finally rooted as an autonomous area of concern. By acquiring or developing the capabilities required, the adaptive copying gets to be rooted in the daily life of the entity.

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91 3:7 (28:28)

92 ...as I am very critical with these issues, I do believe that their good intentions were visible, but in many areas those good intentions were not put into practice, right? which is to say that the power point implied the intention of informing, but it was not informative. The power point wasn't send by e-mail, as had been said. Then, the Web site, well, it was a good intent, but it wasn't that informative, which is to say that it was like "This exists but we are no explaining well what this is", right? According to my criteria, there was a lack of information.

10.3.6. TS entities as documents: organizational reifications

The process of formalization produces a series of objects that gain value beyond their role as aids for organizational action. Documents, as reifications produced by TS entities, are crucial in that their effects of truth are disregarded of the rationale of their contents. Documents are used as a basis for justifying decisions and, in a wider sense, they are the carriers of the continuity of TS entities. This is why they constitute the material, palpable result of most of the work done, and thus are at the center of almost every activity. Something happens to words when they are translated to paper. They acquire a different status. They become 'solid'. In this sense, it can be said that, along with those typified activities (assemblies, meetings, councils, etcetera), Third Sector is, to a large extent, ink on paper. This is particularly accentuated from the point of view of technicians, whose work take place basically around sheets, tables, presentations, reports and records.

In the following excerpts, a technician from the *CBS* explains how the planning meetings with representatives of local TS entities and public services were conducted:

> Por lo tanto nosotros ponemos los objetivos como una... eh... inicial. Se proyectan... las sesiones fueron aquí [la sala de reuniones del consorcio] se proyectan y en el mismo... por el mismo sistema informático, la gente va haciendo objeciones, manipulaciones, cambia esta letra por la otra, 'prom, plom'. Muchos [objetivos] se conservan, porque de algo debemos demostrar que somos profesionales del tema, sino que hemos intentado recavar aquello que se puede (...ificar) como marco inicial lo más general posible para iniciar un trabajo. Lo que hay que hacer es detectar necesidades y decidir propuestas. Y esto es. Esto es una ficha [señala otro documento][93]. 17:38 (92:92)

[93] Consequently, we put these objectives as a... hum... starting point. The are presented through an overhead projector... these session were held here [the consortium's meetings room] they are projected and in the same... by means of the same informatics system, people present their objections, manipulations, change this letter for another, 'prom, plom'. Many [objectives] are kept the same, because we have to show our professionalism on the subject at some extent, but we have tried to collect the things that can be [...ified] as a starting, general framework, so we can star working on something. What we have to do is to identify needs and make decisions on proposals. And this is it. This is a form [he points at another document]

> Esto nos posibilitó de que desde nuestro.... eh... nuestra... ah... tasca de coordinación, y sin ganas de manipular evidentemente, fusionamos ideas. Que las ideas () detectaban una necesidad que podía estar... Esto ya estaba consensuado. Podría estar concectada a uno de estos objetivos, cubrir uno o varios objetivos, y luego unas propuestas que podían ir ligadas a esto. Era una manera de trabajo de tres piezas. Era un tres en raya. Pom, pom, pom. () lo coloco aquí, lo coloco. Ellos lo mandaban, nosotros lo... eh... cada técnico lo reorientaba y lo fusionábamos y se lo enviamos. Una vez aceptado, bueno... ...esto son fichas de trabajo. Pom, ¿ves?, pom, pom [señala el documento]. Incluso hay gente que ni siquiera hizo ficha de trabajo...[94] 17:41 (96:96)

In the account of the meetings that the technician offered to me, documents have the leading role. They constitute the axis in which concerned agents are expected to focus. As the axis of the meeting, documents are the central part of a triad in which agents involved play the role of proposers and objectors. At the end of the meeting, these working documents are the fixed proof of the agreements that have been reached. According to this view, participation could be understood has having a part – any part – in those activities in which documents are the axis. Participation could then be addressed in terms of producing, amending, sending, and receiving documents. Strictly speaking, those that, by any reason, are disengaged from the production and circulation of documents ('some people didn't even fill the form...') are not participating.

What happens with documents is that they acquire some sort of factual character. The refinements in their elaboration are a crucial aid in the production of this effect. Here, the amount of resources that TS entities of important dimensions devote to the edition and publication of different sorts of documents becomes relevant as the basis of the effects of truth these documents have. While documents are objects in which arguments - among other elements - are

[94] According to our coordination task and, of course, without any interest in manipulating, this made possible for us to merge ideas. The ideas were linked to the identification of needs that... This had passed through consensus. It can be connected to one of these objectives, attending one or several objectives, and then, several proposals that could be linked to this. It was a manner of working with three pieces. It was a tic-tac-toe. 'Pom, pom, pon'. () I put this here, I put this. The send it, we... hum... each technician rewrote it and we merged it and send it back. Once accepted, well... ...these are the forms that we used. 'Pom' see?, 'pom, pom' [he points at the document]. Besides, some people didn't even fill the form...

formalized, shaped, and registered, in time, they get to be used as justifications. The peculiarity of this use of documents lies in that justifications are not made by any reference to the rationale of their contents. The basis for justifications comes from the fact that what has been said has also been included in a document. Of course, one can expect to found a hierarchy of documents according to the validity and scope that each of them has. When justifications based on documents are faced, the hierarchy of documents is brought into the conversation as the basis for resolving the confrontation.

Along with documents, the value of which rest upon their being textual, there is other form of reification that plays a part in TS entities. This form of reification can be referred to as 'sloganization'. 'Sloganization' is a phenomenon by which sayings with regard to the main concerns of a TS entity are simplified and reduced to a number of easily recognizable sentences that are frequently used by people involved in the activity of the entity, and are easily transferred to newcomers. Many examples of 'sloganization' were identified in the interview with the Catalan delegate of *AjA.* The interviewee frequently brought into the conversation a small number of expressions such as 'North-South', 'sustainability', 'development', and 'empowerment'. It is not that repetition of these expressions *per se* can be regarded as 'sloganization'. The attribute that defines 'sloganization' is to be found in the way in which these expressions are used. Such use is characterized by a detachment between the expressions and its contextual meanings. Once 'sloganized', expressions function as ritual formulas, the enunciation of which evokes 'pieces of reality' autonomously contained in them. This is why 'sloganization', as a reproductive device, reproduces the trivialization of collective concerns through certain forms of talk.

Other forms of reifications in TS entities can be found in the representations by which organizational arrangements are rendered intelligible. Common devices such as charts, diagrams, and schedules are objectifications that serve as an aid in the deployment of compartmentalization, hierarchicalization, and routinization. As objectifications in use, these devices are far from offering a full account of the organizational arrangements of an entity. Nevertheless, the representations these objects convey can be used in attempts of producing a normative effect. Organizational charts, for instance, convey a simplified representation of the division of organizational activities because these divisions are reduced to a

representation that out of its context can only offer information regarding a generic form of conceiving part of the organizational arrangements of an entity. At the same time, in spite of their limitations, organizational charts are able to be used as the basis for justifying decisions.

Besides, as these devices constitute the intelligible face of organizational arrangements, they are likely to consume considerable amounts of time and efforts in endless discussion intended to define the how a TS entity should function. In order to illustrate this point, it is worth to mention the observation of an assembly of the Catalan delegation of *FEDER*. During the assembly, members of the core devoted more than a half of the time to make clear to the audience how the federation was organized – the organizational chart – and why it was difficult to change that organization.

10.3.7. ICTs as eroding devices

Information and communication technologies, which currently have key functions in Third Sector activity, are often conceived as a mean for widening the scope of action, shortening distances and allowing a more collaborative, agile, work flow. However, it is necessary to pay attention to their unintended effects on organizational life. The way these technologies are used and the practices they allow, undoubtedly imply an extension of the ways in which third sector associations can work. Nevertheless, when used as a remedy to solve problems associated to lack of time and the scarcity of live, face-to-face encounters, ICTs allow for a transformation of what can be discussed, and of the process of discussion itself. Given its nature, decisions and information delivery can be postponed and the dynamics of TS entity change. Moreover, while producing new forms of interaction, they impose restrictions on these forms of interaction. The differences between a fluid, rugged conversation, and a series of messages delivered though e-mail are but a sample of this constraints. In this sense, ICTs act as a catalyst for the standardization of practices.

The need for being serious makes of the use of ICTs a requisite that cannot be neglected. ICTs are unavoidable instruments in the elaboration of well edited documents and the like. Simultaneously, their immediacy and their fast pace, as opposed to the time consuming deepness that some issues require, erode the memory of a collective undertaking. As ICTs are the model of order and

standardization by excellence, they constitute the objectification of the offer of operative paths. This is why they act as catalyst of the engulfment of ends by means.

10.3.8. The tangle of forms, contents, means, and ends

As described above, formalization introduces a generic ordering. As a consequence of the engulfment of the ambiguities in which the proper thinking on how to be a TS entity is founded by available operative paths, aspects other than those regarding the collective undertakings in which a TS entity is rooted gain importance as areas of concern by their own right. In this view, organizational arrangements, procedures, resources, legal issues and the like get to be as important as the common concern the entity is supposed to work on. The resulting condition of this transformation affects the relations between forms and contents on one hand, and means and ends on the other. While the distinction among these hierarchic dyads is preserved at the literal level of utterances and documents, in terms of its practical effects such distinction becomes blurred and the relation of subordination is dislocated. What happens is that the elements of both dyads get to be functionally tangled in a way that makes of them interchangeable pieces the priority of which varies according to each situation.

This entanglement can be seen in the way in which good practices, diagnostic processes, participatory principles, and other sorts of prescriptions that are said to have an instrumental place are progressively held as valuable in their own terms. Concerns regarding this kind of means pervade many spheres in the life of an association, imposing a functioning the implications of which reach the long term development of entities. A major implication is the displacement in the focus of learning processes in the TS entities. The focus is displaced from the undertakings that define the specificity of the collective concerns in which the entity is rooted, to the implementation administrative and managerial methods, procedures, and tools that are generic in its nature.

10.3.9. Functional inversion

Functional inversion is an extreme case of the tangle of means, ends, forms, and contents. This phenomenon occurs when the core of an entity is more concerned with the definition of forms or frames (the name of the association, the organizational chart, etc.) than it is with the original collective undertaking or

purpose. The adaptive copying of operative paths can reach a state of overprocedurization. Such state is defined by a sustained cycle by which dysfunctionalities generated by the functionalities of procedures and other organizational formal arrangements are treated by means of more procedures. The most remarkable feature of this sustained cycle is the almost complete self-referentiality that formal organizational arrangements reach.

It is worth to think of the implications of functional inversion, which by means of the need for being serious reproduces an instituted version of participation. What was a feature attached to common concerns engaged in a collective undertaking becomes a goal and a procedure at the same time. In the following excerpt, the project manager of the *CBS* explains how she conceives the participatory work the consortium is expected to develop:

> Los modelos participativos no... no son algo que te viene dado. Te vienen dadas algunas pautas generales y a partir de ahí trabajas, pero creo que eso también es lo interesante, ¿no?, lo bonito y lo enriquecedor, darle forma entre todos, una masa que le vas a ir dando forma entre todos y... que va a ser totalmente distinta a la que sigue, ¿eh?, cuando uno realiza un proyecto de estas características, creo que también tiene un valor... esta estrategia de trabajo, Miguel, por qué me parece muy importante, y por qué el peligro de que sea... sólo una oficina gestora de proyectos me asustaría, porque este modelo de trabajo de... concertación y demás, empodera a los agentes sociales del territorio. Este proyecto puede terminar, y terminará, pero la idea es que cuando termine, deje una base de agentes sociales autónomos con una dinámica de trabajo de consensos y de acuerdos, y totalmente corresponsables del destino del terri... de su distrito, de su territorio. Y creo que este es uno de los valores... a veces no se ve demasiado, muchísimos quizá no te explicarían esto, pero los que hemos trabajado en esta línea sabemos digamos que ese es el valor más importante, más allá de que se haya mejorado el espacio público o se hayan puesto en marcha proyectos innovadores en centros educativos. Este es un poco el quid de la

> cuestión. Pasa y deja lo más importante, una sociedad más organizada[95]. 18:16 (88:88)

According to the interviewee's conception, the work of the consortium has to go beyond the 'mere' administration of resources in order to increase the quality of life in the territory in which the entity operates. The activity of concerned agents is thus placed as an object that requires being shaped or molded. Here, a reified version of participation is the instrument for such molding. This happens under the disguise of a non-bureaucratic, non-managerial approach. The disguise is intended to convince concerned agents and the grassroots that the promoters of that civic molding are not identifiable with the administration. Behind the disguise, the focus of the managerial scope moves from specific issues or needs to an overarching attempt to manage the ways in which civic action around those issues take place. Again, what is at stake here is the specificity, the situated nature of collective initiatives, which, from this point of view, have to be 'domesticated' in order to properly function.

Functional inversion, as an extreme consequence of formalization, has yet another implication. When the reason for being of a given association seems to be no other than its mere preservation, inertia has taken the place of the common interests upon which the association itself was built. Memory, as an activity regarded to such concerns, is lost, and the reason for being of a given association becomes a mere argumentative resource.

Of course, there are forces that fight against functional inversion. The gray market in which TS entities are involved opens the door for the introduction of other

[95] Participatory models are not... are not something ready made. You can get some general guidelines and on that basis you have to work, but I think that's the interesting part, right? The beauty, the enriching part of it is that we all have to shape it, a mixture that is progressively shaped by everyone and... that is going to be completely different from the next one, right?, when you get into this kind of project, I believe it is valuable... this working strategy, Miguel, why is it so important to me? and why the danger that it could become nothing more than just a project administration office scares me so much? Because this model of coordination and stuff will empower the local social agents. This project may come to an end, and I will surely do, but the idea is that, once finished, it leaves a pool of autonomous social agents with a work dynamic based on consensus and agreements, and totally co-responsible of the destiny of their district, of their territory. And I think that this is one of the values... sometimes it is not clearly visible, many people may not explain this to you, but those of us that have been working according to this principles know that, let's say, that this is the most important value, even more important that any improvement in the public space or the implementation of innovative projects in education centers. This is, somehow, the crux of the matter. Get through it and leave the most important thing, a more organized society.

practices. Nevertheless, formalization remains as an unavoidable process for any undertaking that conforms itself as a TS entity. As such, it introduces alien organizational arrangements that shape the functioning of the rationality by which the coherence and stability of the entities is achieved.

10.4. The apex

The apex, a term that should not be confused with the strategic apex of Mintzberg (1979) in his approach to organizational structures, is the keystone in which the consistency of TS entities is founded. The apex is a rationalizing intentionality. This rationalizing intentionality is concerned with the deployment of those functionalities by which a TS entity, as the product of ongoing achievements, is sustained. In this sense, the apex conveys the organizational unfolding of the imaginary 'package' of being a TS entity. By means of the functionalities of the apex, the ambiguous, diffuse, proper thinking in which the need for creating a TS entity is developed, situated, and rooted in the day-to-day. Simultaneously, the apex serves as an instrument for the engulfment of that proper thinking by offered paths for action. The apex is the instance that leads those transformations, which, as said before, are never complete.

The leading role of the apex, as a rationalizing intentionality, is enabled by its being rooted in the generic subjectivity it produces. Such generic subjectivity is the place of the living memory of each entity. The apex, because of its functionalities, constitutes the dynamic center of that living memory; it is the character of these functionalities the one that determines what to remember and how the remembering occurs. The apex serves as the board in which the generic notions of being a TS entity and the situated, specific undertaking that the entity intends to facilitate are melted and transformed into organizational practices and arrangements. The rationalizing intentionality of the apex intends to assure the continuity and consistency of such practices and arrangements and, simultaneously, it relies on that continuity. In doing so, issues that belong to the domain of the generic, diffuse, proper thinking, such as the wish of being participative, are diluted into the specificity of imported doings and sayings. The functionalities of the apex are the means by which that dilution is produced and maintained. The embodiers of the apex are the ones that perform those functionalities.

10.4.1. Embodying the apex

The apex is embodied by agents that are deeply involved in the activity of an entity. This is why availability is, to a large extent, what allow agents to become an embodier of the apex. These agents are usually found at the core of the entity. Continuous involvement arises as opposed to a more fragmented, occasional involvement of the grassroots. The differences in terms of knowledge and capabilities tend to a progressive increase in as much as the undertaking ceases to exist as a loosely structured flow of activities and becomes a well defined object. As these differences are accentuated, the gap that separates embodiers of the apex from other agents becomes more visible.

In order to become embodiers of the apex, these agents have to be located in a position that, *de facto*, grants them access to central issues with regard to the functioning of the entity. The position of the embodiers of the apex is not necessarily coincident with the higher positions within the formal structure of an entity - the one that appears in the organizational chart - , though it often does. In fact, the degree at which the position of the embodiers of the apex overlaps with the higher positions in the formal structure of a given association offers a cue on how the organization functions. In all cases, the apex, when deploying its functionalities, necessarily endorses their best embodiers. As for the relation between the apex and its embodiers, it is not that the rationalizing intentionality is experienced by its embodiers as deliberate attempt or as an explicit area of concern. Instead, the specific activities and concerns, and the expressions of the proper thinking of these embodiers are based on and linked by that rationalizing intentionality.

Being embodier of the apex generates a sense or ownership, mastery, and authority over the tasks regarding the functionalities of the apex. Continuous involvement in the activities by which the entity comes into being – a condition for becoming an embodier of the apex – fosters this sense of property, which is often obscured by participatory rhetoric. This often silent sense of property can be traced by some of the ways in which those that embody the apex talk about the activity of their association. In the next excerpt, a technician of the CBS the planning process conducted by the consortium:

> ...como este proceso que nosotros presentamos a la comunidad es... responde... a... metodológicamente a... la participa... responde absolutamente a la participación en el gran concepto, responde a la transversalidad y ambas cosas son... son... básicas para el consorcio... Por lo tanto, se fundamente en algo muy importante, que es "os hemos tenido en cuenta", o sea "os tenemos en cuenta", "os consultamos" y "damos respuestas respecto a vuestra consulta"[96]. 17:48 (120:120)

The process presented to the community is not property of the community. In the account of the technician, the community is distinguished from the core of the entity. The way in which the division we/you is used is crucial for performing that distinction. Besides, there is a tension among the expression of the imaginary 'package' of being a TS entity and the practical concretion by which the entity is achieves. The community is invited to get involved in the planning process, a matter that might concern its members but is not under their control. The involvement of the grassroots can only be partial, circumscribed to specific moments. While in sayings based on the proper thinking *participation* implies a deep involvement of the grassroots, the practices and organizational arrangements intended to enable such implication are limited in their scope. This is why the sense of ownership derived from the embodiment of the apex is both an effect and a condition for the successful celebration of typified participatory activities.

While the sense of property over the tasks regarding the functionalities of the apex is a crucial implication for the embodiers of the apex, there are other important implications. The apex is embodied on the basis of the availability and continuous involvement of part of the agents involved in a TS entity. As an instrument of formalization, the apex creates the conditions for its own need and deployment. Consequently, the continuity in the involvement of the embodiers of the apex becomes a condition for the maintenance of the organization. Along with this demand for continuity, the gap between the embodiers of the apex and other concerned agents grow. The practical concretion of the TS entity is so demanding

[96] ...as this process that we present to the community is... fits... methodologically to... participat... absolutely fits to the grand concept of participation, fits to transversality and both aspects are... are... basic for the consortium... In consequence, it is based in something very important, which is "we've taken you into account", or "we take you into account", " we consult you" and "answer your consults"

that the embodiers of the apex can hardly find replacements. The resulting situation is one in which the embodiers experience a sense of lost as the outcome of a paradoxical detachment. The more the embodiers are engaged in the functioning of the entity, the more distant they are from the original undertaking and the collective activities in which it was founded. This is why disappointment, loneliness, exhaustion, and the feeling of being burned are frequent in the embodiers of the apex.

10.4.2. Functionalities of the apex

The functionalities deployed by the apex are focused on those activities by which concerns are made public, grouped, coordinated, and pursued. These functionalities are introduced in those activities, containing and transforming them. In other words, the apex structures the activities by which urgencies and claims are enacted. This structuring operation has already been mentioned in Chapter 9 as the processing of raw materials into more valued civic activities. As the apex conveys a force with a given direction, one of the most significant outcomes of its functionalities is that of digestion or contention of counterforces. Such counterforces, which necessarily represent forms of activity to be conquered by the rationalizing intentionality of the apex, can be referred to as apathy, fragmentation, and barbarity. The meanings of these counterforces are defined according to the point of view of the embodiers of the apex, always with regard to the notion of concern. Apathy is conceived as a void, a negative state that conveys the passive expression of not being concerned. Fragmentation in turn is thought of as the break up of common, grand concerns into less common, more particular, smaller concerns. As for barbarity, it is conceived as a wrong expression or deployment of common concerns. Concerns might be there, but the forms in which they are expressed, and the undertakings by which they are addressed are regarded as non reflective, ideologically unacceptable, emotional, or unrefined.

The way in which these counterforces are conceived is the outcome of a specific way of making sense of events and forms of action. This is why it is important to pay attention to the kind of events and actors that are addressed as counterforces and to the logic or rationality that functions as the basis for the judgment. According to this, while for a TS entity an specific undertaking could be considered

as an legitimate, organized effort, from the government's perspective it could appear as a reaction that is irrational, that comes 'from the guts'. At a different level, a TS entity can reproduce this judgmental pattern while dealing with complains of their grassroots.

In the following excerpt, the president of a neighborhood association explains some difficulties and confrontations regarding the grassroots' concerns about drugs, addicts, and their treatment:

> ...frente a las drogas tienes muchas alternativas, ¿no?, la alternativa que nosotros siempre hemos tenido es una alternativa casi digamos de legalización de las drogas como liquidación de las mafias y sobre todo de organizar mecanismos paliativos con () y todos éramos partidarios de… del… hemos… de hecho, en todo el distrito, conseguimos un… un centro de eh… de atención a drogadicciones por reivindicación nuestra, ¿no?, que costó no… no fue en el barrio nuestro, fue en el de a lado, pero costó… y el de… el presidente del barrio de a lado tuvo que aguantar… la protesta de vecinos en contra y aguantó… este un… y… y en este caso, nosotros defendíamos la sala de venopunción. Curiosamente la asociación de vecinos de a lado nuestro es muy reaccionaria y estaban en contra y… claro en las asambleas… y ésta fue una situación difícil, muy difícil, porque claro, mmm… tú estabas diciendo “Hombre, esto… de gente drogándose en la calle y pinchándose, hay que acabarlo, pero hay que acabarlo… en un sentido o en otro”. Incluso yo, un día, una asamblea terrible, porque además era… era al aire libre… con megáfono que se oye poco, eh… debía de ser en el mes de octubre que está casi de noche… y había un sector () en la asamblea había sectores que lo que querían era pegar… ah… a los drogadictos, ¿no?, que es muy fácil. Ese día yo creo que () un milagro, ¿no?, porque otro compañero y yo nos subimos en un banco con un megáfono, bueno, supongo que había más gente más sensata de lo que… por suerte, y paramos una acción de este tipo, ¿no?, y la canalizamos… eh… claro, esto… estos casos son mucho más

> complejos, porque hay un sentido común muy reaccionario…[97]
> 20:23 (122:122)

The interviewee starts by making explicit his position on the matter: 'one closer to the legalization of drugs'. Later, he connects that position with a practical concretion: 'we've got a center for the treatment of drug addictions on our own initiative'. The reference to his position is made on behalf of a collective that cannot be entirely identified with the association. Once that his position is clear, the president points out that there were groups opposed to that position. Those groups are regarded as 'conservative', a term that is used again, with a greater scope: 'there is an extremely conservative common sense'. Here, the proper thinking enacted by the apex extend the application of the adjective of *conservative* to the common sense, which also implies an extension of this adjective to the grassroots. Later, in the description of the assembly, the interviewee underscores the savagery of 'some sectors'. In doing so, he settles the ground for talking about his role in front of such an unacceptable intention. The interviewee, as embodier of the apex, owns the right to use the word, and thus make an intervention the characteristics of which are not included in his account. In any case, the intervention seemed to be effective, in as much as some of the people involved was 'reasonable', which means that these people was susceptible to the action of the apex.

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[97] ...with regard to drugs, you have many alternatives, right?, the one we've always considered is one closer to the legalization of drugs so that the mafias can be wiped out, and, more important, the organization of palliative mechanisms for () and we all were in favor of... of... we, in fact, in the whole district, we've got a center for the treatment of drug addictions on our own initiative. right?, which take a lot of effort, not in our neighborhood, but in the one beside ours, but it was hard... and... the... the president of the neighborhood beside ours had to resist... complaints from the neighbors and he held on the pressure... and... in this case, we were in favor of the 'sala de venopunción' (a facility in which health care professionals offer to people addicted to drugs a medically supervised administration of doses). Curiously, that neighborhood association near to ours is very conservative, and they were against... and, 'course, in assemblies... and this was an extremely difficult situation, very difficult, because... sure, hum... people said things like 'Man, this thing of... people taking drugs in the street, shooting themselves up, we have to stop this, but we have to stop this one way or another'. Even myself, one day, a terrible assembly, because it was being celebrated in the open air... with megaphone, which doesn't allow you to be heard well, hum... it must have been during October, almost at night... and there was a group () in the assembly, there were groups aimed at beating up the drug addicts, right? which seems easy. That day, I think that a miracle (), right? because one partner and I came up on a stool with the megaphone, well, I guess that, luckily, reasonable people was more numerous than we... and we got to stop that kind of action, right? and we channeled it... hum... sure... this... these cases are far more complex, because there is an extremely conservative common sense...

In order to deal with these counterforces, the embodiers of the apex exert a constraining function over the activities of the grassroots. This constraining function neutralizes, contains or transforms initiatives, undertakings and demands that do not fit to certain standards in terms of procedure or content. Standards are implicitly used by the apex in a process of assessment the results of which are considered as self-evident or obvious. Depending on the resistance capacity of those forms of activity depicted as counterforces, the constraining function has two different forms: domestication and taming. On one hand, domestication operates over those forms of activity that offer low resistance or no resistance at all. This kind of activities can be molded and assimilated according to the standards of the apex. Activities that can be domesticated are raw materials needed by TS entities. The value of such materials lies in their malleability. On the other hand, taming acts upon those forms of activity that offer a considerable degree of resistance and thus are not susceptible to molding efforts. As such forms of activity are highly resilient, embodiers of the apex attempt to deflate, content, dissolve, or dissipate them. The 'savagery' of such activities cannot be transformed; it can only be subdued and thus remains in a state of latency.

The functionalities by which the apex exerts this domestication and taming are deployed by many of the tasks that the core of a TS entity performs. Such functionalities include: (1) enabling selection devices; (2) dealing with complaints; (3) performing accountability; (4) offering frameworks for intelligibility; and (5) creating dependency.

Enabling selection devices allows the embodiers of the apex to purposefully include and exclude activities on the basis of their compatibility with the standards of the entity. This compatibility might be actual or potential. Selection devices are to be found in the realm of the procedures. The logic of procedures enables a series of requisites, some of them formal and other as silent conditions. Here, the apex deploys a functioning that reproduces many features of the public administration.

Dealing with complaints is a key functionality of the apex. To a large extent, the embodiers of the apex become embodiers because of their ability to deal with the grassroots' uneasiness and grumblings. Complaints are frequent when the apex meets with the grassroots. An important amount of such complaints goes about

posing questions on and criticizing the way things are done. A usual tactic of the apex to face that situation consist of offering to those that make the complaint the chance of doing things by themselves and becoming part of the apex. Of course, many of them argue that they do not have time to get involved at that level and a consequence this brings to the end of the discussion.

But there are other tactics for dealing with complaints. During a conversation, a technician of the *CBS* said that there was a permanent, unsolvable tension between contradictory requests[98]. On one hand, people involved in a participatory process raise constant complaints about the lack of transparency when a process starts with basic proposals that have to be reviewed during the work meetings. This kind of complaints finds its origin in the disagreement of the grassroots with what they conceive as a narrow possibility for exerting changes over plans that have been previously made. On the other hand, when those participants are invited to work in the planning process from its very beginning, some of them raise complaints in the sense that they are doing the work that the technicians should do. And they want the technicians to work on the plans. The technician said that it was hard for him to bear with situations in which people is never satisfied, no matter what he does. What is worth to emphasize in the technician's account is that in such situations, embodiers of the apex have to listen in a way in which the contradictory nature of complaints are made evident. This way of dealing with complaints turns back the problematic situation to the ones that make the complaints in the first place.

Another functionality is that of performing accountability. Accountability is a requisite for the embodiers of the apex. It is achieved through different procedures by which decisions taken and its effects are reported to other members of the entity, the grassroots, or governmental instances. In this sense, accountability has an inwards direction and an outwards direction. Each direction has its own features and conditions of operation, but there are some shared principles such as transparency and the duty of having detailed records of operations, decisions made, and changes. The performance of accountability, as a procedure, offers a basis for legitimacy. This, in turn, serves as a measure of prevention for future criticisms with regard to decisions made.

[98] 5:10 (30:30)

As a functionality of the apex, the inwards direction of accountability is the most important, because it provides a normative model. Proposals and decisions need to be justified. The sources of any possible justification can be found in the sense of mission of the entity, in a set of civic principles that express certain values related to the idea of democracy, and in claims of efficacy or efficiency. These sources are drawn from the ongoing engulfment of the proper thinking on how to be a TS entity by the offer of concrete, operative paths. As the tasks regarded to inwards accountability are always regarded to such sources, they serve as means for the reproduction of the instrumentality of the apex.

Offering frameworks for intelligibility is also crucial when domesticating activities. The embodiers of the apex develop accounts in which the situations are rendered intelligible. Such accounts compete with other accounts in a situation of advantage. Consequently, those frameworks provided by the embodiers of the apex create the conditions for disqualifying interpretations that are considered as barbaric, apathetic, or dividing. Besides, these frameworks allow for the distinction between agencies whose activities are susceptible to domestication and agencies whose activities are not malleable. The ways in which accounts based on such frameworks are received is the response by which the distinction can be traced. Finally, these frameworks for intelligibility might have a deep, long term effect in terms of subjectivity. When they get to generate shifts in terms of knowledge of the self – and here the production of dissonances is crucial –, they are also reproducing the schemes the functioning of the apex relies on.

Creating dependencies is the last functionality of the apex. As a product of their own performances, the embodiers of the apex get to establish a series of conditions in which their work becomes necessary. When this occurs, the grassroots' undertakings become mediated by the embodiers of the apex. It is not coincidence that a paradoxical outcome of most procedurized enactments of participation is this generation of conditions of dependency. In the following excerpt, the project manager of the *CBS* offers his view on how to foster the autonomy of people:

> ...ahí también las personas, una vez que hagan ese cambio mental, podrán valorar la importancia de su participación, aprenderán métodos para que su participación sea eficaz, un proceso de aprendizaje conjunto, que no... bueno, pones los

> elementos, creas los espacios, produces las situaciones, pero en realidad el crecimiento y... la maduración es a nivel de () personal. Tú generas las condiciones, esa es tu obligación, ¿eh?, ponés el recurso en la mesa y generas las condiciones para que estos grupos sean autónomos con el tiempo[99]. 18:44 (168:168)

According to the interviewee, in order to achieve autonomy, the grassroots have to follow some guidelines provided by the core of the entity. There is a promise of a future, hypothetical autonomy that requires of agents involved to develop certain capabilities and follow a number of guidelines. The outcome of this promise is the adhesion to the principles and methods offered by professionals. The image of an idealized 'empowered agent' provides the basis for arguing in this direction.

This overview of the functionalities of the apex has been intended to make clear that the apex is crucial in the process of formalization. Its embodiers allow for the introduction of those alien logics of functioning by which that ambiguous and imaginary envisage of being a TS entity is progressively took over by concrete practices based on paths offered in the market. The successful functioning of the apex necessarily passes through the naturalization of its deployment and outcomes. Such naturalization is made possible because of the introduction of the functionalities of the apex in the form of organizational imperatives. The deployment of the apex is addressed as the building and maintenance of a TS entity and thus its domesticating and taming effects are covered under the obvious necessity of a proper functioning. This is why the apex is located beyond organizational expressions and the position of its embodiers, symbolic in its nature, cannot be fully grasped by organizational charts. By being beyond organizational expressions, the apex is also the condition of possibility for such expressions.

By addressing the process of formalization and the role of the apex in such process, we have established a basis for understanding the organizational functioning of TS entities. While some references on the enactment of *participation* have been made, it is still necessary to address the more specific

[99] ...and there, once that people pass through that mental change, they will be able to value the importance of their own participation, they will learn methods for making that participation effective, a joint process of learning that doesn't... well, you offer the elements, you create the spaces, produce the situations, but, actually, the growth and... the maturity occurs at a personal level. You put the conditions, that's your responsibility, right? you put the resources on the tables and provide the conditions for this groups to be autonomous in time.

aspects of such enactment. In order to do so, the following section is focused on the performance of participatory activities. As access to decision arenas is said to be an inexcusable element of *participation,* the section makes emphasis on the links between participatory activities and decision making.

10.5. Participatory activities and decision making

Formalization, as the process by which organizational arrangements of TS entities are shaped, is deployed by the rationalizing intentionality of the apex. The process introduces a functioning based on the ordering, standardization, and procedurization of the day-to-day of entities. This section is devoted to two inextricable areas in which formalization is particularly acrid: participation and decision making. Participation is depicted as a set of typified activities performed according to a script that reduces the possibility of unexpected interventions to appear. Decision making is presented as an illusion that results from the performance of chains of participatory activities. The procedures for decision making are understood as the peculiar way in which the rationalizing intentionality deals with the distance of the locus of the fields and the wishes rooted in the proper thinking on how to be a TS entity. These procedures obscure the areas in which decisions cannot be made and foster the making of innocuous or void decisions.

10.5.1. Participation as a non-ordinary event

There are different forms of *participation* depending on the manners, places and moments in which the term is invoked. The enactment of *participation*, the practices by which it is enabled convey different meanings and practical concretions. The areas in which these variations can be found are *formalization*, *scope*, and *locus of the field*. *Formalization* is understood as the degree at which those practices are shaped and informed by explicit, rational guidelines. *Scope* is referred to the dimensions of the issues treated by a participative practice. Finally, *locus of the field* is referred to the distance between the place in which the participatory practices are performed and the place in which the decisions regarding the issues treated by those participative practices are made.

In order to distinguish differences in terms of *formalization*, these practices can be located in different positions of a *continuum,* the extreme positions of which define the range of variation. On one extreme of the *continuum*, we can find implicit,

open, not formalized enactments of participation. The arrangements of the practices by which these enactments are produced are wide and loosely defined. Here, *participation* does not have to be though of as something different to the condition of being involved in a given collective undertaking raised on the basis of convergent concerns. In fact, it usually does not have to be thought at all. *Participation*, in its most open conception, is but a contingent element of the activities by which the collective undertaking is developed. On the other side of the *continuum*, there are narrow, explicit, defined enactments of participation. These enactments are based on a standard, operative conception of participation that includes as a set of conditions and steps required for a collective undertaking to be legitimate and effective. Operationalizations of participation are thus the bricks these enactments are built with. At this side of the *continuum*, objectifying *participation* and the activities through which it is made possible (e.g. assemblies, informative meetings, or consults) is a crucial task.

This *continuum* is thus one in which *participation* goes from emergent to instituted practices. Participatory activities of TS entities pass through the different positions of this *continuum*. Indeed, the formalization of participative practices goes along with the formalization of organizational arrangements because part of those arrangements is expected to enable *participation* as a property of TS entities. It is surprising how quickly emergent practices of participation can be taken over by instituted practices. This phenomenon, of course, is at the center of any attempt of understanding the inextricable links between *participation* and power.

10.5.2. Scripts

Instituted forms of participatory encounters are only a few, with the assembly as their paradigm. These instituted forms vary in terms of the number, specificity and degree of detail of their guidelines, including the procedures that assure their observation by those involved in the encounter. The more elaborated and detailed are the guidelines, the more predictable the outcome of the encounter is. There are scripts for these instituted encounters, and the density of those scripts is directly proportional to the predictability of the results. The formalization of participatory activities relies on the reproduction of those scripts. They provide the basis for a stage in which the scenario, each sequence, the climate, the roles, and the rules for interaction are predetermined. In this sense, scripts for participatory

activities – for the typified ones – function as devices by which some forms of intervention are actively and passively included or excluded.

Typified participatory activities include several sequences, starting with the arrival of participants and, prior to the start of the meeting, the period of apparently trivial conversations, in which people say hello. The environment or climate can be seen as a product of the relevance and agreement of issues that are treated in an encounter. In participatory encounters, it is possible to find attempts to translate features of a daily-life interaction to create a specific climate (e.g. previous informal conversations or welcoming people with a familiar touch). Agents involved in the encounter are induced to perform that climate on the basis of a series of cues provided by those in a leading role. Newcomers learn their parts by means of these cues and the way in which old member react to them. There are lots of tacit rules associated to specific roles. The head of an entity, for instance, is the one who has to introduce each topic, declare that a decision has been taken, or proclaim what can be consider as an agreement.

As for specifications regarding the scenarios for participative activities, the scripts are, to some extent, supported by spatial dispositions. In general terms, spatial dispositions offer cues or indications on the roles and behaviors that agents involved are expected to assume.

A superficial look at different participatory encounters is enough to reveal a few basic forms of spatial dispositions. Radial or vortical dispositions are those in which a center – the spatial correlate of a common concern - can be easily located and every one occupies a similar position around that center. Vortical dispositions, a circle looking inwards, reduce the impact of differences in terms of formal positions of agents during the unfolding of encounters. These spatial dispositions are often part of emergent participatory activities, but they are also frequent in certain instituted activities.

Other spatial dispositions are characterized by a division of the spaces in which agents are going to be located. The following excerpt belongs to the observation of a general assembly in a neighborhood association:

> La distribución espacial del mobiliario era la típica de estos eventos. Una tarima al frente, con una mesa y unos pocos lugares, y varias hileras de sillas, separadas por un pasaje central.

> Al final de ese pasaje central, estaba un cañón con un ordenador. Detrás de la tarima con la mesa en la que supongo se localizaría la junta de la asociación, había una gran pantalla en donde supuse que se proyectaría la información para la asamblea[100]. 10:9 (8:8)

The excerpt describes a frontal disposition. In dispositions like this, agents involved are located in one of two sides. Each side is associated to a different role, at least during the encounter, and each role has different duties and rights. The disposition is not only normative; it is also functional because it allows those involved to play their role in a better way. The default spatial dispositions for instituted participatory activities are those of the conference or a panel. When those involved in an encounter wants to change the dynamic of the event, so that they can generate a different climate, they might end up changing the spatial disposition.

As for the sequences specified in the script, they are engaged in the timing of TS entities. First of all, any participatory activity conveys certain routines that define its character. Obvious things such as the reasonable length of an intervention determine the delays and hurries by which the timing of an encounter is marked. Plastic as it is, this apparently well defined knowledge is always under ongoing adjustments according to the overarching rhythm of the encounters. Expressions of intolerance or discomfort in front of large interventions are progressively permitted as the encounters advance. At a more general level, the periodicity of typified participatory activities is also determined the timing of the TS entity. As this timing depends upon decisions and undertakings the locus of which is far from the entities, participatory activities are finally affected by the general arrhythmia of the Third Sector. On one hand, when they are not frequent, participatory encounters often get to be overloaded. On the other hand, when these encounters are frequent, they face the risk of becoming meaningless.

As seen before, the apex is crucial for the functioning of typified participatory activities. The embodiers of the apex are the ones that assure the performance of

[100] The spatial arrangements of furniture were the usual in these events. A platform in the front, with a table and a few chairs behind, and several rows of chairs, divided by a central way. At the end of that central way, there were an overhead projector and a computer. In the back of the platform with the table in which, I supposed, the board of the association would be placed, there was a wide screen in which, I guessed, the information for the assembly would be projected.

the script. This is why they can be seen as the stewards of participation in the Third Sector. The sense of ownership over the activities by which the TS entity is achieved makes of participatory activities an object of the apex. The sense of ownership is both an effect of and a condition for the successful celebration of standardized participatory activities such as assemblies and informative meetings. In such activities, the word is owned by the embodiers of the apex, who deploys the conditions for its own necessity.

The embodiers of the apex (1) declare the start and the end of the encounter; (2) expose the issues that are going to be treated; (3) establish the tone of each moment of the meeting; (4) manage turn-taking when members of the public wants to take part in the discussion; (5) assess if a given intervention fits to the issue that is being discussed and to the rules or procedures of the meeting; (6) reinforce adequate interventions by means of giving thanks or stressing the importance of what has been said; (7) actively puts pressures over the member of the pubic that is not acting according to those issues and procedures; and (8) draw a division line between what is inside of the meeting and what is not.

The roles that the embodiers of the apex exert, whether because of their formal positions or because of their recognizable trajectory and experience in the life of the association, consist of assuring that the encounter is being celebrated according to a previously specified plan and following a given dynamic that is considered as a requisite to meet the ends of the encounter. The apex has to deal with attempts of the audience to overcome that order and in hence it exerts a disciplinary role.

Attempts of overcoming the order of a participatory activity can be conceive as script-breaking actions. Script-breaking is a form of resistance. It consists of actions that go against the planed or expected sequences under which the encounter usually goes through. Script-breaking can be more effectively managed when the spatial disposition is vortical and allies are distributed along the circle. Nevertheless, the tendency is that, in spite of the spatial disposition, allies in a script-breaking activity are closer to each other. A script break is more likely to occur when the density of the script is low. In this sense, the probability for surprising, innovating, or unpredictable results to appear is associated to the irruption of breaks in the script, whether they are subtle or insidious.

A peculiar form of script-breaking is that of the continuous irruption of resets. Given the lack of day-to-day interaction among its ordinary members, many TS entities devote a major part of their meetings and assemblies to shed some light upon frequent misunderstandings and the lack of knowledge on some of its basic features. When this happens, embodiers of the apex are forced to describe, explain, and even discuss issues that in other circumstances would have easily be part of an unproblematic and taken for granted common ground. The irruption of the need for resets on a regular basis serves as an indicator of a great gap between the embodiers of the apex and other agents. Here, the living memory of the entity or, to use Weick's concept, its generic subjectivity, is almost entirely disengaged from the day-to-day of the grassroots.

The next excerpt belongs to an observation of a meeting on the Facilities Plan held at the *FAVB*. It includes the reaction of the president of the federation to the intervention of one of the assistants:

> Cuando la mujer comenzaba a hablar, [la presidente] interrumpió para pedirle a ella y a las persones que fueran a intervenir a partir de ese momento, que dijeran su nombre, y luego, en tono de broma, dijo que a pesar de que tenían años viéndose entre sí, muchos aún no se lo sabían. Esto lo hizo justo después de que uno de los asistentes, al iniciar su intervención, se refiriese a otra de las asistentes como 'la señora de ahí'[101]. 9:20 (46:46)

The president of the *FAVB*, as an embodier of the apex, has to assure certain continuity in the functioning of the entity. As this continuity is menaced by a lack of knowledge as apparently innocuous as ignoring the names of the representatives of other associations, the president is force to make an intervention in order to solve the situation. It is as if the president had said 'let's do this again, but this time, with the knowledge we need to do things right'. The idea of resetting comes from this 'starting again'.

[101] When the women was starting her intervention, [the president] made an interruption to ask her and the rest of the assistants that were going to make an intervention from that moment on to tell their names, and then, as in a joke, she said that despite of all those years of seeing each other, many of them did not knew their names. The intervention of the president came after one of the assistants, when starting his intervention, made reference to other assistant as 'the lady over there'.

Resets are recursive patterns that frequently appear in participatory encounters. They can be conceived both as a necessity and a function. As a necessity, resets arise when the grassroots are not deeply involved in major undertakings or do not have a clear idea on the way the entity functions. Thus, the grassroots need to be informed of those aspects in manner similar to that of a newcomer. As a function, resets consist of what might be called 'a fresh start'. Resets function through a series of actions that allow the grassroots to acquire knowledge on current issues and ongoing undertakings. Associated to memory, resets can be chronically required. When this happens, resets generate a sense of memory lost, or simplification. Resets frequently appear in participative encounters of coordinative-representative entities. When meetings or assemblies are not frequent - and considering that in some cases the frequency is not an option - representatives of grassroots entities are likely to change from one meeting to another.

In spite of the presence of script-breaking interventions in participatory activities, the embodiers of the apex, as the bearers of the living memory of the entity, are able to amend the past. The amendment of the past is made through the way in which accounts of participatory activities are made. These accounts, the elaboration of which starts during the passing of the activity, are made through the lens of the scripts performed. According to such lens, the events that are included in the narration are selected and shape in a given direction. This is why debates, dialogs, agreements, consensus, decisions and the like come into being as part of a story, the story that the apex produces. What has occurred is assimilated by a scheme.

10.5.3. The making of decisions and nondecisions

Decision making in TS entities is a central element in expressions of the proper thinking. Making decisions by means of participatory activities is posed as an attribute that marks the distinctiveness of the Third Sector in front of the Private Sector, but also as an extension of the limited scope of participatory initiatives in the Public Sector. According to those generic, diffuse expressions, participation cannot be disregarded from the actual involvement of concerned agents in the making of decisions on issues that are crucial for the undertakings that a TS entity intends to facilitate.

In the following excerpt, the manager of the UCCAP explains how decisions are made in his entity:

> ...las decisiones importantes se toman en conjunto.
>
> X: ¿TODOS?
>
> M: Sí. La… la junta directiva un poco marca líneas, filtra algunas anteriormente, una buena información como para que llegue ya más elaborada, pero luego las decisiones importantes se… se toman en conjunto.
>
> X: O SEA, TIPO ASAMBLEA, ¿NO?
>
> M: Sí. Y además como… como además son pocos centros y que el… el campo de trabajo es el que es, muy acotado, también hay mucha comunicación paralela en… es decir, que todos estamos muy en contacto con todos.
>
> X: SÍ, SE LLAMAN POR TELÉFONO…
>
> M: Los correos, cuando te llega algo interesante lo mandas a todos () hay bastante () de comunicación.
>
> X: VALE.
>
> M: Con lo cual, no es que sean opciones políticas que… que estás a favor o en contra, ¿no?, es bastante consensuado todo[102].
>
> **15:49 (277:293)**

The manager provides some generic pieces of information on the ways in which his entity addresses decision making. Members that are in touch on a regular basis, a board that provides the conditions required for the making of decisions, and the assertion that every decision is based on consensus seem to compose an

[102] ...important decisions are made jointly.
X: ¿EVERYBODY?
M: Yes. The... the board establishes some lines, filters some previously, good information so that it gets more elaborated, but later, important decisions are made jointly.
X: WHICH IS TO SAY, AS AN ASSEMBLY, RIGHT?
M: Yes. Besides, as.... as there are also a few centers y and the... the area of work is what it is, a very narrow one, there is also much parallel communication in... which is to say, that we are all in touch with each other.
X: YES, YOU CALL YOURSELVES ON THE PHONE...
M: When you receive an interesting e-mail, you send it to everyone () there's a lot () of communication.
X: OK.
M: All these means that this is not about political options of... being in favor or against, right? Everything is made by consensus.

overview of decision making in which participation and involvement are central. Yet, in spite of the lack of specificity of this loose account, there are some aspects that lead us to pose questions on the relations between this generic account and the practices by which decision making is achieved. On one hand, the functioning of the board, as an instance in which the frame for each decision is settled, lead us to the necessity of establishing the implications of such functioning. Such implications are to be found in the configuration of the universe of what can be decided, the activities by which the decisions are made, the conditions under which those activities are performed, and the accounts of the outcomes of such activities. On the other hand, it is important to underscore the emphasis of the interviewee on consensus, along with the distinction he establishes between consensus and jointly decision making on one side, and the expression of political options and positions on the other. The emphasis and the distinction lead us again to the imaginary 'package' of being a TS entity. If formalization, as an overarching process, allows for the engulfment of the wishes rooted in that proper thinking by the offer of concrete paths for action, a similar engulfment can be expected in decision making. Along with this engulfment, the distinction among politics – as something to be avoided – and consensus – as an ongoing, everlasting state of harmony – points towards dark areas that, in terms of contents or manners, seemed to be actively kept out of accounts of organizational activity.

The performance of decision making has two layers: generic expressions and practical concretions. These two layers are not to be understood as a matter of concordance or congruence between what is said and what is done. Each layer has its distinctive sayings and doings. The relation between them is marked by the expression of diffuse wishes on one side, and the necessary inadequacy of concretions on the other. TS entities' practices of decision making are performed over the universe of the decidable. While doing so, these practices specify, as a reiteration or as a shift, what is in and what is out of that universe. The non decidable, though tacit, becomes central to any attempt of understanding how decisions are made in organizations in general, and in TS entities in particular, because it establishes the limits of the decidable.

There is a constant reference to collective dialog, reflection, and debate as a requisite for legitimacy and as the basis for democratic decision making. It is not always clear, however, if this reference is a description of how an association

works or an argument that sustains and justifies in terms of method the results and decisions already made. This is not to say that in every case decision making is not conducted under one of the few practical concretions of open dialog and horizontality. Instead, it means that the arguments and the descriptions are but the same thing. Collective debate, as a constant attempt and as a complete fulfillment is produced in the narratives of what is and has been done.

10.5.4. Locus of the fields and organizational arrangements

There is a complex, fluctuating relation among the decidable and the non decidable. Here, the locus of the fields to which the issues that a TS entity addresses belong and the organizational arrangements of the entity are the most important determinants of such relation. As said before, the locus of the fields, as the axes in which decisions are produced and relevant undertakings are rooted, is always far from TS entities. This is why the activity of TS entities finds their sense as an attempt of gaining influence in those distant axes. Consequently, the distance of the locus determines the scope of the decisions that an entity can make. As the President of a neighborhood association said, “nunca hay espacio de negociación gorda en los grandes proyectos”[103] 20:35 (166:166). By determining the non decidable, the locus of the fields also determines the scope of the decidable: decisions on how to have influence in remote decisions.

As for organizational arrangements, they deploy the conditions for the activities by which decisions are made and the links among such activities. Through the action of the apex, these arrangements convey the meaning and the need for making decisions. Here, typified activities function both as enablers and constrictor of decision making. Constraints appear not as an explicit attempt to take control over what the grassroots could decide. What happens is, in fact, the opposite. Organizational arrangements are thought of as conditions intended to enhance decision making and role of the embodiers of the apex is conceived as a facilitating one. Instead of thinking of organizational arrangements in terms of facilitation or constriction of decision making, they have to be regarded as facilitators of a few, well delimited forms of making decisions.

Decision making in TS entities is performed through chains of activities. The composition of these chains by clearly identifiable elements is the product of the

[103] There's never a space for important negotiation in big projects.

procedurizing activity of the apex. The election of members of the board of a TS entity is a good example of decision making as a chain of activities. Elections consist of establishing a pool of persons suitable for assuming certain positions and responsibilities in a given association, as well as the set of steps through which the members of the association determine who will finally take the position. The chain of events by which this kind of decision is made is originated in the need for the making of such decision. And this need is raised by the organizational arrangements of the entities. According to the procedures that link activities for decision making, each step is conditioned by its predecessor and, in turn, it conditions the next one. Nevertheless, this conditioning is relative in as much as each activity is performed according to a script.

In the following excerpt, the president of a neighborhood association describes the activities that the *FAVB* conducted in order to elaborate the proposals of federated entities for the *Municipal Action Plan* (PAM) is intervention is made from the point of view of his position as a member of the board in the *FAVB*:

> Por parte del movimiento vecinal [FAVB], hemos hecho lo que hemos hecho siempre, hemos hecho, a nivel de junta, una primera propuestas, las hemos trasladado a las asociaciones de vecinos, hemos hecho una reunión general, hemos () a reconsiderar en la reunión general, o sea que ha habido un proceso amplio y participativo. Eh… no ha venido la totalidad de las asociaciones, porque sería impensable que hubiera tal grado de disponibilidad y de conciencia, pero ha habido una participación importante. Y a partir de allí, este documento lo hemos llevado al ayuntamiento. Eh… después ya ha sido el ayuntamiento el que, en este momento, tiene que dar respuesta y, bueno, la respuesta ya… ya nos la ha dado, pero tiene que poner en práctica (). Ya veremos cómo se llevará a cabo. La dificultad política de llegar al acuerdo[104]. 22:33 (146:146)

[104] From the part of the neighborhood movement [FAVB], we've done what we always do, we've done, at the level of the board, a first set of proposals, we've sent them to the neighborhood associations, we've made a general meeting, we've () to be reconsidered in the general meeting, which is to say that there has been a wide participatory process. Hum... no every association has come, because it wouldn't be realistic to expect such degree of availability and awareness, but there has been an important participation. And after that, this document has been taken to the city government. Hum... later, it has been the city government the one that, right now, has to answer and, well, we've received the answer, but it still has to be put into practice.(). We'll see how this is done. The political difficulty of reaching an agreement.

The interviewee described the activities followed during the elaboration of proposals for the *PAM* as a standard procedure well settled in the form of a common routine: ' we've done what we always do.' Decisions are thus progressively shaped through a chain of activities. Important decisions (those that already exist in the agenda) can only take place through a chain of different situations, each of which is needed to inform those that are implicated and allow them to deliver and receive their own and others' opinions. There are activities in which only a few agents – the core of the entity - participate and other in which a wide sector of representatives are also involved. The tasks performed by the board entail the composition of the specific frameworks in which the decisions that are going to be made are configured. The board of the entity has to share that framework as a starting point. Later on, the board has to provide spaces in which other agents can suggest amendments, refinements or the inclusion of new elements into that original framework. A part of the interviewee's intervention that deserves to be underlined is that of his justification of the absence of some entities. The justification of is absence, understood as result of the lack of awareness and responsibility, is introduced along with the interviewee's assertions on the participatory nature of the activities. Here, the proper thinking requires of the members of the apex to perform decision making as a participatory attribute. It is not only that decisions have to be made in a participatory manner. TS entities have to make decision in order to be participative. In the final lines of the excerpt, the interviewee establishes a division line in the sequence of activities: once that the proposals are in the hands of the government, the entity has to wait. It is the government who will finally put those proposals into practice or not. This last part of the intervention shift the meaning of the whole intervention: the entity is not making decision on issues of their concern; the entity decides on how to fill in a form provided by those who actually have access to the decision arenas.

What occurs is that the locus of the fields in which TS entities intend to deploy their activities (1) establishes extended areas that are not decidable, and (2) raise initiatives to which TS entities can only react by asking themselves 'What do we do?'. Along with this, the deployment of organizational arrangements entail (3) the configuration of naturalized areas of decision the majority of which are innocuous in their contents, and (4) the routinization of procedures for making decisions that are not decisions at all. These phenomena can be labeled as 'decisionless making

of decisions' whether because the concretion of the procedures conveys a *de facto* impossibility of making the decision, or because its performance as a ritual produces the experience that a decision is made in spite of the absence of decisions. Both the distance of the locus and the organizational arrangements generates a network of practices in which the space for effective decisions over the issues of interest is progressively narrowed.

10.5.5. Non decidable issues

Besides of the distance of the locus, there are certain conditions derived from the functioning of organizational arrangements that sustain the non decidable. Among such conditions we can find (1) the non debatable character of some issues; (2) the fragility of the situations in which effective decision making occurs; and (3) the imbalances among positions of agents involved.

Keeping certain issues beyond the possibility of discussion is one of the most powerful, yet non-deliberate practices. The non debatable character of matters is achieved by actions that diminish the visibility, relevance, or conflictive character of certain issues. These actions are particularly relevant in typified participatory activities of TS entities. It does not make sense to think of the debatable and the non debatable as a dichotomy. There are different configurations of the visibility, relevance, and conflictive character of an issue. Most important, these configurations mold the irrelevance of the issues and, in some cases, their inconceivability.

The fragility of the situations in which decision can actually be made is particularly acute in the Third Sector. For instance, changes in those who occupy key positions in the Public Sector pose serious threats to the continuity of decisions made through participatory processes. The following excerpt describes a conversation with a technician from the *CBS*. The technician talks about the consequences of political changes derived from elections:

> ...con los cambios a partir de las elecciones, se estaban recortando los recursos destinados al consorcio y no querían contratar a más técnicos. Me explicó que se sentía bastante incómodo con el tema: dos de sus compañeras del equipo técnico habían marchado y Jan, el informático, haría lo mismo en unos días. Yo le pregunté cuáles eran los motivos del cambio, y me dijo

> que eso no es que lo tuviera muy claro, pero que después de todo el trabajo participativo, ahora habría que recortar los programas por falta de presupuesto, y que estaban planificando las reuniones en donde se informaría de esto a las personas que habían participado en el proceso[105]. 5:5 (12:12)

In order to reach a state in which the decisions made are effectively accomplished, TS entities depend upon the confluence of several conditions. The situation that the technician explains is one in which such conditions change before the decision made through a long series of typified participatory activities are materialized. The locus of the field to which the issues of those decisions belong is far from the entity. Therefore, what happens in that locus defines if an already made decision remains as such or becomes a senseless outcome. In other words, the outcomes of such participatory processes cannot be regarded as decisions until they are ratified in the authentic decision arena.

As for the balance or imbalance among positions of agents involved, they can lead a decision making process to an impasse, or they can turn the process into a mere delivery of information. Debate, as a feature of typified participatory activities, imposes a script that favors some positions depending on the argumentative resources of those involved. In a given discussion, a notorious gap among participants' formal positions, trajectory, degree of involvement, and rhetorical skills creates a situation in which some interventions become dominant while others are easily neglected. In some cases, interventions different to those made by agents in a position of advantage – usually embodiers of the apex – might not appear at all.

10.5.6. Innocuous and void decisions

Along with the extended areas of the non decidable, the making of innocuous or 'decisionless' decisions is also a common feature of the Third Sector. Decisions that are innocuous or void can be understood as chains of events in which the

[105] ...with those changes derived from elections, resources devoted to the consortium were being cut, and they didn't want to hire more technicians. He explained to me that he felt very uncomfortable with the situation: two of his colleagues in the technical team had left the job and Jan, the IT guy, was going to do the same in a few days. I asked him for the motivations of such changes, and he told me that he was not very sure about it, but it seemed that, after all the participatory work already done, programs would have to be cut down due to a narrow budget, and that they were planning the meetings in which they would let the people involved in the process know the situation.

collective, deliberate resolution over multiple paths for action is absent or focused on non significant issues. They are the product of the reaction of TS entities to those non decidable areas. As said before, the rationalizing intentionality that serves as the instrument of formalization cannot get rid of the cloud of ambiguous good wishes to which decision making as requisite of participation belong. But the practical concretions for decision making that the rationalizing intentionality imports cannot match the generic and ambiguous wish. Consequently, the instrumental role of the apex as the instance that assures consistency through formalization seeks to assure the experience that decisions are made.

As for the ways in which innocuous and voids decisions are made, they cannot be understood in an isolated manner. In fact, their capability for performing the illusion that relevant decisions are being made passes through their mutual reinforcement. Among such ways we can find (1) the dysfunctions derived from the arrhythmic timing of TS entities, mainly in the form of rushes and delays; (2) the reduction of decision making to a nominalistic exercise in which some words are substituted for others; (3) the consumption of most of the time of decision making activities in convincing others of things that they are already convinced; (4) the presentation in terms of issues to be decided of decision already made; (5) the introduction of discussions over decisions made in locus that are far as if they were decisions to make; (6) the concentration of most decision making efforts on issues of little relevance; and (7) the delivery of information on actions to take based on technical imperatives as if there was something to decide.

The rushes and delays that characterize decision making in TS entities are a particular case of the arrhythmia that the timing of entities cannot overcome. The pace at which Third Sector functions is such that decision making, as a reaction to events in far loci, occurs under time pressure or enters into a state of chronic delay. In the first case, only a few members of an association, the embodiers of the apex, are likely to define what has be done and what is keep into a waiting list. In this sense, things are done by a few but endorse by many. Not everything can be subjected to those procedures that are said to enable debate or collective reflection. Those that are not embodiers of the apex are not able to fully engaged in decision making because of their lack of time, skills or knowledge, or simply because they do not get to be aware of their role in such affairs. The length of time among the celebration of the activities that conform the chains of decision making,

and the time available for each activity and for the sequences included in its script become crucial. They impose constraints over the evolution of priorities during the activities and they convey a series of dysfunctions that narrow the scope of discussions. One of this dysfunction is the exertion of pressures for confirmation. Rushing into confirmation closes decision making and prevents further controversies upon those decisions. This is particularly accentuated in participatory activities that are devoted to confirmation, which, before anything else can be said, are posed in terms of yes or no.

In the following excerpt, the manager of the UCCAP offers a brief overview of one of the most important areas of decision of his entity:

> ...Al final las cuestiones importantes es… qué tarifa vamos a tener este año y qué aumentos nos van a dar. Como nunca son los que pedimos, siempre son inferiores, pues al final es "Bueno, ¿aceptamos eso o no lo aceptamos". Al final se acepta porque en el mes de noviembre ya no podemos discutir más [risas]. Hay que aceptarlo y punto[106]. 15:52 (297:297)

When the interviewee mentions the issues that are crucial for his entity, he also puts the place in which those issues are defined out the entity (e.g. 'what raises are *they* going to give us'). As the decisions regarding these issues are defined somewhere else, the decision that the entity can make is finally posited in terms of *yes* or *no*. Alternative paths could be raised in front of this situation. Nevertheless, since the locus of those issues remains far from the entity and there is calendar that marks the priorities at each time, the decision making becomes nothing but a verification. As can be seen, the interpretation of the description made by the manager of the UCCAP lead us to pinpoint the confluence of several of the ways in which decisions innocuous and void decisions are made, including their mutual reinforcements and the catalyzing function of the arrhythmic timing of TS entities.

What occurs with decision making as a feature of participation is that its necessity paves the way for a systematic denial of its limitations through the performance of ritual activities. As this systematic denial is rooted in the conditions of possibility

[106] At the end, the important issues are... which rate are we going to have this year and what rise are they going to give us. As they are never the ones that we request, they are always smaller, at the end it is like "Well, do we take it or not? At the end it is accepted because in the month of November we cannot have more discussions. We have to take it and that's it.

and necessity of TS entities, it becomes hard to avoid. Participation and decision making thus constitute an inexcusable, yet impossible exigency. As such, both properties represent the core of the paradoxes in which Third Sector is built. But deviation is not absent from this scenario. The references made in Chapter 9 to the gray market in which TS activities circulate points toward practices performed at the margins of formalization. Although necessarily minority with regard to the main stream, such practices should not be excluded from our account of participation in the Third Sector, because they convey a problematizing look and also a denaturalization of that taken for granted frame of possibilities under which TS entities are developed and sustained.

10.6. Alternative paths: beyond the possible

There is no doubt that, once involved on a regular basis in a collective undertaking, agents are subjected to transformation. Whether these transformations are regarded as the outcome of domestication or development depends to a large extent on the point of view from which the judgment is made. Indeed, domestication, as the phenomenon by which the activities of the grassroots are assimilated by the rationalizing intentionality of the apex, can be conceived as a one of multiple paths for development. But others paths can also be followed. The alternative character of such paths depends, to a large extent, on the representations of power that concerned agents enable. When these conceptions of power objectify the overwhelming network of pressures towards sterile uniformities, alternative paths are more likely to be produced. The fact that images of power that circulate in the Third Sector usually emphasize what occurs in the distant locus of the fields of interest for entities helps to understand why their own compliance with such locus is often neglected.

According to this, some degree of skepticism with regard to that imaginary 'package' of being a TS entity becomes crucial for any undertaking to avoid or minimize the effects of formalization. This points toward to what might be called desecrated formalization, a notion that could be applied to those undertakings that, while creating TS entities, constantly perform the need for keeping the axis of the undertakings out of the instituted space of the entities. (1) Loose organizational arrangements; (2) small, self-organized undertakings based on the idea of self-provision; and (3) the insistence on the limited scope of formal

organizations that are held as just another channel for action create the conditions in which emergent practices can grow.

The following excerpt belongs to the observation of a general assembly in a neighborhood association. It includes a brief account of the insistence of the president on the need for individual initiatives:

> En el cierre de la asamblea, y en referencia al señor que se quejaba de los cierres de una calle por las obras no autorizadas de una empresa privada, [el presidente] señaló que había cosas que sí que era conveniente plantear desde la asociación, pero que otras muchas podían resolverse desde iniciativas individuales, e invitó a los asistentes a que pensaran las cosas en esta línea, recordándoles que la asociación no tenía mucho poder. Muchas acciones concretas las podría emprender cada cual por su cuenta, a menos que se requiera acción conjunta[107]. 10:46 (86:86)

The president's insistence in the limited capabilities of the associations is accompanied by a plea in favor of small undertakings carried out without the necessity of the mediating role of the neighborhood association. By doing this, the president is giving up to the need for aligning and centralizing each of the undertakings that are relevant for the grassroots. In spite of the short range of these undertakings, their relative autonomy regarding the entity implies a deviant path. In such deviant path, the recognition of the limits conveyed by the formalized side of the neighborhood movement is also a form of resistance in front of the engulfment that formalization entails. Simultaneously, this recognition allows agents involved to keep the reason for being of the entity at the center of its living memory.

The reason for being or sense of a mission has not to be confused with the mission's statement. It is usually thought that the sense of mission goes before any kind of organizational arrangement, an assumption largely based on a rational vision of organizational processes. Nevertheless, the sense of mission and the

[107] At the closure of the assembly, making reference to the complaints posed by an assistant with regard to the obstruction of a street by non authorized roadworks of a private enterprise, [the president] said that there were things that the association could assume, but there were also many things that could be solved from individual initiatives. Later, he invited the assistants to figure things out this way, insisting in the lack of power of the association. Many specific actions could be carried out by each one on his own, unless joint action was required.

organizational arrangements of a given association are often co-determined. Think for example in a common practice that consists of building an explicit formulation of the reason for being of the association. Besides imposing limits to the ways in which the mission is objectified, such a practice creates a split between what can be explicitly admitted as the organizations ends - with the exigency of coherence that that these kind of formulations bring - and what operates as the mobilizing intentionality of the association: a sense that is necessarily open, partially ambiguous, and, to some extent permanently subjected to debate. All practices are necessarily rooted in this open sense of mission, which entails a sort of iconic map by which expectations are built. The following chapter elaborates on such map.

11. A meteorological map: looking into a crystal ball

This is the last chapter devoted to the presentation of results. It shows a map of TS entities that we have called 'meteorological'. Focused on the symbolic world of the Third Sector, the map displays the interplay between intentionalities on one hand, and memories and expectations on the other, as an attempt to determine the ways in which the meanings that lead the activity of this sector are conformed. According to the kind of objects and relations that the meteorological map attempts to codify, it has been necessary to work with a superposition of two layers. One layer is that of the principles and senses of direction. This layer includes certain icons or common places the enunciation of which is, by definition, in constant adaptation. The other layer is that of the practical concretions. This layer is conformed by activities and situations the meaning of which depends on their links with the icons.

In order to elaborate on that superposition, the map describes (1) the relations among past, present and future and their consequences in ongoing activities; (2) the characteristics and deployment of the proper thinking on how to be a TS entity, along with its effects on discussions and debates; (3) a basic lexicon of the proper thinking, a set of icons that are neither unproblematic nor univocal and yet, are often taken for granted; and (4) the way in which conversations are unfolded in formalized, non-ordinary events, including the forms of talk that play a part in them, and the organization of discussions they provide.

11.1. A present populated by milestones and wishes

The symbolic universe in which TS entities exist is defined by a slippery present, one in which concerned agents cannot consistently locate their activities. For agents involved in TS entities, the present is a place that tends to be blurred as a result of forces that put persistent pressures to keep it out of focus. The blurred

character of this slippery present is sustained by the joint actions of *remembering* and *anticipating*. *Remembering* attracts the attention of agents involved by means of its configuration in the form of a collection of milestones. *Anticipating*, instead, gets to be the focus of attention through its deployment in the form of a cloud of wishes.

11.1.1. Milestones

Milestones, as the form of *remembering*, are tales presented as key pieces of history. These tales have been told in a way that makes of them outstanding events that constitute an obligated reference in the day-to-day of TS entities. The configuration of milestones, as selected pieces of history, is the product of the retrospective functioning of the proper thinking. In order to make sense of these pieces, one has to ask why and how they become salient with regard to the more or less opaque flow of activities and its traces. Hence, these pieces of history have to be understood in terms of their meaning at the moment of being performed as memories. When brought into conversations, these landmarks are told under a shadow of a laudable resignation, because they entail an often subtle expression of a feeling of loss, along with the pride of surviving in spite of that loss.

In the following excerpt, the President of a neighborhood association offers a brief account of the origins and transformation of his entity:

> ...la asociación de vecinos nació en el 72, en plena dictadura aún, en toda la ebullición de… eh… las reivindicaciones vecinales y… con… muchos puntos de unión con movimientos sociales para derribar la dictadura, y a partir de ahí, pues es un () nuevo, luchando hasta ahora, con diferentes momentos, diferentes etapas y… pero bueno, nos hemos mantenido activos hasta el momento[108]. 22:2 (10:10)

At the beginning of his account, the President uses some *clichés* when locating the origin of the association in a different epoch. The past – that distant epoch – is depicted as one in which collective efforts, neighborhood associations and social

[108] ...the neighborhood association was born in 1972, still under the dictatorship, when the neighborhood's vindications were at their peak and... with many points of contact with social movements in order to tear down the dictatorship, and, since then, well, it has been () new, fighting until now, with different movements, different stages and... anyway, so far, we've kept ourselves in motion.

movements in general were, figuratively speaking, 'on fire'[109], because they were close to each other in the fight against the dictatorship. The present, in turn, is presented in terms of proud subsistence, with a generic fight against a more diffuse enemy. Here, the meaning of the expression “anyway, so far, we've kept ourselves in motion” points toward a sort of double-sided assessment. On side of such assessment declares that, under the current circumstances, keeping the fight at the level of subsistence is more than enough. Simultaneously, the other side addresses that result as disappointing. When the President makes reference to different moments, the meaning of the term 'different' has to be regarded to the properties of such moments. Indeed, when speaking of different moments, the interviewee seems to be pointing toward ups and downs throughout the life of the association. This implies that agents involved have coped with critical situations. As a consequence of coping with these critical situations, the persistence of the fight is equated to the subsistence of the association.

The account of the President also entails a series of dichotomies. Each of the sides of these dichotomies is located either in the past or in the present. But the terms of each side are not equally expressed. The sayings about the past convey silent references to the present. In the interviewee's account, there are at least four examples of these dichotomies: (1) being 'on fire' *versus* surviving; (2) clear targets *versus* blurred aims; (3) common front *versus* dispersion; and (4) ups *versus* downs. What occurs with these dichotomies is that the things that are not said about the present are the tacit counterparts of the things that are said about the past. The milestones that *remembering* configures are composed by the declarative side of these dichotomies.

11.1.2. Wishes

With regard to wishes as the form of *anticipating,* their confusion with the outcomes of prospective or planning exercises becomes crucial for analytical purposes. Thought they might be expressed as such, wishes constitute neither forecasts nor predictions. In fact, when wishes are expressed in the form of forecasts, the finale outcome has more in common with prophetic activities, as the making of undetermined, generic announcements about an uncertain period in the

[109] A relatively convenient translation for 'estar en ebullición'.

future, than with specific, univocal statements about a moment in a short-distance future.

As for their confusion with the outcome of planning activities, wishes are often expressed in terms of overarching long-term goals or purposes. Wishes under the disguise of goals can be identified on the basis of their generic, ambiguous character. Because of that character, wishes cannot be rationally unfolded into practical concretions. The only attachment to practical concretions they can have has to be arbitrary by definition, in the sense that an undetermined number of different practical concretions could equally be attached to them. This is why it can be said that a considerable number of the goals that TS entities intend to achieve are, basically, good wishes, in the sense that the expression of such goals is good in its own terms, regardless of the actions by which agents try to achieve those goals.

Wishes can be defined as the concrete expression of hoping and desiring. As such, wishes result from the looking-forward functioning of the proper thinking because their expression fits to the contexts in which they are said. Wishes are the expression of the right way of thinking of the future. In other words, wishes convey the collective composition of imagined futures through the lens of what seems right to expect. The generic, open depictions of those imagined futures disguise the ambiguities that the wishes entail. Moreover, since wishes constitute the concrete expression of hoping and desiring, their active side is exhausted in that expression. Wishes are thus expectations in the sense that, beyond their expression, they are passive; wishes are images of a future that concerned agents wait for.

Now, let us consider one of those wishes. In the following excerpt, the project manager of the *CBS*, talks about the general purpose of the consortium:

> Vamos a trabajar porque realmente en el territorio se produzca realmente un cambio de tipo estructural. O empiece a producirse. Y esta es un poco la idea. No sé hasta dónde lo saben las administraciones; yo, por lo pronto, mientras no me digan 'no', seguiré adelante [risas][110]. 18:19 (96:96)

[110] We're going to work so that an authentic structural change in the territory takes place. Or starts taking place. And, in a nutshell, this is the idea. I don't know the degree at which the public administration is aware of this; in the meantime, as long as they don't tell me 'no', I'll keep going [laughs].

First thing to note is that the meaning of the expression “an authentic structural change in the territory” is regarded to the presence of the entity in the area in which it operates. That presence is justified by eliciting a wide, long-term purpose. Nevertheless, the specific deployment of that purpose is absent of its formulation as a result of its polysemy. This is why the purpose is the expression of a wish. Moreover, that polysemy is not a failure, but a property of the expression of that wish. Any kind of specific activity can either be conceived as a step forward to the elicited purpose or equally be disregarded from that purpose. This means that specific activities or undertakings are arbitrarily linked to the purposes they intend to serve. And yet, the expression of the purpose remains functional. When the interviewee claims to be working so that the production of a structural change can at least get started, she is expressing an idea that is worth thinking about in those settings. And the images of the future as a wish are produced by means of the expression of that kind of ideas. Wishful purposes, as expressions of the proper thinking, fit into the situations produced in those settings.

Another aspect of the excerpt that deserves to be underscored is the reference to the present. The interviewee establishes a distinction between herself and the public administration. Later, she situates the locus of the field in which the consortium intends to deploy its activities in that public administration. The expression “as long as they don't tell me 'no', I'll keep going” means that the achievement of any specific activity or undertaking depends on what occurs in distant places. By stating that the constraints derived from that dependence exist, the interviewee is making explicit the fragility of her position, along with the brittle conditions in which specific actions are undertook. The recognition that there are constraints and fragilities in current conditions can only be made from the present. Being in the present means being aware of restrictions and insufficiencies.

11.1.3. Insufficiencies

For TS entities, the present is a zone that cannot be completely avoided by evoking a mythologized past or by invoking an idealized future, because it is in the present that the practical concretions are carried out, with all their limitations. The present is thus the blurred place of the things that are narrow, incomplete, or inadequate. Indispensable as it is, the experience of being in that place is defined

by attempts of maintaining an unstable equilibrium. In contrast, the future is depicted as generic, desirable and open, and the past is remembered as discrete, firm and distant. But being in the present has also another face. The present is the place in which common concerns, with all their uncertainties, are nurtured and molded. Common concerns, specific and rooted in the day-to-day, are the basis upon which the sense of mission or the reason for being of a collective undertaking grows. For a TS entity, as the institutionalized version of a collective undertaking, the present, in spite of its precariousness, preserves the possibility of keeping in touch with that sense of mission.

The present of the TS entities is slippery because agents involved are constantly looking forward or backward. The way in which agents cope with the experience of insufficiency consists of bringing in collections of milestones and clouds of wishes. What is at stake in this never completed avoidance is the interplay among different stances: (1) the sense of mission, produced by situated, common concerns, and the axis of collective undertakings; (2) the proper thinking, as the generative principle in which those ambiguous, diffuse notions on how to be a TS find their sense; and (3) the offer of practical concretions, the specific paths for action by which the organizational arrangements of a collective undertaking are progressively formalized. Since the offer of practical concretions has been addressed throughout Chapter 10, the following sections of this chapter will elaborate on the proper thinking and the sense of mission.

11.2. The proper thinking

As said in Chapter 10, the deployment of the proper thinking on how to be a TS entity consists of the expression of certain images that make reference to things the desirability or pertinence of which is some how taken for granted. These images are generated by a network of diffuse notions that are rooted in the *zeitgeist*. The function of that proper thinking is fulfilled in the act of expressing those good things in the right way. The things that are worth thinking about make sense because it is good for agents to think that they are thinking them.

The proper thinking has to be understood as a practical linguistic disposition. According to this disposition, certain things that are good to be thought are expressed in the right direction. This linguistic disposition is pragmatic, in the sense that it is used. Moreover, it is generative, because its specific expressions

are not confined to a predetermined, delimited set of ready made statements. The proper thinking has a collective, overarching character in that its expressions are located beyond the space of interpersonal encounters. The most important implication of the proper thinking is that its expressions dilute the conditions in which discussions can emerge and move forward.

11.2.1. Expressing indissociable forms and contents

The proper thinking entails a practical linguistic disposition because it implies a given position that is enacted through the expression of things in a proactive manner. The specificity of the expressions of the proper thinking with regard to other expressions can be found in the indissociable relation between what is expressed and the form in which the expression is made.

As said before, the proper thinking is deployed through the expression of good things, thinks that are good to think about. But in order to be things that are worth thinking about, they also have to be expressed in the right way, that is, in an adequate manner and with a given direction. The indissociable links between the things that are expressed and the form of their expression is what makes of the expressions of the proper thinking something intelligible for those involved in the situations in which the expression is produced. The existence of the thing that is being thought, as a collective, immediately meaningful expression, is the product of a symbiotic unity between the form and the content. This is crucial, because the functionality of the proper thinking – and thus, the distinctive character of its effects – lies in the intelligibility of its expressions. This is why the intelligibility of those expressions is based on the assumption that everybody agrees with them.

The functioning of the proper thinking as producer of expressions about which everybody agrees depends on that indissociable character of contents, form, and direction. In order to be intelligible and agreed, those expressions have to be delimited and, simultaneously, diffuse. This apparent paradox lead us the iconic character of the plastic, visible expressions of the proper thinking. The paradox is apparent because the delimited character of the expression is found in its form and direction. The meaning of the expression, the thing that is thought – disregarding who is the speaker, when is it made, and how –, remains ambiguous, and this ambiguity is crucial for its functioning as a product of the proper thinking.

11.2.2. The context of the proper thinking

Both the intelligibility and the taken for granted agreement of the good-thinking things lead us to the context in which the proper thinking is deployed. The context of the proper thinking has not to be confused with the situations of its deployment. Situations, as a moment in the staging of interpersonal encounters, are crossed by the expressions of the proper thinking. The principles under which those expressions are produce belong to a collective, more general level. This is why I have said before that the proper thinking is rooted in the *zeitgeist*. Its expressions are things the agreement on which has necessarily to be taken for granted. Beyond any specific situation, there are wide narrative threads, and the expressions of the proper thinking are located in those threads. The narrative threads provide the basis for the intersubjective coherence of those expressions. The context is the space for the ongoing accomplishment of that intersubjective coherence, a key condition for the efficacy of the expressions of the proper thinking. Situations, in turn, make reference to the specific settings in which that accomplishment is achieved. The context is the key for being aware of what is actually going on. Situations, instead, are moments composed by the specific places, times, and agents involved in that ongoing activity.

Figuratively speaking, the idea of game can serve to illustrate the differences between context and situation. Each time the game is played, the context establishes the conditions that render a game intelligible for those involved in it. The game – as a totality that includes its particular rules, sense, and amusement –, is experienced in the form of an immediate apprehension, including the tacit intelligibility and the explicit practice of its being played. The context is thus what defines the kind of game that is being played through the practice of playing the game itself. In this view, the game is accomplished in each match, because the context for the game exists only when the game is being played. But the context does not exhaust the elements necessary for the game. The playing of the game is always situated, and its situated character makes reference to aspects the existence of which is independent of the game. More important, those aspects, as necessary conditions for playing the game, are invested with particular meanings once they become part of the game. The situations in which the game is played are thus localized moments of each match. Each localized moment includes: the space in which the game is played (the game board); the time available for playing

the game and the way it is used (schedules and chronometers); the agents involved in the game, with their different skills and abilities (the players); and the current balance of the game (the scoreboard).

Taking the illustration forward, a crucial implication of the distinction between context and situation is that the meaning of being a competent player depends on the basis upon which the expression is understood. From the point of view of the context, being a competent player means being capable of grasping the sense that a given game is being played. In other words, being competent in terms of context implies that what is occurring is intelligible as a particular game for the agents involved in that game. Without such an immediate apprehension, agents cannot play. From the point of view of the situation, being a competent player means that considering the settings in which the game is being played and the performance of other players, a player is in a position of advantage or disadvantage, because of his relative mastery of the game and the values of the scoreboard at that specific moment. It could be said that, in terms of the situated character of the game, players are more or less successful according to the situation, which is as a transversal cut of a match. In terms of context, agents are more o less able to play the game depending on their predisposition to grasp the unfolding of the game.

As if it were a game, the functioning of the proper thinking lies on the competence of agents involved to grasp the meaning of its expressions – the things that are good to be thought – because it is by means of that immediate apprehension that the context is produced. Agents might be more or less skilled with regard to the making of those expressions, but without that basic competence required for grasping the intelligibility of the context for the proper thinking, agents cannot make sense of what is going on. As the proper thinking is somehow founded in the *zeitgeist*, this basic competence can normally be taken for granted when agents involved have common origins and lifestyles.

11.2.3. Good-thinking things

Until now, I have been making reference to the expressions of the proper thinking as 'things'. As the use of this term is crucial for elaborating on the idea of the proper thinking, some considerations are required. As the visible, plastic form of the proper thinking, the things that are good to be though (1) cannot be split into

form and content; (2) are more than just the product of objectifications in that they are diffuse and specific at the same time; (3) do not include a subject other than the grammatical; (4) oversimplify the objects of conversations by reducing them to a closed formulation.

The indissociable relation between form and content has been developed above. With regard to the diffuse and yet specific character of the good-thinking things, and the exclusion of subjects, both aspects entail conditions the absence of which breaks the deployment of the proper thinking. Things that are good to be though are more than the just the product of objectifications because if they were so, then they would be debatable. Objects are, socially and linguistically, debatable. By being decomposed into a series of properties, objectifications become dynamic, controversial, subjected to contested versions and varying formulations. In fact, the functioning of the proper thinking assures that what is being conformed as an object, that is, as something debatable, is pulled back to the area of the non debatable. It is not that a version over the object had momentary won a match in the debate. What occurs instead is that the discussion becomes nonsense, because the things that are good to be thought are expression about which everybody is expected to agree.

With regard to the exclusion of any subject other than the grammatical, the deployment of the proper thinking depends on an effective dilution of the individual. Such dilution is a condition for asserting the collective character of the proper thinking. If the subject has pragmatic or semantic implications, the deployment of the proper thinking fails and discussions are likely to arise. This failure can be seen when the expressions of the proper thinking are interpreted as a mean to obtain any sort of particular benefit, because particular benefits are contrary to the idea of the proper thinking. This is why impersonal forms, the ‘it’ (e.g. “being participative is indispensable”, instead of “I like being participative”), are frequent in the formulation of good-thinking things.

As for the oversimplification that the proper thinking exerts over the objects of conversations in ongoing encounters, it has to be understood as the opposite of complexification. Debatable as they are, objects are shaped through a progressive series of syntheses that constitute specific moments in an open-ended contest among different versions. Each version addresses objects from different

perspectives, highlighting some of their properties while neglecting others, and taking care of even the more subtle aspects of those properties. Consequently, those momentary, partial outcomes tend to be more complex as the contest advances. The proper thinking works in an opposite way. Its effectiveness lies on its capability for rendering the discussion meaningless. In order to do so, the proper thinking has to avoid the cues that could eventually lead the conversation to the complexification of the object. By means of the expression of closed, simple formulations that everybody agrees with, the discussion is prevented. Simplification is sometimes hard to grasp by an observer, because it is often deployed under the disguise of an elaborated rhetoric.

The expressions of the proper thinking are deployed in a way that turns any intervention that could raise discussions into a thing that is bad for thinking and thus cannot be sustained during a given conversation. According to this, the expressions of the proper thinking are actions that interfere with other actions. The interference can be produced (1) in a preventive manner, by establishing a configuration in which interventions that lead to discussion can hardly appear, or (2) as a corrective response to this kind of interventions once they have been made.

11.2.4. Framing and displacing

The preventive and the corrective interference that the expressions of the proper thinking exert operate in different forms. The preventive interference lies on the introduction of a frame with a giving composition. The frame and the composition define what is going on in a given situation, including the scope of issues, the direction of the unfolding event, and the forms of intervention that are pertinent. Frame and composition shape the situations by providing a context, a narrative threat that agents are expected to follow if they are willing to get involved in the ongoing course of events.

The corrective interference operates over already established frames and compositions in which objects are conformed and their debatable character is necessarily brought into the situation. In order to break the context of the discussion and pull it back to the area of the non-debatable, the corrective interference of the proper thinking displaces and redirects the object into a different frame with a different composition. The incipient controversial character

of the object, which is made possible by the context, is transformed into a good-thinking thing that, of course, is free of controversies. The deployment of corrective interferences – displacements and redirections of objects in conversations – is more effective in collective situations. Interpersonal situations – dyads or triads – put more difficulties to the proper thinking, because, usually, their normative effects are smaller and interventions that bring controversies into the conversations are more probable.

11.2.5. Political correctness and clichés

The expressions of the proper thinking have a curious relation with the use of clichés or expressions that are politically correct. It is not that that the former and the later are necessarily referred to different forms of expression. The distinction between them has to be located in the effectiveness of the expression, that is, in the kind of responses it generates in a given context. When a given expression is branded as, let us say, demagogic, the deployment of the proper thinking fails. The failure lies in the inability of the expression for introducing or maintaining the good-thinking thing in the narrative thread that prevents the configuration of objects and discussions. When expressions are labeled as clichés or politically correct statements, agents involved are brought into the domain of the debatable. The proper thinking, as producer of expressions about which everybody agrees, ceases to function.

The scope of interventions understood as expression that are politically correct is thus the scope of the inefficacy of the proper thinking in a given context. In other words, when a thing that is good to be thought is recognized as a slogan the whole context for the proper thinking is disintegrated. When the Catalan delegate of *AjA* says that "es la gente del sur quien está realizando sus propias actividades, ¿no?, con la ayuda nuestra, con la financiación nuestra, pero, mmm, son ellos mismos quien deciden[111]" [16:7 (92:92)], she is introducing a good-thinking thing into the conversation. The intervention of the interviewee entails an oversimplification in the sense that the elements of the intervention – helping people from the South, offering financial support, and autonomous decision making – are unproblematically addressed as things the virtue of which is beyond

[111] It is the people from the South who is conducting their own activities, right? With our help, with our financial support, but, hum, they themselves are the ones that make decisions.

reasonable doubt. Nevertheless, the situation in which the conversation is unfolded – an interview – allows for the depiction of those expressions as an appeal to recurrent clichés, some sort of slogans that are often brought into conversations in order to fill in the gaps that could eventually lead the conversation to places that are uncomfortable.

11.2.6. The Third Sector through the proper thinking

The proper thinking is crucial for understanding the functioning and the distinctive features of the Third Sector. The links between the Third Sector and the proper thinking can be located at different levels:

(1) To some extent, TS entities can be seen as the institutional, organized deployment of the proper thinking. Its organizational arrangements provide conditions that enhance the preventive and corrective interferences that the expression of good-thinking things entails. This is why, for instance, debate in TS entities frequently appears as an expression of the proper thinking. Debating is a good thing. As such, initiatives that pose questions over those debates (e.g. restrictions on actual debates, they way they are developed, their reaches, and their pertinence at a given time in front of other forms of action) are discouraged. Here, the configuration of organizational arrangements is justified in terms of its capability for enabling debate but, simultaneously, that configuration prevents the transformation of the idea of debate into something that has to be discussed.

(2) The Third Sector itself constitutes a thing that is good thinking about. There is a general agreement about the virtues of TS entities, the emphasis they put on participation, the voluntary work through which they operate, their non-profit orientation, and so on. There are expressions of the proper thinking that serve as reminders of that general agreement. By doing so, those expressions put the Third Sector out of the domain of what can be discussed. The Third Sector is thought of as 'the' alternative to the Public and Private sectors, instead of being considered only as an alternative among others.

(3) Participation and decision making, as key elements of the Third Sector – two of its well known virtues – constitute a well hidden paradox. As common places of the proper thinking, both of them are constantly brought into the conversation, particularly during meetings, assemblies and the like. But they are brought in as well known, widely accepted formulations that obscure the complexities,

insufficiencies, and contradictions entailed in their deployment. In the collective situations in which those formulations circulate, any attempt to highlight the dysfunctions, complexities, difficulties, and insufficiencies entailed in the achievement of participation and decision making runs the risk of (1) being depicted as the expression of a position against those widely accepted premises – as a bad-thinking thing –, or (2) being diluted in the course of the encounter, as a result of the organization of turn taking into fragmented, isolated interventions that cannot conform a dialog. The *Consell de Ciutat*, with its detailed protocols and uncontested interventions, is a fine example of how this dilution creates the conditions for keeping objects as non debatable things.

(4) The reduced scope of the present in TS entities is a product of the deployment of the proper thinking. As said before, being in the present means being aware of restrictions and insufficiencies. Bringing that awareness to a collective level requires of agents involved a joint approach to the complexities of unfolding events and current conditions. This is why the present can be understood as the domain of the object, of the debatable. In as much as the proper thinking pulls those debatable objects back, it narrows the scope of that present.

To sum up, when the expressions of the proper thinking are effective, they reorder objects into a non-debatable configuration, that is, a configuration in which those objects cannot be discussed, because they are presented in a way everybody should agree with. At different layers, the Third Sector conveys the deployment of the proper thinking. In fact, part of the reproduction of the logics of functioning of TS entities lies on that deployment. As a key, stable aspect of the Third Sector, the deployment of the proper thinking has some recurrent icons. These icons, a few good-thinking things the formulation of which vary, constitute the basic lexicon for thinking good things about the Third Sector, and thinking them in the right way.

11.2.7. Common places

The things of the proper thinking in the Third Sector include those common places that conversations developed in their settings can hardly avoid. In fact, those common places can also be identified in documents produced by TS entities. If the proper thinking can be seen as the grammar of a particular language, then the common places are its basic lexicon. In this view, the expressions of the proper thinking can be seen as specific, located, pragmatic constructions based on that

grammar and that lexicon. The concrete expressions, as specific constructions are undetermined in their number, because, pragmatically speaking, the combinatorial possibilities of the grammatical rules through which such expressions are built cannot be exhausted. Nevertheless, the common places, as the basic lexicon – a set of icons – by which concrete expressions are composed, include a delimited collection of good-thinking things. Albeit in the long term the collection of icons is a changing one, the common places it includes at a given period and the general composition of the collection is stable enough to offer a good view of the constellation of icons that settle the scope and contents of the expectations and memories circulating in TS entities. According to our analysis, the most important icons of such constellation are:

(1) *Participation*, as a crucial icon of TS entities, is properly thought as 'getting one's feet wet' and also as 'doing things together'. People might or might not be able or willing to get involved, but no one will disagree that getting one's feet wet is a good thing. In fact, when TS entities raise requests for the implication of people in specific tasks, the receivers of the requests find themselves in the need of offering justifications when they are not able to get involved. In terms of 'doing things together' *participation* emphasizes, in an oversimplification, the idea of horizontality. Being participative means being horizontal, and being horizontal means bringing everybody on board. At some points, at certain moments of a given undertaking it is usual to gather most of the people potentially or actually affected by the issues that are being treated. The core of the entity that leads the undertaking is likely to make references to those moments as the proof that the undertaking has been participative. Alone or in the course of interpersonal encounters, individuals might pose questions to the narrow understanding of participation that is entailed in those references and elaborate on possible answers. Nevertheless, during collective, formalized encounters, those questions are less likely to be posed and, when posed, they are often diluted in the performance of the script that guides the encounter.

(2) The icon of power is interesting, because, as a good-thinking thing, it conveys a simplification based on the idea of an absence. The thing that is good to think about power is that it is bad and remote. In fact, it is a bad thing because it is remote and thus, not distributed, but if it were close and distributed, then it would not be power. Issues of power are regarded as contests over control for its own

sake. Such hunger for control and its potential fulfillment are located in places other than TS entities. The following excerpt includes some assertions made by the member of a neighborhood association on the nature of power:

> Tú no sé si has tenido alguna vez ocasión de tener poder. Es como el… o sea… el vicios… de tener dinero, sexuales… bueno, pues el más… el más bueno es tener poder. En la escala que tú… que tú tengas, ¿no? Un concejal de ayuntamiento tiene un poder tremendo, sobre gente, funcionarios, decisiones y tal, ¿no?, y eso le satisface mucho. Eso les gratifica, entonces, les horroriza perder el poder, por eso, las elecciones les… les… preocupan, les preocupan bastante y tal[112]. 23:36 (234:236)

The idea of the power as a bad habit, as an addiction, entails an oversimplification that circulates widely among TS entities. Besides, as can be seen, the expressions of the interviewee with regard to having that bad habit are always made using the third person. The ones that are addicted to power are 'others', and those 'others' are in different, far places.

(3) *Volunteering*, as another unavoidable term when speaking about the Third Sector, is often presented as the keystone of the Third Sector. When thinking about doing something in a voluntary manner, it is important to distinguish between the meaning that the term has in the everyday life forms of talk on one hand, and its expression as a good-thinking thing on the other. In the everyday life, the term implies an assertion of a fact: certain people, at certain moments, do things without monetary compensation or beyond their working life. As a good-thinking thing, volunteering is more: it implies the exercise of a virtue, a disinterested assumption of responsibilities and tasks that are intended to benefit third parties.

In the following excerpt, a senior member of CONEX describes in general terms the surprise with which users of the training activities provided by her entity react when they get to know that most of the people working in the entity are volunteers:

[112] I don't know if you have had the chance of having power. It is like... that is... the addiction... to having money, sex... well, then, the most... good is having power. At your own scale, right? A city councilor has a tremendous power over people, government employees, decisions and the like, right?, and that satisfies him a lot. That is pleasant for them, they are horrified by the idea of loosing the power, that is why, the elections are... are.... a huge, huge worry for them.

> ...los chicos que vienen aquí, ellos vienen y se apuntan y no saben si esto no… no tienen una explicación. Pero cuando alguno que ya tiene más confianza y le digo "Uy, uy, no pidas tanto, ¿eh?, que aquí todos somos voluntarios, que nadie…", "¿Ustedes no cobran?, ¿los profesores no cobran?, pensábamos que tenían una ayuda o algo", "no tenemos nada"[113]. 19:20 (260:260)

There is some sort of anonymous, suffering heroism in the iconic presentation of voluntarism. Voluntarism is something to be proud of, if one is the volunteer, or something to praise, when the volunteers are others. Moreover, the voluntary character of collaboration prevents the making of demands for more effectiveness or for a more accurate performance. Volunteering is good in its own terms, and any statement that seeks to point out subtle aspects or variations to this formula is likely to be rejected. When the instructor of a workshop on volunteer work teams held at the *EVV*[114] said that volunteers in TS entities should be selected in a way similar to that of employees, reactions from the part of the assistant arise immediately. According to such reactions, it was out of the question to thing about selection devices for volunteers in TS entities, because volunteering is an expression of good will, and you cannot discuss, let alone put obstacles to that expression.

(4) *Efficacy and efficiency* are, together, a relevant icon of the proper thinking in the Third Sector. This icon can be seen as the contemporary expression of the proper thinking about being an organization. Formulations such as "results have to be effective"[115], "meetings have to be operative"[116], and "it's not a bed of roses, but efficacy is higher"[117] entail references to a loosely defined requirement for ordered, almost immediate practical concretions. The insistent expression of those requirements is the proof that the entity is serious. The opposite of being serious

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113 ...the kids that come to this place, they come and sign up and they don't know if this isn't... they don't receive an explanation. But when someone is more closed to us I tell him "wow, wow, don't ask for much, OK?, 'cause we all are volunteers here, 'cause nobody...", "you are not getting paid?, the teachers are not getting paid?, we thought you had an aid or something", "we don't have anything".

114 Volunteering Summer School.

115 18:26 (104:104)

116 9:7 (16:16)

117 9:41 (98:98)

is doing things in an 'unorganized' manner, which is the way things are done in 'spontaneous', 'informal' undertakings. According to those requirements for efficacy and efficiency, doing things in an 'unorganized' manner equals doing nothing at all.

(5) *Legitimacy* is undoubtedly a common place in the Third Sector. As another icon of the proper thinking, legitimacy is often brought into conversations that seek to establish a given undertaking, intervention, or position as valid. What those conversations have in common is the assumption that thinking of being legitimate is something good. Beyond this assumption it is complicate for TS entities to debate the idea of legitimacy for practical purposes, because such a discussion could lead to certain degree of paralysis in their functioning.

The following excerpt includes a reference to the legitimate character of the procedure for a participatory planning process conducted by the technicians of the *CBS.* The interviewee, a technician form the consortium, explains how the insistence of preserving the inputs provided for the participants in their original form is what turn the process legitimate:

> Yo creo que esta pulcritud a la hora de... eh... traspasar esa información... creo que nos da una legitimidad a la hora de decir este proceso ha sido transparente, no se ha perdido materia gris por el medio, no hemos perdido demasiado material informativo en el traspaso[118] 17:60 (132:132)

Legitimacy, as an non problematical icon, functions each time it is used as an adjective that, once attached to a noun – in this case, the transfer of information during the participatory planning – asserts, the validity of that noun. Moreover, there are other ideas that are used as equivalents of legitimacy or as means to achieve it. The interviewee mentions the term transparency, but other terms such as representativeness, debate, and consensus play a similar role.

(6) *Decision making*, is also a crucial icon, because it invokes the experience of being engaged in the unfolding of something important. It is as if the depiction of a given activity as one through which decisions are made entailed the performance of the opposite to the iconic conception of power. It is good to make decisions – it

[118] I think that this pulchritude when... hum... transferring that information... I think it give us a legitimacy when saying that this process has been transparent, no gray matter has been lost in the process, we haven't lost informative material in the transfer.

is good to think that decisions are being made and to express that thought – because it means that not everything occurs in those remote loci; that things are actually happening here. Facing the experience of thinking the opposite is not a good-thinking thing, because it seems to render the involvement of agents meaningless.

(7) *The fight,* as the last of the icons of the proper thinking included in this account, is one that is frequently used to make reference to current or past undertakings in which some TS entities have been involved. Thinking of such undertakings in terms of fight conveys an oversimplification in which the well known 'us and them' divide is solidified. Along with this divide, there are some epic reminiscences in the expressions of this good-thinking thing. Protests and critics are depicted as movements in a battle characterized by a strong imbalance of forces: “strong fights in the neighborhood always took place in working class quarters”[119]. The past, as the domain of heroic battles, is often brought into conversations as an exercise of memory through which those milestones that populate the present are shaped.

These seven icons of the proper thinking are not easy to delimit. Any attempt to elaborate on them in terms of definition leads to the domain of the objects and, thus, of the debatable. It is as if these iconic thoughts presented resistance to analytical treatments by tending to dissolve themselves in the course of the analysis. This is why they have been addressed on the basis of their use. But there is more to say about the icons of the good-thinking things. As a crucible in which tendencies with different trajectories shape the imaginary world of TS entities, the proper thinking is subjected to transformations. Its icons, as well known formulas, and the equivalences, contradictions, parallelisms, and subordinations among them are the concretion of those transformations. A consequence of these changing relations is that the aforementioned icons are not equally present in every activity of every TS entity.

Once that the icons of the proper thinking, as the basic lexicon for thinking right, have been addressed, it is necessary to pay attention to the way these expressions are brought into the conversations held in TS entities.

[119] 20:44 (18:18)

11.3. Speaking the Third Sector

As in any other setting, conversations in TS entities are sustained through the unfolding of chains of utterances made by agents involved. Those utterances arise from the sense of what is at stake in any particular setting. That sense defines the experience of need, opportunity, direction, and adequacy with which agents respond to the kind of situation they are immersed in. In doing so, the sense of what is at stake marks the forms of intervention that any agent, according to his position and the relations of his position with those of other agents is allowed and expected to do. The settings in which conversations are unfolded are crucial because they provide cues that lead agents to put themselves into a given frame. Besides, in contrasts with spontaneous conversations, some conversations are held with a given, explicit purpose – whether it is finally achieved or not – and through non-ordinary, structured events. The immediate apprehension of, or the progressive socialization with the prescriptions and proscriptions entailed in such events has also a key role in providing the cues by which agents are lead to play their parts. The cues derived from the settings and the kinds of event in which conversations are held are thus the key for identifying and understanding the particular frames under which agents talk in different areas of social life. In consequence, the distinctive features of conversations in TS entities have to be found in (1) the implications of the configuration of the network of positions of agents during the course of the conversations; (2) the characteristics of situations enabled by the particular organizational arrangements through which non-ordinary events are prepared, performed, and recorded; and (3) the characteristics of situations located in the everyday life as a persistent, necessary, general background for the functioning of TS entities that resists the effects of formalization.

The distinctive phenomena of conversations in TS entities are produced by the interplay among these aspects. Such phenomena can be found at two different layers. On one hand, TS entities, through the deployment of their organizational arrangements, enable and constraint different forms of talk. Forms of talk are particular configurations of language in use the interrelated unfolding of which marks the aforementioned non-ordinary events. On the other hand, the arrangements for non-ordinary events settle the conditions for the performance of rhetorical formulations that discourage actual debate on key issues and,

simultaneously, depict themselves as discussion. The unfolding of different forms of talk and the relations among them, along with the deployment of rhetorical formulations that covertly diminish debate are thus the attributes that define the specificity of conversations in the Third Sector.

11.3.1. Forms of talk

Forms of talk are recognizable through the utterances in context they produce. Through the speech, each form of talk enacts a particular world and a defined point of view within that world. Each particular world makes reference to a position with particular things, relationships, concerns, and expectations. A form of talk makes sense of surrounding events (1) by molding the cues that are salient for its position in its world into familiar things, or (2) by attempting to reshape things that have been already molded by another form of talk. The scope of the cues that each form of talk can grasp is proportional to the scope of the world it enacts.

For analytical purposes, we have built six categories of forms of talk. The categorization has been made on the basis of the differences and commonalities of observed utterances. The aspects in which the differences and commonalities among utterances were observed included (1) the position of the speaker as it is tacitly assumed in the utterance; (2) the frame and the composition that the utterance reinforces or seeks to introduce; and (3) the nature of the concerns entailed in the utterance.

The six forms of talk included in our categorization are the *managerial*, the *vindictive*, the *prophetic*, the *tribal*, the *technical-specialized*, and the *everyday life*. Next, we offer a brief description of these categories:

(1) As its name shows, the *managerial* form of talk enacts the world of the manageable and the managed. Utterances raised by this form of talk are focused on the establishment of an explicit, standardized, rational order for action. This form of talk is constantly making reference to the future in terms of things that should be done – specific series of steps – in a predetermined manner.

(2) The *vindictive* form of talk is referred to utterances that sustain the necessity of the fight as a mean for getting others – those in the locus of the fields to which relevant issues belong – to do what they are supposed to do. The vindictive form

of talk thus asserts the necessity of an active role of the grassroots with regard to the achievement of the rule of law.

(3) With regard to the *prophetic* form of talk, it is deployed through utterances that depict images of a distant future. In contrast with the *managerial* form of talk, the *prophetic* does not make reference to specific actions, because the world it enacts is the world of the grand narratives, whether in terms of apocalyptic visions or utopian announcements.

(4) The *tribal* form of talk is rooted in the world of memberships and groups. Its concerns are configured around the boundaries that separate those who belong from those that are outsiders. These boundaries, which are reinforced each time they appear in utterances, provide a resource for making sense, in a reflective manner, of situations of conflict.

(5) There is also a place for the expression of concerns with regard to specific fields the mastery of which is far from the reach of most people. In this sense, the *technical-specialized* form of talk enacts a world of relatively obscure specificities. These specificities stand for themselves as descriptions or prescriptions that do not require any kind of justification beyond their own fields.

(6) As for the *everyday life* form of talk, its utterances make references to the familiar world, to the territory inhabited and the ongoing events that occur in that territory. In this sense, the world enacted by the everyday life form of talk is the world of the *praxis*. As such, it often exerts a conversion over the utterances of other forms of talk. This is why this form of talk is the form of talk of the present.

Forms of talk in Third Sector entities are located at two different levels. On one hand, the *everyday life* form of talk is at the basic, most general level, because it is by means of its utterances that agents end up making sense of other forms of talk. Consequently, the other forms of talk are located at a subsidiary level. As for the relations among these forms of talk, the *prophetic*, *tribal*, and *vindictive* forms, as enactments that are out of the institutional, are close to the everyday life form, which is domestic in its nature. The *managerial* and *technical-specialized* forms of talk, as autonomous enactments of the institutional world, appear as dissociated, alien languages.

11.3.2. Spaces for arguing

The performance of rhetorical formulations provides the rationale in which justifications, as means for persuasion, are made. In doing so, they define the reaches of the space in which actual debates can take place. The common frame of reference through which TS entities enter into arguing is a narrow one, because such frame does not allow for the reconstruction of the objects of discussions. What usually occurs is that debates are discouraged either because what is being supposedly discussed is already a taken for granted issue or because there is no space for the discussion. In the first case, the objects of conversations are deployed as things on which everybody agrees, so that problematizing interventions are prevented. In the second case, as an alternative to that unquestioned agreement, the fixation of intransigent positions turns the debate impossible or gives place to interventions that are absurd for the other speakers because of the absence of that frame of reference.

Creating and sustaining a space for arguing is more than just assuring that everyone can have a say. It requires of conditions for the unfolding of dialogic situations. Speakers have to admit the positions of other speakers while arguing; otherwise, the complexification of the object, and thus the direction of the conversations toward an actual debate in which the object can be reconstructed, is not possible. The procedurization of activities intended to foster debate introduce ritualistic schemes into conversations so that attempts to organize discussions as a serious, ordered activity, finally turn the expression of divergent points of view into (1) a trivial exercise in which challenging assertions are ignored because of the ritualistic organization – time, openings, sequences – of the encounter; (2) a thing that is bad to think and, as such, cannot be elaborated because of the generalized rejection; (3) an attempt of breaking the script that has to be amended by the corrective intervention of the stewards of the encounter; or (4) the verification of an uncompromising confrontation – only of one of its sides – that leaves no space for agreements.

In spite of its narrowing effects over the space for arguing, the ritualistic organization that results for procedurization assures that what occurs in the encounters is depicted as debate. Here, the *managerial* and the *technical-specialized* forms of talk play a crucial role. The positions from which their

utterances are made, and the kind of worlds they enact sustain a vision in which a debate, for being effective, has be well delimited, with clear steps and roles according to a formal, explicit order the legitimacy of which is drawn from the domain of the experts and from the necessity of doing things right. Nevertheless, expanding and opening the space for arguing is always a possibility. Such possibility necessary goes through the daily life and its form of talk it is through this form of talk that agents involved translate the utterances raised form others forms of talk. By doing so, prescriptions and proscriptions are played down through the lens of common sense and collective concerns are reintroduced in the conversation in the form of controversial objects that are located in the present.

11.4. The currency of the reason for being

As said before, the present is the place of the precariousness and the insufficiencies. As such, its scope tends to be narrowed down by appeals to a glorious past and a bright future. Such appeals, which are well equipped with distinctive forms of talk and widely accepted formulations, have the practical effect of putting aside the dissatisfactions and the problematic openings entailed in the present. The deployment of the proper thinking and its arbitrary practical concretion in terms of formalization of organizational arrangements erode the conditions in which actual debates can take place and simultaneously hide that erosion by means of the naturalization of the devices by which it is produced. Consequently, the controversial character of objects is neutralized, and the reason for being of the entities, which was originally founded on the common concerns of collective undertakings, is displaced.

What is at stake here is the sense of a mission. As the reason for being of a collective undertaking, the sense of a mission entails the intentionality whose deployment is seek by the undertaking. The deployment of such intentionality is what gives any undertaking its specificity, because it is rooted in the practicability of common concerns of agents involved (e.g. improving the public spaces in the neighborhood, covering basic needs of retired persons, or getting good medical attention for rare diseases). Here, participation does not have to be distinguished from the background flow of activities in which the common concerned, as the place from which controversial, debatable objects emerge, is shaped and reshaped. The proper thinking and the formalization of organizational

arrangements subject the intentionality of the sense of a mission to a contest with other intentionalities that introduce alien logics. The result of this contest is the configuration of that hybrid, conflictive set of principles that have been mentioned in Chapter 9. As a consequence of this hybrid outcome, participation, along with decision making, acquires that hardly reconcilable double side as a good-thinking thing and as a procedure. But the sense of a mission, as an expression of that specific intentionality of each undertaking, cannot be entirely wiped out. The present, which is the place of the sense of mission, might be narrowed down by milestones and wishes, but it cannot be entirely drawn, for the functioning of the TS entities, the practical concretions arbitrary linked to the proper thinking, require that present for being deployed. To some extent, the moments of crisis cannot be totally neglected. It is this moments of crisis, of giving voice to the insufficiencies through even the small breach for arguing, that the sense of a mission might be recovered.

The final outcomes are uncertain in all cases. Some entities might slightly become extensions of the Public and Private Sectors; others might get finally eroded, disappearing or entering into a lingering, inertial functioning; others might get trapped into the impossible conciliation of good-thinking things and procedurization; and yet others might get the occasion to take advantage of the uncomfortable conversations about the insufficiencies of the present, as a manner to rebuilt the common concern. The path that is finally followed depends on the specific, localized scenarios in which the activities of TS entities are developed. Albeit taking a part in the conformation of the great vectors that define the macro-context, each scenario entails a particular, mobile relation of forces. The links between members of the core and the grassroots, the primary or secondary place of the formalized version of the undertaking, the number and magnitude of the gateways among the entity and the Public or Private Sector, and the currency of the issues in which the common concerns are founded are all aspects that determine the situation and direction of each particular scenario.

As a concluding comment, the meteorological map of participation in the Third Sector can be depicted as an inverted triangle (Figure 12).

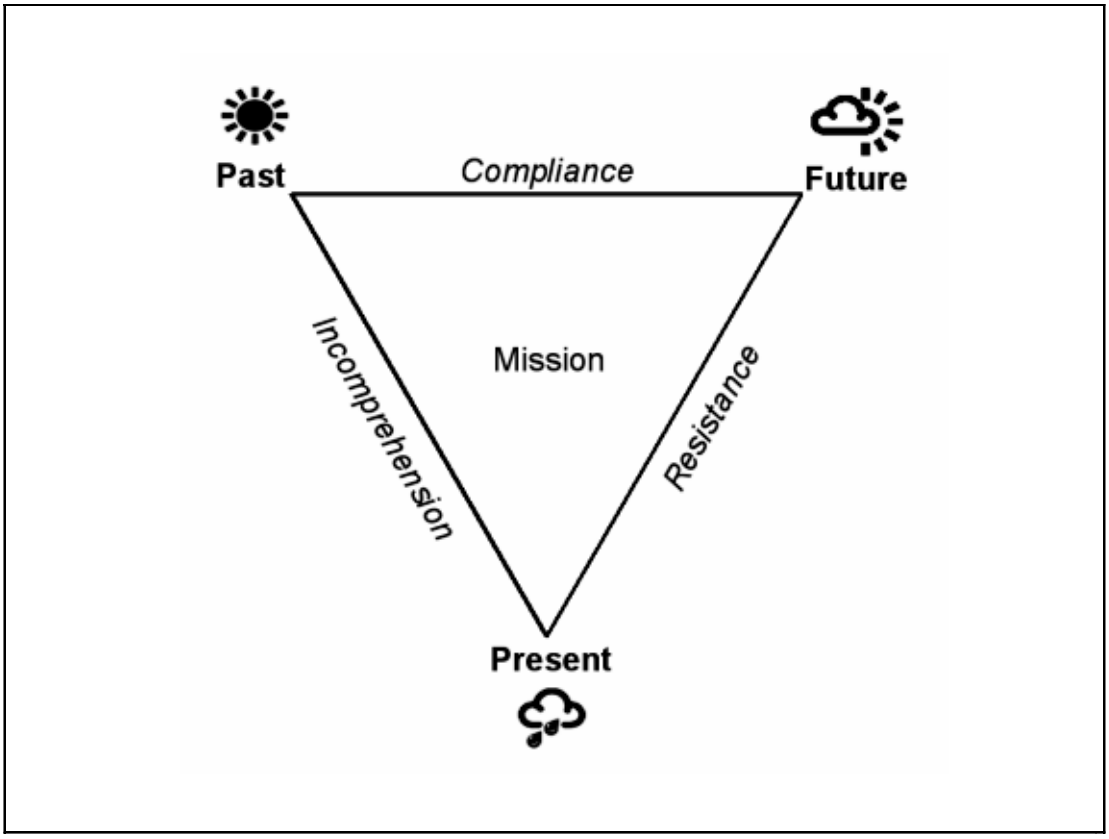

Figure 12.
The triangle of past, present, and future

Each vertex of the triangle stands for a place toward which attention can be oriented. The past and the future are located in the upper vertices, while the present occupies the lower vertex. The past, as the time that was, is populated by milestones, revisited traces of better times and glorious moments. Figuratively speaking, the past is made by remembering a shining sun. The future, as the time to come, is populated by ambiguous wishes, in an attempt of thinking the good-thinking things in the best possible way. The figure of the future is the vision of the arrival of a “better weather”. The present, the last vertex, is the place of the discomfort, of an often diffuse feeling of awkwardness. Figuratively speaking, the present is the experience of the thunderstorm. The line segment between the past and the future are defined by a relation of silent compliance. The line segment between the past and the present is defined by a relation of incomprehension, because the past and the present are alien to each other. Finally, the line segment between the present and the future is one of resistance. Being in the present means rejecting the enchantment of ambiguous wishes and being in the future means neglecting the discomfort of the present.

The sense of a mission is trapped in the middle of the triangle. The more it is closed to the present – to the lower vertex – its scope becomes inevitably reduced. The more it is closed to the past and the future – the upper vertices – the wider the scope of the sense of a mission becomes, albeit it gets detached from the ongoing flow of activities.

12. Conclusions

The end of a journey is, among other things, a time to deal with the question of where we have arrived. To answer that question, we have structured the conclusions in a way that allows us to underline: (1) the rationale upon which we planned our journey; (2) the meaning of what we found throughout that journey; and (3) possible new journeys that such a meaning points out.

The first section argues in favor of an approach focused in the logics in which the specificity of the Third Sector and its articulation to participation is founded. The second section presents a brief overview of the three maps of participation in the Third Sector highlighting the specific conclusions derived from them. The third section elaborates on those conclusions in the form of three ideas about the directions that collective undertakings engaged in TS entities could follow. The fourth section depicts some areas of inquiry that would be interesting for further research. The fifth and final section marks the closure of this study by reintroducing the metaphor of the iron cage included in the title.

12.1. From sayings to logical orders

The approach to the phenomenon of participation in the Third Sector conveyed in this research is defined by its focus on the ways in which this area of social activity is conformed by what people say and do. The sayings about the Third Sector that constitute the *corpus* include (1) the production of purposeful conversations with an array of agents involved; (2) different sorts of documents that are produced and used in those settings; and (3) tales or narrative descriptions on what occurs in daily life settings and, particularly, in non-ordinary events typical in the Third Sector. Thus, the materials we have analyzed include interviews with key informants, narrations of observations, and selected written materials. This approach could be seen as selective or partial in that its focus on what is said and

how it is said seems to pay little attention to the current, typical activities that TS entities offer, which are the activities these entities are known for. The field of specific activities that make of the Third Sector something identifiable includes particular areas as health, leisure, culture, sports, immigration, poverty, exclusion, or education. Indeed, the production, description, and interpretation of the *corpus* have certainly shown minimal concern with regard to the content-related aspects in the ways in which, for instance, (1) early childhood intervention is provided, (2) neighborhood festivities are carried out, (3) events for raising awareness on rare diseases and their consequences are conducted, or (4) trips for retired people are prepared and made. According to this perspective, it might be possible to think that what is actually made by TS entities is kept aside throughout the research process. Since the aforementioned fields, which have in common the fact that they are the fields of the unattended, occupy a marginal place in this study, it could be thought that the core features of the Third Sector have been missed.

12.1.1. The logics of participation in the Third Sector

Thus, it seems pertinent to reintroduce, after all this journey, the rationale that is at the basis of this apparently tangential approach. The emphasis on what is said and how it is said as a form of doing has provided the opportunity of conducting the analysis at a different layer than that of the thematic contents that characterize the field of TS activities. Instead of looking for a comprehensive treatment of those contents in what is done in TS entities, our approach is intended to find out the logic entailed in both sayings and doings in order to configure an intelligible depiction of it. In spite of not being complete, because the reconstruction of that logic is centered in the articulation between participation and the Third Sector, the resulting depiction has provided a frame in which what is at stake in that articulation, its conditions of possibility, and its effects are given shape and meaning. Participation, as something that is located and exists in the Third Sector, is enacted through a dense network of interwoven practices in which an immanent yet hardly apprehensible game takes place. In such game, different intentionalities are unfolded through action, reinforcing, interfering, or resisting one another. The specificity of the interdependence between the Third Sector and participation, which is by far a major part of the specificity of each of them, lies in the logic of that game. And that game is simultaneously the product of localized foci of power and a condition for its existence. Shifting the attention from thematic and content-

specific activities to the logic of the game has thus been our path for a better comprehension of the power phenomena inherent to the enactment of the articulation between participation and the Third Sector

The views that understand the preeminence given to what is said and how it is said as the opposite of taking into account what is actually done entail a dichotomy. Such dichotomy makes reference to a group of positions in major debates in the social sciences like those that are grandiloquently referred to as 'culture wars'. It is beyond the reaches of this research to elaborate on these debates. Nevertheless, their mention offers us the chance of making explicit our own position. Situations, as crossroads in which agency is exerted, are the product of intersubjectively coherent experiences. Sayings and doings, as meaningful, intelligible units, arise on the basis of such experiences, which, to a large extent, are raised in an immediate, apparently obvious sense of urgency or opportunity. Since that sense of urgency or opportunity purports an intentionality that is normally opaque for their agents, the reconstruction of that intentionality, of that logic, becomes necessary. Paying attention to sayings, as interpretable materials that lead to that reconstruction, is thus a pertinent path.

12.1.2. Order, organization, and politics

In our view, the specificity of the Third Sector as an area of social life with features of its own lies in the functioning and effects of its logical order. In turn, this logical order entails distinctive political and organizing forms, and those forms are deployed in the interstices and entrails of the Third Sector. The forms of organization, as organizing activity, but also as organizations in the sense of delimited entities produced by such activity, are conceived in a way that goes beyond the idea of management. These forms of organization include all those practices and devices the organic action of which brings that logical order to relationships and activities of undertakings in process of becoming TS entities, and assures the preservation of that order in already converted undertakings. Politics, inherent to the Third Sector's order, imply an analytic look to the links between the activity of TS entities, and the production and reproduction of the social systems in which those entities are inscribed. Politics, as an activity and as an effect, convey the fostering and development – inwards and outwards – of the features of a given social system that are compatible with the logical order in

which the Third Sector is founded. It may be true that this logical order is not exclusively introduced and unfolded through language. Nevertheless, if not exclusively, language is still responsible to a large extent of this introduction and unfolding because, at the least, it is the system through which that logical order is expressed. In consequence, the traceability of that logical order lies in their linguistic character.

These are our reasons for defining this research as an interpretative analysis of the languages of the political and organizing order that shapes the articulation between Third Sector and participation. A superficial look could regard this work as one in which the constitutive, even the constituting aspects of the Third Sector are neglected through what might be seen as a collection of lucubrating disquisitions. Notwithstanding, what the interpretative task carried out has provided is precisely the opposite. By systematically addressing the transversal enactment of the articulation between participation and the Third Sector, the interpretative approach has been a pertinent instrument for depicting the specificity of this area of social life well beyond the variety of thematic areas it assumes.

It has been our intention, disregarding how better or worst the results can be, to use a specific set of concepts (Foucault's perspective of power, Bourdieu's theoretical model of social practices, Brachrach and Baratz idea of nondecision, and Goffman language for frame analysis) as the basis for that interpretation. Far from looking for the establishment of correspondences between empirical features and concepts, or trying to describe those concepts by making reference to illustrative examples, our effort is defined by the attempt of taking advantage of those concepts as tools, as the lens through which the empirical analysis could be carried out in a generative manner.

12.2. Recalling the maps

In order to reconstruct the organizing and political order of the articulation between participation and the Third Sector, we have delineated three grand maps. Each of the maps entails a specific point of view of the same territory; a distinctive layer and scale for addressing different sides of the Third Sector's order according to its traceability. As maps, that is to say, as representations of spatial relations through time, their elaboration has been made on the basis of the location, distribution,

and displacements of the sets of practices that are significant for each of them. The economical map depicts the area in which the exchanges by which most activities of TS entities get to function as goods are performed. The physical map pictures the organizing functioning of TS entities in terms of the formalization of practices and relationships. The meteorological map draws the production, reproduction, and displacements of the cloud of meanings that shape the experience of being a TS entity and doing things as a TS entity. In order to take forward the results contained in each map, this section offers the conclusions derived from their main elements.

12.2.1. A niche in a gray, dynamic market

The Third Sector has growth in a niche of market and *vice versa*. The interdependence between the Third Sector and its niche of market has built the conditions for the necessity of the Third Sector as a whole. The niche of market is that of the necessity of counting with a particular interface. Through that interface, the local expressions of the everyday life can find a way into the locus of the fields to which issues of great concern belong. In order to find that way inside, the expressions of the daily life, which are given the status of raw materials, have to be processed. Many of the activities that Third Sector carries out exert this transformation, which is the reason why they acquire value. As a result of its interdependence with that niche and the value that many of its activities acquire, the functioning of the Third Sector gets attached to a particular kind of market.

This particular kind of market is defined by the bases or principles upon which value is given. Since most of those principles are connected by the value of having a say in public issues – the value of participation as the value of being an active citizen in the matters of the *polis* – this market can be regarded as a market of civic activities. In other words, TS entities, as interfaces, stand for the grassroots and pre-sectorial collective undertakings so that they have, somehow, access to decision arenas. As a market, the main roles that are interchangeably played in it are those of producer–provider, mediator–distributor, and user–consumer. The existence of competitors in and out the boundaries of the Third Sector, their changing strategies, and the currency of public issues make of this market a more o less dynamic one. Besides, as a competitor and, alternatively, a collaborator, the public administration is an unavoidable interlocutor for the Third

Sector. Regarding many civic activities, the public administration has acted as a wholesaler during the last decades, requiring of TS entities to assume the role of retailers. This makes of TS entities something relatively necessary as a whole, but individually prescindible. Nevertheless, this distribution of roles is changing by initiative of the public administration, which is currently seeking to assume the role of retailer as an attempt to gain the monopoly in the production and distribution of some civic goods.

The dynamic character of the market has as one of its most important effects the fluctuating, varied nature of the activities that function as goods, because the value they acquire when they are exchanged is far from being fixed. The TS activities that acquire value, that is, that function as goods that can be exchanged are not all directly valued according to their expected capability for reaching distant loci. In front of activities the value of which lies in their expected or actual capacity for having some influence in those distant loci (relation, inclusion, compliance, knowledge, and pressures), there are activities with an instrumental value (management and resource acquisition). The instrumental value of such activities is derived form their capability for creating or maintaining conditions required by the more substantive activities. And yet, there are activities that are valuated according to blurred principles that are neither substantial nor instrumental in an exclusive manner (recycling of remainings and institutionalization). The liminal character of the value this kind of activities receive is a key expression of the hybrid nature of needs that the Third Sector seeks to attend, because it shows the extent to which alien logics are introduced. The recycling of remainings of the everyday life those areas of life that the labor market cannot absorb is the most outstanding example of this blurred area in the market of civic goods. It is crucial because, as an unintended effect of the ways in which TS entities get the task force required for its functioning, it introduces an alien logic: the necessity of doing something productive with spare time. The provision of public services, which entails the conception of TS entities as an extension of the public administration, can also be located in this blurred category.

By finding a place into the market of civic activities, the Third Sector has expanded itself and constituted an incipient field. In spite of having little autonomy regarding other fields, the field of the Third Sector has progressively consolidated its specificity as provider of certain formalized activities of participation. The hybrid

nature of this market makes of TS entities managers of citizenship and extensions of the public administration. As interfaces that talk with the public administration, and as extensions of that administration, the market driven activities of TS entities tend to be performed according to the institutional nature of the gateways in which exchanges are made. Nevertheless, by keeping some gateways with the world of activities that are out of the institutional – collective undertakings and encounters with the grassroots –, TS entities preserve some forms of exchange and generation of civic value that restrain the formalization requirements of the official side of the market. The fact that boycott and sabotage, as activities that are often valuable by those who find them as forms of achieving some influence, is but a sample of this. Another relevant case that points toward the opposite direction of the instituted market is that of self-provision which is inherently a form of participation as self-management.

The market of civic activities is thus a shifting space because it is the object of pressures toward regulation and deregulation and the space in which different principles of value and modalities of exchange are conflictingly integrated. TS entities, through the harmonization of their organizational arrangements to the characteristics of that market, reflect those shifts and conflicts in their functioning.

12.2.2. Formalization: conforming hybrid spaces

Formalization is the never complete introduction of an organizing logic in the form of a generic ordering. The introduction is deployed by means of procedurization devices. Procedures become crucial as a distinctive feature of the Third Sector, because they function as the guaranty that each entity possess certain desirable properties like, for instance, being participative and efficient. Ultimately, procedures are the proof that a TS entity is serious. Seriousness carries with it a series of dichotomies: committed–not committed, organized–unorganized, professional–amateur, planned–improvised, grave–light, and reflective–spontaneous. As an expression of the proper thinking, seriousness and its dichotomies entail the performance of an attitude in which formalizing concerns are crucial. In doing so, it assures the reproduction of certain forms of organizational arrangements. When seriousness is experienced as a need, the dichotomies it carries foster the adaptive copying of available paths for action because that need has to be fulfilled with something.

The links between the proper thinking in which the contextual expressions of seriousness are founded and the practical concretions that formalizations introduce are arbitrary. The reasons for this arbitrariness are to be found in (1) the non-operationalizable character of the good-thinking things, the ambiguities of which are fulfilled and exhausted in their own contextual expression; and (2) the fact that the practical concretions that are finally introduced are determined by the existing offer, that is, by what is at hand. The arbitrariness of the link between the expressions of the proper thinking and the practical concretions is, nevertheless, hidden in the form of obvious, non debatable solutions, because these solutions seem to be naturally adequate. In the case of scarcities, for instance, TS entities often claim that there is a lack of means. But these claims are, to a large extent, unspecific, because they entail the expression of something that fits the context. Consequently, their imagined fulfillment is the outcome of the acquisition of resources that are at hand. The offer, which is determined by the gateways through which each entity interacts with other spaces, ends up defining the practical concretion of that ambiguous lack of means. It is not that this arbitrariness can be completely neglected, since there are moments in which the gap between the expressions of the proper thinking – the good-thinking things – and the practical concretions are particularly acute. Nevertheless, the experience of insufficiency these moment produce is confined to the narrow scope of the present, which is overflowed by the milestones of the past and the good wishes of the future.

Along with procedures, ICTs are one of the most relevant cases of available or offered paths for action. Detached from the well known claims about their virtues, the introduction and effective use of ICTs – their practical concretion – imply the introduction of a quasi-autonomous, almost self-referential logic of functioning. This alien logic acts as a standardizing device that enables mediated forms of interaction. These forms of interaction, with their aseptic, fragmented character, gain ground to more organic, face-to-face forms of interaction. As a result, the frames, contents, and developments of the whole forms of interaction in a given entity tend to reflect that generic ordering by which formalization is characterized.

The role of the apex, a rationalizing intentionality, is crucial for formalization. The apex, embodied by those deeply involved in the functioning of an entity, entails the hybrid logic that defines the Third Sector. In doing so, it exerts a taming and

domesticating function over those activities that are not compatible with the kind of activities that the interface is intended to produce. The action of the apex (1) aligns those forms of activity that lead to conflict and fragmentation; (2) contains the ones that are not malleable; (3) and processes the ones that, as raw materials, can eventually be transformed into more valuable forms. The apex functions in a way that settles the conditions for its own need. By introducing and sustaining the organizational arrangements that transform collective undertakings into TS entities – formalization –, the apex creates strong dependencies. Its embodiers, differentiated from the grassroots, acquire the kind of knowledge, skills, and relationships necessary for the functioning of TS entities in general, and for the right performance of typified activities, in particular.

The articulation between Third Sector and participation constitutes a hybrid interface. Its hybrid character lies in that the logic of its order is the always incomplete, yet operative product of the conflictive synthesis of other logics. Some of those logics are familiar to those engaged in the collective undertakings in which many TS entities are founded, while other are alien, in that they come from other places and its introduction is a necessary effect of formalization. The apparently obviousness of the resulting logic reveals its hybrid nature through (1) the ways in which objects are configured through collective encounters; (2) the mixture of alien and familiar forms of talk unfolded in conceptions and expressions; and (3) the places to which the gateways that are vital for the subsistence of TS entities lead. The hybrid logic of the Third Sector is pervasive in that it reaches the sense of a mission in TS entities. When this happens, those distinctive, locally rooted, familiar intentionalities are subjected to alien, generic intentionalities. This is why the hybrid logic deployed through the organizing activities of TS entities entails a confusion and, in extreme cases, an inversion of means and ends.

TS entities are thus hybrid spaces subjected to homogenizing pressures that shape their organizational arrangements and their reasons for being toward the enactment of divergent and even contradictory tendencies. On one hand, there are pressures that pull the functioning of TS entities back to the logic of the undertakings in which most of them were originally founded. On the other, the formalization of TS entities – the organizing side of institutionalization – settles the

conditions for the experience of needs with logics and directions other than those of the moments of pre-sectorial activity.

12.2.3. Participation and decision making: arrhythmic rituals

The hybrid interface created and sustained by TS activities can never get synchronized with the world in which it is inserted. This is so, because the locus of the fields in which the issues that TS entities intend to address belong is out and far of their reaches. Something similar occurs with regard to the grassroots. The multiple spaces for instituted, typified activities of participation enabled by the public administration, as a wholesaler of civic activities, are a particularly relevant case of this arrhythmia. The moments in which such spaces are celebrated, their frequency, and their scope pose important exigencies for TS entities. Their representatives, usually part of the core, are expected to take part in a myriad of fragmented, narrow spaces for participation. As the response capabilities of TS entities cannot cope with these exigencies, because they are many and go too fast, representatives end up exhausted.

Participation and decision making in TS entities are preferred targets of formalization, which is to say that formalization is particularly acrid on them. The gap between their expression as good-thinking things and their practical concretion end up in the illusion of their fulfillment through their ritualized enactment. Once participation and decision making are given the form of relevant issues, they start being deliberately pursued as desirable attributes. When this happens, participation and decision making are enacted in the form of encounters that take place as non-ordinary events. Such encounters are performed on the basis of scripts, the density of which is proportional to the predictability of the encounters. Attempts to overcome the performance of such scripts are managed by embodiers of the apex, who act as stewards of these procedural versions of participation and decision making.

The illusion of the fulfillment of participation and decision making lies in their double-sided performance, composed by generic expressions and practical concretions. Each side entails sayings and doings of their own. On one hand, practical concretions – the performance of the scripts – introduce an organizing order. Such order provides an explicitly facilitating, yet tacitly constraining set of devices in which (1) the non-decidable issues – those with a far locus – are kept

aside or minimized; (2) activities that include no decisions at all are regarded as decision making; and (3) innocuous or irrelevant decisions are given an aura of importance. On the other hand, generic expressions allow the stewards of the non-ordinary events through which participation and decision making are performed to elaborate narrations. Such narrations are made in a way that, in consonance with the proper thinking, assures the illusion of fulfillment. In other words, while alternative versions on what happen on those non-ordinary events could be made, the dominant accounts tend to confirm their success.

Considerable areas of TS activity, particularly non-ordinary encounters, are inundated by expressions of the proper thinking. As ambiguous, diffuse formulations on which everybody agrees, good-thinking things disable the conditions in which debates can take place. The situations in which the contexts for the deployment of the proper thinking can be staged are those of collective encounters. In the case of TS entities these encounters usually take place in the form of non-ordinary events unfolded through typified activities with dense scripts. According to its aligning, containing, and shaping functions, the apex takes advantage of the debate-disabling effects of the proper thinking by establishing a frame in which certain acute issues are rendered undiscussable. When interventions of the audience introduce other frames, particularly those in which conversational objects are configured in a modality of discussion, the apex reacts. Through its embodiers, the apex displaces the narrative threads of the conversation to restart the non-debate modality. By amending script-breaking interventions through the expression of good-thinking things that, by definition, are incontestable in their contexts, the apex assures that a specific ordering is reestablished.

The wide presence of debates in TS entities are thus the mischievous result of the ways in which collective encounters devoted to participation and decision making are narrated. In contrast, at least in those collective spaces, the scope of spaces for arguing remains narrow, because the conditions of possibility for dialogic situations to arise can hardly be met in those settings. The arrhythmia of those encounters regarding the loci in which issues of their interest are located, the performance of dense scripts, and the expressions of the proper thinking assure a public homogeneity of positions and in those extreme cases in which divergence cannot be digested, discussions are turned into uncompromising confrontations.

12.2.4. Re-engaging layers: breakthroughs and re-invigoration

There are some terms like participation, legitimacy, debates, efficacy, efficiency and volunteering that constitute ineluctable references when speaking of the Third Sector. As nodes in a network of meanings in use, those terms can be transversally found across the different looks entailed in each map. According to their uses, the meanings of those terms make reference to (1) wide, interpretable principles of value that are mentionable and debatable in practically every context, (2) non debatable, good-thinking things the expression of which is strongly dependent on the context; and (3) practical concretions that entail the imagined achievement of the good wishes to which they are arbitrarily attached.

At the beginning of the presentation of results, we insisted in that those maps were more than formal devices intended to organize the information in an accessible manner, because they are used by agents involved as means for establishing routes and previsions. By emphasizing the transversal character of the terms that are crucial for the Third Sector, we are also emphasizing how they are differentiated according to the layers addressed by each map. In this sense, the maps are a reconstruction in which differences among images and conceptions engaged in the activities of TS entities are preserved while being rendered intelligible. This clarification finds its pertinence in that the logic of the organizing order specific to the Third Sector, its functioning, and its subsequent effects lies to some extent, in the differentiation of the layers at which those images and conceptions are located. By making explicit that differentiation, in what cannot be more than an undoubtedly open and debatable manner, we seek to open a space for discussing on the nature and the implications of the logical order in which it is founded. Such a discussion might provide a way for the consideration of the possibility of alternatives to that logical order.

The ways through which Third Sector is made intelligible and its location in the world make of it a space of paradoxes and contradictions. As interstitial, hybrid spaces, TS entities are sustained under contradictory pressures. On one hand, they have to transform the raw materials provided by the grassroots into activities that are compatible with those of the instituted world. On the other, they have to avoid the point of complete self-reference in their organizational arrangements. In other words, the hybrid logic of TS entities enables a perspective in which an

unstable balance between organizational robotization and barbarities is always pursued. The overwhelming yet never complete engulfing of the sense of a mission by the practical concretions of formalization and its arbitrary links with the icons of the proper thinking settle the ground for the conflictive experience of dissatisfaction and insufficiency. The present, narrow as it is, remains as the place in which the discomfort derived from this unstable balanced can be experienced. In that experience of uneasiness lies the potential for transformation of this area of social life.

The containing and assimilating function that the logics of the Third Sector exert over the grassroots and pre-sectorial collective undertakings can thus provide a living laboratory for producing forms of knowledge and acquiring skills that go in directions other than those of the contention and assimilation. In order for this to happen, unpleasant experiences and ruptures have to configure alternative narrative threads that, collectively followed, can eventually lead to that disenchantment with formalization, procedures, and institutions.

12.3. Three emergency lines

Disenchantment is thus crucial for taking TS activities somewhere else. At the end of this journey, we would like to propose some directions through which this disenchantment can be reached. These directions are presented as emergency lines not because they have to be called in limit situations, but because they intend to recover the idea of the emergent as opposed to the instituted.

12.3.1. Power relations: Toward a de-articulation of its functioning

TS entities have peculiar conceptions and images of the plexus of pressures their activities and relations are interwoven with. The peculiarity of those conceptions lies in the idea that power, often seen as a bad thing that has bad effects, is something generically located out and far. These conceptions entail considerable oversimplifications by: (1) addressing power as something that is possessed and consumed; (2) understanding its use and consumption as an individual activity; (3) disregarding other forms of pressure – whether restrictive or productive – to power relations; and (4) conceiving the exercise of power as a unidirectional phenomenon. Of course, this is not to say that every single agent involved in TS entities hold this kind of conceptions. In fact, more complex conceptions and images of power can be found in, for instance, conversations during some

interpersonal encounters in which those agents take a part or in ideas included in written productions of such agents. The significance of oversimplified conceptions of power lies in that they are collectively held. In front of the more complex versions of power that in terms of circulation and discussion tend to be located in the sphere of the private, oversimplified conceptions of power are constantly reproduced in key activities of TS entities as, for instance, non-ordinary events. What occurs here is that the organizational arrangements resulting from formalization inherently sustain the discourse in which these conceptions are rooted.

Oversimplified images and conceptions have thus to be questioned, which is to say that, power, as an object, has to be configured in a modality of debate. In order for this configuration to occur, interventions that complexify this object, that dilute their previously well-defined boundaries and properties have to introduce their own narrative threads in the unfolding of collective activities. Only through this sort of backward objectification the gaps among the functioning of power relations and their conception can become a never ending are of discussion. The task is difficult but crucial. It requires a constant, conflictive, complexification of the ways in which agents involved collectively understand how power operates in their own settings – which pressures are exerted, how they are exerted, and with which consequences. The collective complexification of power entails the creation of openings toward the de-articulation of the functioning of power relations. Those openings imply, among other things, the recognition of the forms of compliance of agents themselves with that functioning, and the unavoidable need for alternative paths.

12.3.2. Participation beyond the Stockholm syndrome

The articulation between participation and the Third Sector have its axis in the formalization of collective undertakings, that is, in the introduction of organizational arrangements based on standards and procedures. As an outcome of the process of formalization, the practical concretions of participation get attached to the performance of procedures and the use of ICTs. The attachment is so strong that participation and the Third Sector get to be identified with a right performance of the right guidelines and steps. Procedures and ICTs, explicitly address as facilitators, have considerable constraining effects the tacit character of which

makes them extremely hard to grasp. Formalization blossoms in the fascination with which participation sees procedures and ICTs. And that fascination obscures the fact that participation has been kidnapped by the objects of its affection.

Participation has thus to be taken beyond that Stockholm syndrome. In order to overcome that state of delusion, collective undertakings require dealing with the uncertainties that dialogic situations convey. Prescriptions may not have a place here, since they are one of the sources of the enchantment. But still there are some observations that might be useful for framing the contexts into a modality of debate. Regarding procedures and ICTs, as suspicious tools that cannot be entirely put aside and yet cannot substitute the uncertain, time-consuming character of the dialogic might be a good departure point. Assuming the indispensable need of the everyday forms of talk, as the form of talk of the praxis *par excellence* is also a god reminder. Participation is not a matter of degrees. It is not about a continuum that starts with receiving information and ends with self-management. Participation is about how objects are collectively configured and which consequences are derived from those configurations. Collective undertakings have to go back to the objects, collective activities have to turn objects into areas of controversy in which unpredictable, temporary conclusions can led agents involved to emergent forms of activity.

12.3.3. Getting undertakings out of the Third Sector

The specificity of the Third Sector is trapped in its hybrid nature and its subsidiary identity. In terms of their functioning, TS entities, as formalized collective undertakings, cannot expand their narrow present. Though never complete, formalization pushes them toward the instituted, and for TS entities, the instituted is a dead end, because it neutralizes the potential of collective undertakings for becoming spaces in which the articulation between debate and action can be enabled. In terms of their relations with the Public and the Private Sectors, TS entities as a whole are relatively necessary but dependent. Moreover, their being necessary, as an expression of their hybrid logic, is moving toward a situation in which their role as interfaces for citizenship is more and more secondary with regard to their role as extensions of the public administration.

The experience of uneasiness that the narrow present enables can of course lead agents involved to other forms of collective action, but these forms can hardly find

a place in the Third Sector, at least not in a conception that understand the conformation of a TS entity – in the form of an association, a foundation, or any other – as the uttermost point in the 'evolution' of a collective undertaking. Expectations have to be taken out of the Third Sector. Collective undertakings and participation, as dialogic engagements, have to be released from the Third Sector, even in terms of the ways in which agents involved conceived the future of the undertaking. In order to keep their feet on their grounds and their voices in their territories, collective undertakings have to abandon the apparently comfortable, yet precarious and demanding camp Third Sector is, in the same way that the so called 'underdeveloped countries' should abandon the Third World so that they can start being in the world.

12.4. Understanding the emergent

These three emergency lines lead us to consider some directions for further research. Briefly described, those directions would find their links in the interest of addressing organizing phenomena that while being close to the area of activity the Third Sector is, somehow escape to the hybrid logic that characterizes it. Such directions could be focused in the identification and study of cases that constitute anomalies, in the sense that the development of the collective undertakings entailed in those cases follows divergent paths. Whether the divergent character of those paths is clearly salient or subtle, they would offer us the opportunity of looking for the specific features, the conditions of possibility, the development, the reaches, and the consequences of the emergent. In our approach to these divergent cases, anomalies would not be addressed as spaces that are free of power phenomena, but as forms of practices the inherent power relations of which point toward new places. In this view, specific areas of inquiry when addressing such cases could include:

(1) The conformation of spaces for arguing, the conditions in which the dialogic situations they convey arise, the ways in which they are unfolded, and the forms of action they enable.

(2) The specificities in the configuration of the relation between the apex and its embodiers, particularly regarding the processes by which certain agents become the embodiers of the apex, and the effects of the position, trajectory, knowledge,

and skills of those agents in the logics and unfolding of the rationalizing intentionality.

(3) The place of the social imaginary – that cloud of systems of meanings – in the images and conceptions through which agents, situations and actions are understood and given shape.

(4) The ways in which the debate-disabling effects of the expressions of the proper thinking are deployed and treated in those settings, and the conditions under which that treatment occurs.

(5) The specific features of the organizational arrangements by which activities are carried out and the forms of relation they enable, in a view that seeks to describe and analyze them in their own terms, and not according to the degree to which the characteristics traditionally associated to an organization are absent.

(6) The specific processes by which crucial objects are configured (conditions, sequences, ordering, and consequences), from the expression of complaints and uneasiness to the elaboration of critics, proposals, and paths for action.

(7) The ways in which agents are configured in those specific processes, the oscillations of objects between the private and the public spheres, and the ramifications and confluences by which one object can be unfolded into several and *vice versa*.

In our view, these areas of inquiry offer interesting openings toward the development of forms of intelligibility of a territory of social life. The relevance of that territory lies in that it points toward the edges of the instituted and the phenomena that are inherent to those edges.

12.5. The gates, the cage, and the outside

The interstitial character and the hybrid logic of the articulation between Third Sector and participation is rooted its proximity with the Public and the Private Sectors. On one hand, this proximity exists in terms of identity, because the conception of the Third Sector is only possible by making reference to the other sectors. On the other hand, the proximity exists in functional terms, because of the gateways that are crucial for the subsistence of TS entities communicates these entities with entities of the other two sectors in an imbalanced, dependent relation. This work has offered a wide picture of the multiple implications and

consequences this proximity has. TS entities, as a differentiated area of social life, find their distinctive features in their position between the grassroots and collective undertakings on one side, and the Public and Private Sectors on the other.

To put it in other words, Third Sector is that space between the daily life, with all its harshness and potential, and the iron cage of the bureaucratic functioning, with their enabling, yet constraining rationalizations. Through the interpretative analysis of some of the practices by which participation is enacted in that interstitial space, we have depicted the reaches that the shadow of that iron cage has, along with the areas it still cannot reach and the irruption of precarious bonfires. Now is time to take a careful, curious look at what happens in those shadow-free areas and in the places in which bonfires are lit.

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Appendix 1. Guidelines and documents for gaining access to Third Sector organizations

1a. Guide for establishing contact through phone calls

Al llamar:

- Saludo y presentación de quien hace la llamada.
- Explicación del proyecto y de la petición:

El motivo de la llamada es solicitar una entrevista con alguno de los miembros de su asociación para pedir su colaboración en un proyecto de investigación.

El objetivo del proyecto consiste en identificar y analizar aquellos aspectos que inciden en los procesos de participación en organizaciones del tercer sector, como base para la construcción de un marco explicativo del tema. Esta investigación, que actualmente lleva a cabo un equipo de profesores-investigadores del Departament de Psicologia Social de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, dará lugar a una tesis doctoral.

Por organizaciones del tercer sector, queremos hacer referencia a aquellas que, sin pertenecer a la administración pública, no tienen fines de lucro y trabajan en ámbitos tan diversos como la promoción del desarrollo, la atención a colectivos desprotegidos, las aficiones comunes, los colegios de profesionales, la acción social, etc.

La pregunta central de la investigación es ¿qué se hace para poner la participación en práctica en las organizaciones del tercer sector?

El trabajo de recogida de datos consiste en la realización de una serie de entrevistas a integrantes de diversas organizaciones del tercer sector que posean una visión global de aquellas de las que forman parte. Mediante las entrevistas se pretende obtener información, a partir del punto de vista de los actores implicados, sobre las actividades, las características y el funcionamiento cotidiano de este tipo de organizaciones, tarea imprescindible para poder contextualizar el trabajo a realizar en las siguientes fases de la investigación.

Respecto a las organizaciones que accedan a realizar la entrevista, es importante señalar que toda información sensible será tratada con estricta confidencialidad y que el equipo que conduce la investigación se compromete a retornar los resultados del proyecto que puedan resultar útiles o interesantes para su asociación.

- Pedir datos del contacto en la organización.
- Fijar, si es posible, una cita para la primer entrevista.
- Dejar datos de contacto del investigador.
- Agradecer atención y reiterar el interés en contar con su colaboración.

1b. Model of letter for requesting access to organizations

Bellaterra, [fecha]

Estimado/a [nombre],

Desearíamos solicitar la colaboración de [nombre de la organización] con la investigación que conduce Miguel Sahagún, profesor y doctorando del Departament de Psicologia Social. El tema de la investigación es la participación en organizaciones del tercer sector. El trabajo tiene como propósito analizar las situaciones en las tienen lugar las distintas formas de la participación (asambleas, reuniones de trabajo, informes,

consultas, debates, etcétera). Para ello, es necesario que el investigador pueda acceder a dichas situaciones, tomar nota de lo que ocurre y, eventualmente, hablar con las personas implicadas para conocer sus opiniones y puntos de vista.

El periodo para el cual les pedimos facilitar el acceso a dichas situaciones a Miguel Sahagún va de [periodo]. Con el fin de presentarnos personalmente le solicitaríamos una primera entrevista para explicarle con mayor detalle el tipo de trabajo a realizar y poder establecer de forma conjunta las condiciones a seguir. El carácter confidencial y la discreción en el trato de la información recabada puede darse por supuesto, ya que tan sólo tendrán acceso a ella quienes participan en el proyecto de investigación.

Igualmente nos gustaría concretar con ustedes la forma y cantidad de devolución de resultados que deseen, de manera que nuestro trabajo les resulte lo más útil posible.

Esperando contar con su colaboración, le saluda cordialmente,

Director del Departament de Psicologia Social

Appendix 2. Interpretative patterns (set-up analysis)

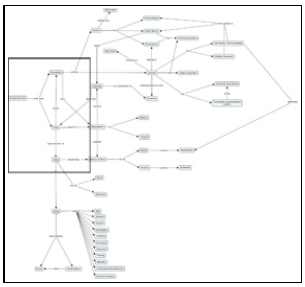
- Whether successful or not, the efforts of Third Sector organizations are normally intended to exert influence over those that can act upon issues of interest. Nevertheless, these organization do not act directly over such issues.
- There is a persistent lack of time in Third Sector organizations that can be seen in those constant exigencies for being operative and avoid delays. This lack of time is due to (1) the *de facto* deadlines imposed by the pace of events to which these organizations react; and (2) the time required for discussions and debates.
- Encounters in which people that is not part of the core of the Third Sector organizations is involved are characterized by a constant necessity of starting from the beginning. This is due to the lack of a regular involvement from the part of those less involved agents. It is as if the generic subjectivity produced by the functioning of these organization were always under construction.
- Effective participation seems to occupy a minor, residual place due to the apathy of potentially concerned agents and the restrictions impose by the functioning of Third Sector organizations.
- It seems that the functioning of Third Sector organizations entails some form of confusion between means and ends. This is particularly noticeable when certain concerns and activities regarding the promotion of good practices, the need for mechanisms that can assure internal democracy, the development of diagnostic processes, and the introduction of certain formulas for performing debate and reflexion become more important than the issues these organizations are supposed to address.

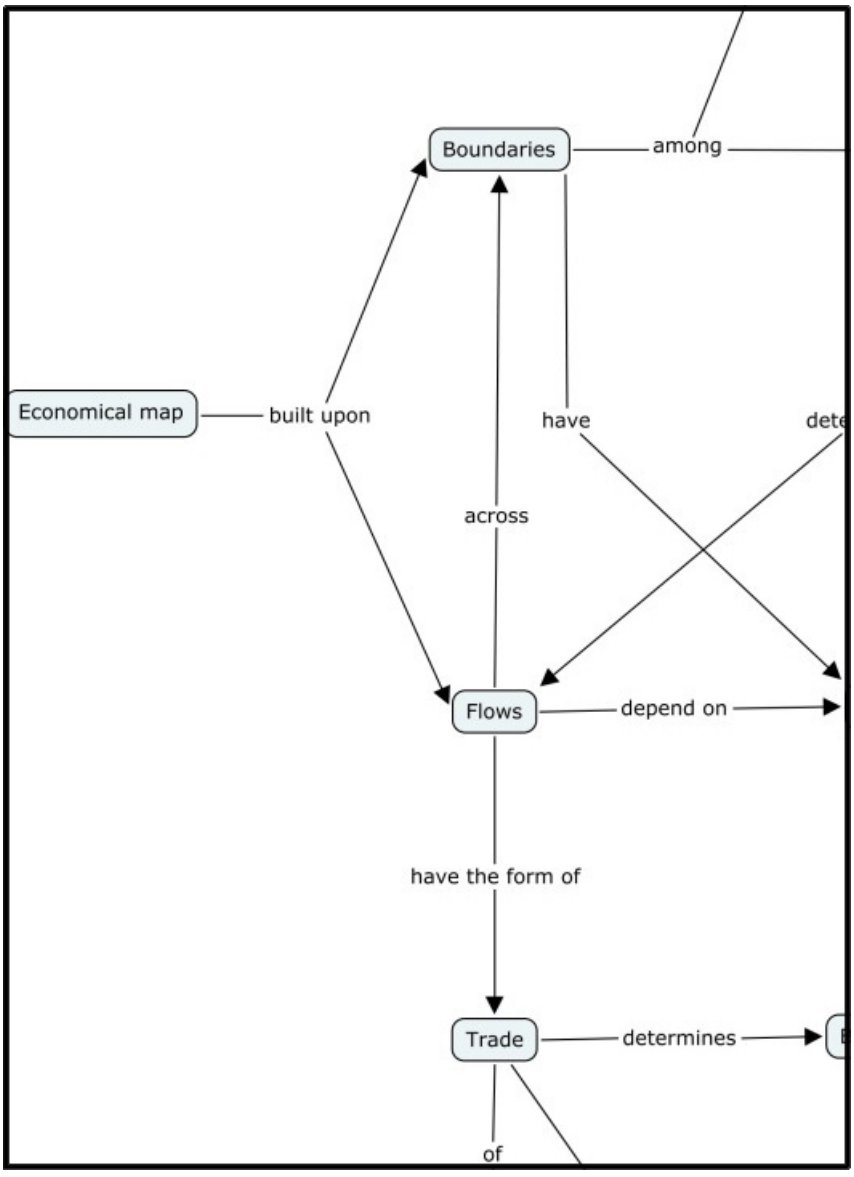
- Collective discussions and debates seem to be the product of the ways in which events are told and necessities are justified. It is a if the those narrations and justifications had a life of their own and were almost independent of the things they are supposed to describe.
- The outcomes of participatory encounters such as assemblies seem to be very predictable. This predictability seems to be an effect of the ways in which these encounters are organized and performed. Unpredictable outcomes are thus possible only by breaking that organization. The more organized and prescribed an encounter is, the less those breaks are likely to appear.
- The relations of the Third Sector with the Public and the Private Sectors are defined by a restrictive facilitation. The most easily identifiable form of this restrictive facilitation is that of the aids the Third Sector requires. In order to be able to receive support, Third Sector organizations have to act according to certain requisites and guidelines.
- Participatory encounters, as special events, can adopt different forms according to the spatial disposition of the people involved in them. Spatial dispositions, which in general terms are circular or frontal, serve as marks of the system of positions that is going to be 'activated' in each encounter.
- Regarding decision making, activities in Third Sector organizations are normally performed by a few, highly involved members and then, somehow, are supported or ratified by the rest of the members. This settles the conditions for turning many issues into things that cannot be discussed because many members, whether for lack of knowledge or lack o time, cannot take a part in those discussions.
- Information and communication technologies are another case of restrictive facilitations. By offering the possibility of extending the scope of channels through which members of Third Sector organizations can interact, the way these technologies are used transforms the manner in which issues are debated and discussed, imposing a tendency toward a more superficial consideration.

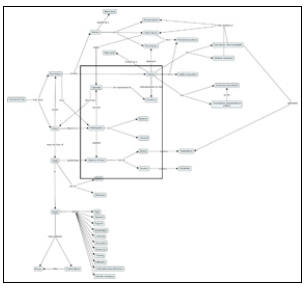
- The confusion between means and ends, which is regarded to the functioning of Third Sector organizations seems to be linked to the learning processes that take place in those settings. Those learning processes change their focus from the specific issues of interest to the formal procedures and arrangements that characterize any organization.
- In Third Sector organizations, the links between the making of decisions and the occurrence of nondecisions seem to be close to an operation in which, under the idea that decisions are being made, concerned agents only change the names given to the issues that are being discussed.
- Legitimation and de-legitimation of interventions in participatory encounters seem to be regarded to the level of involvement of those that make the interventions. Some interventions are de-authorized when the authors of the interventions are asked to take responsibility for the implementation of the things they are proposing. As many agents are not willing to assume that responsibility, their interventions are kept aside.

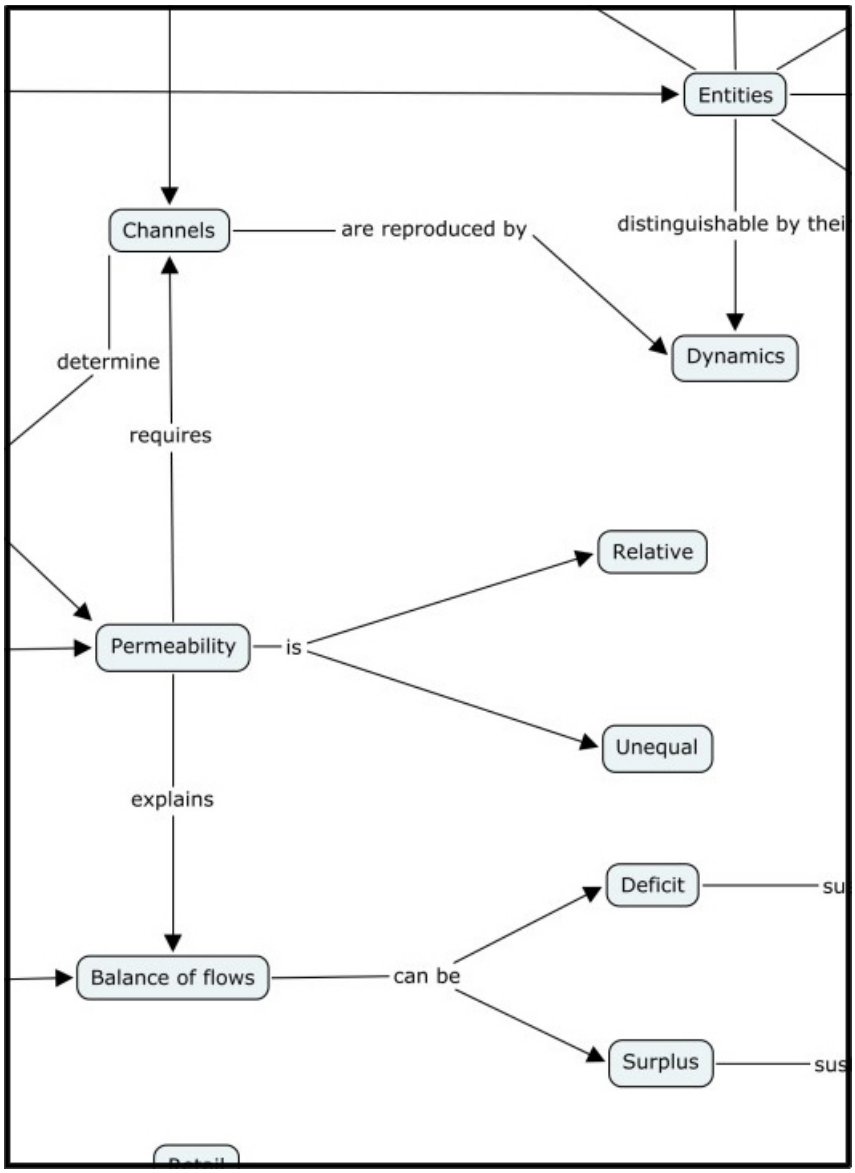
Appendix 3. Conceptual maps (set-up analysis)

3a. Map of exchanges





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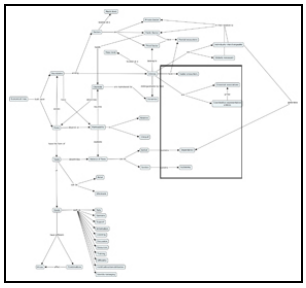

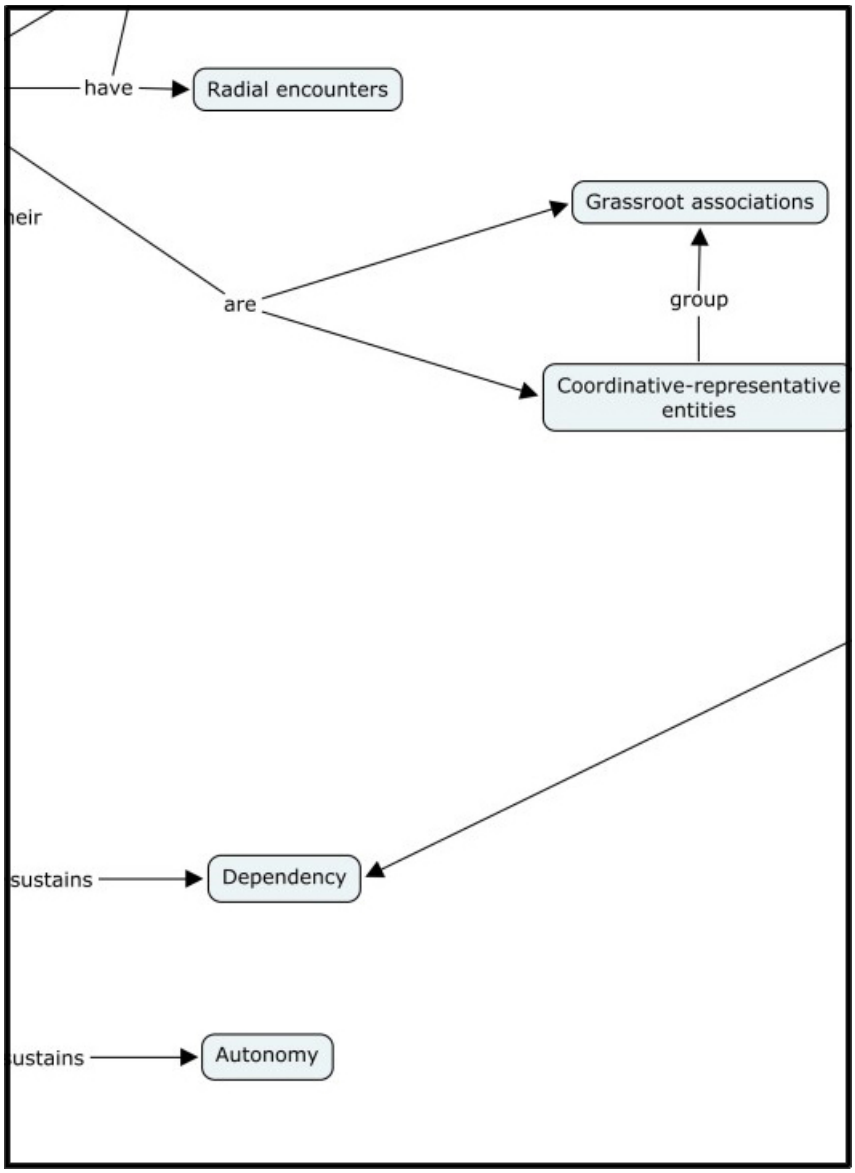
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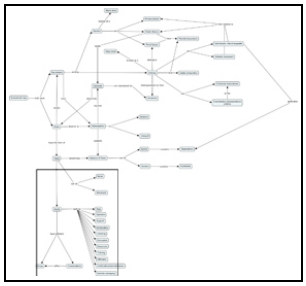

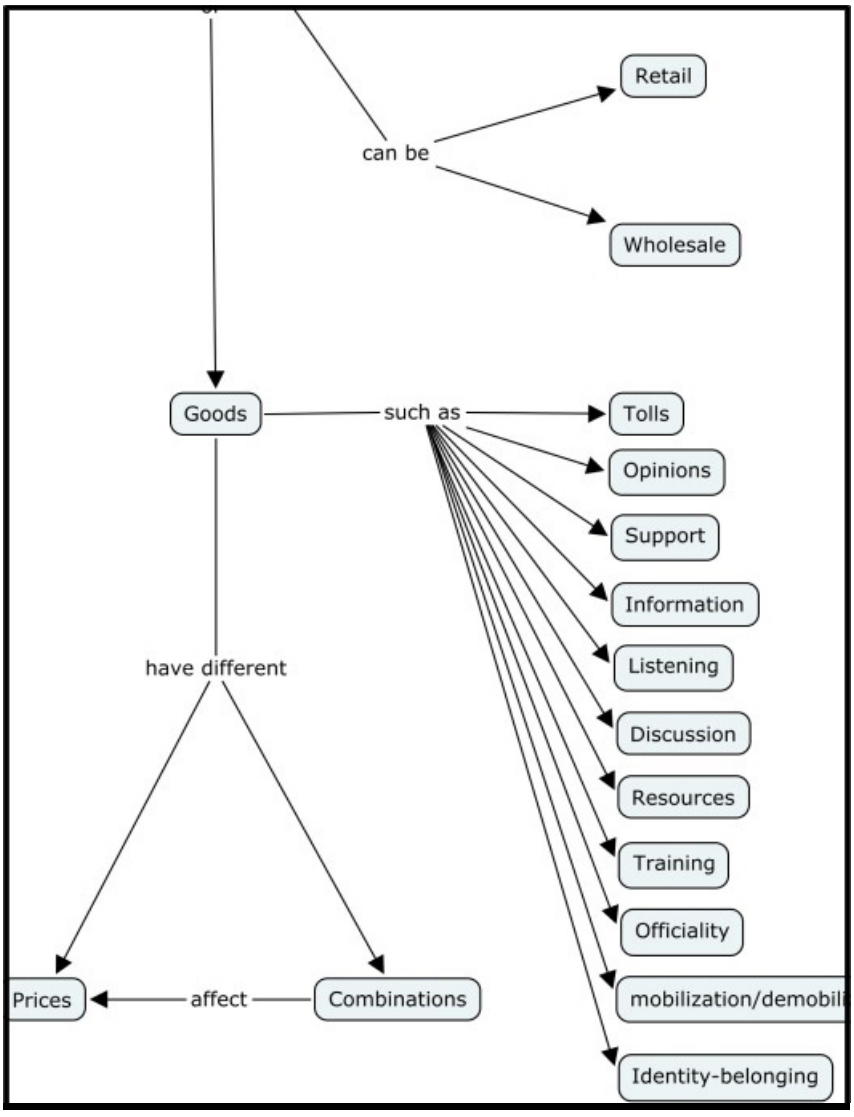
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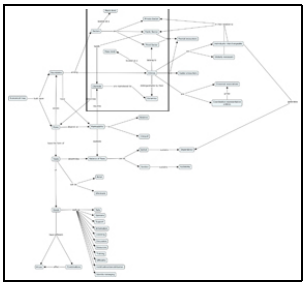
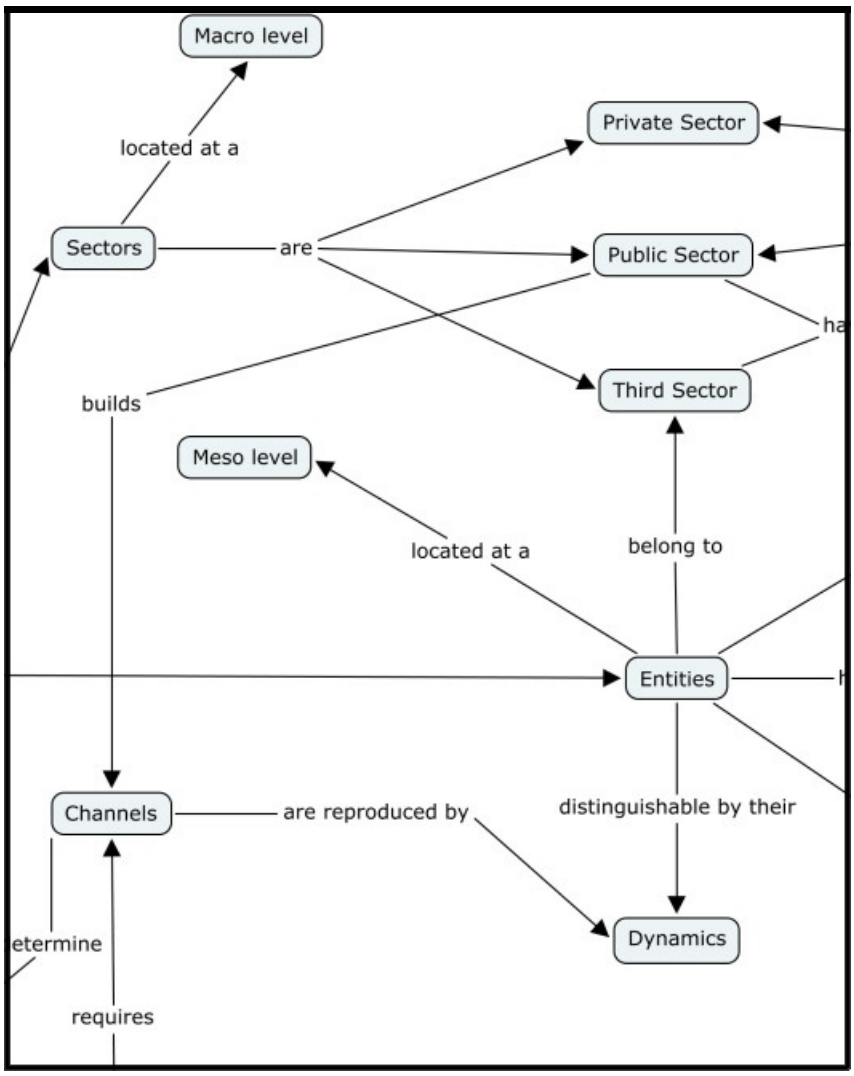
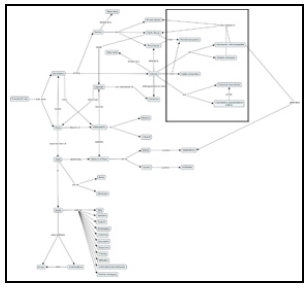
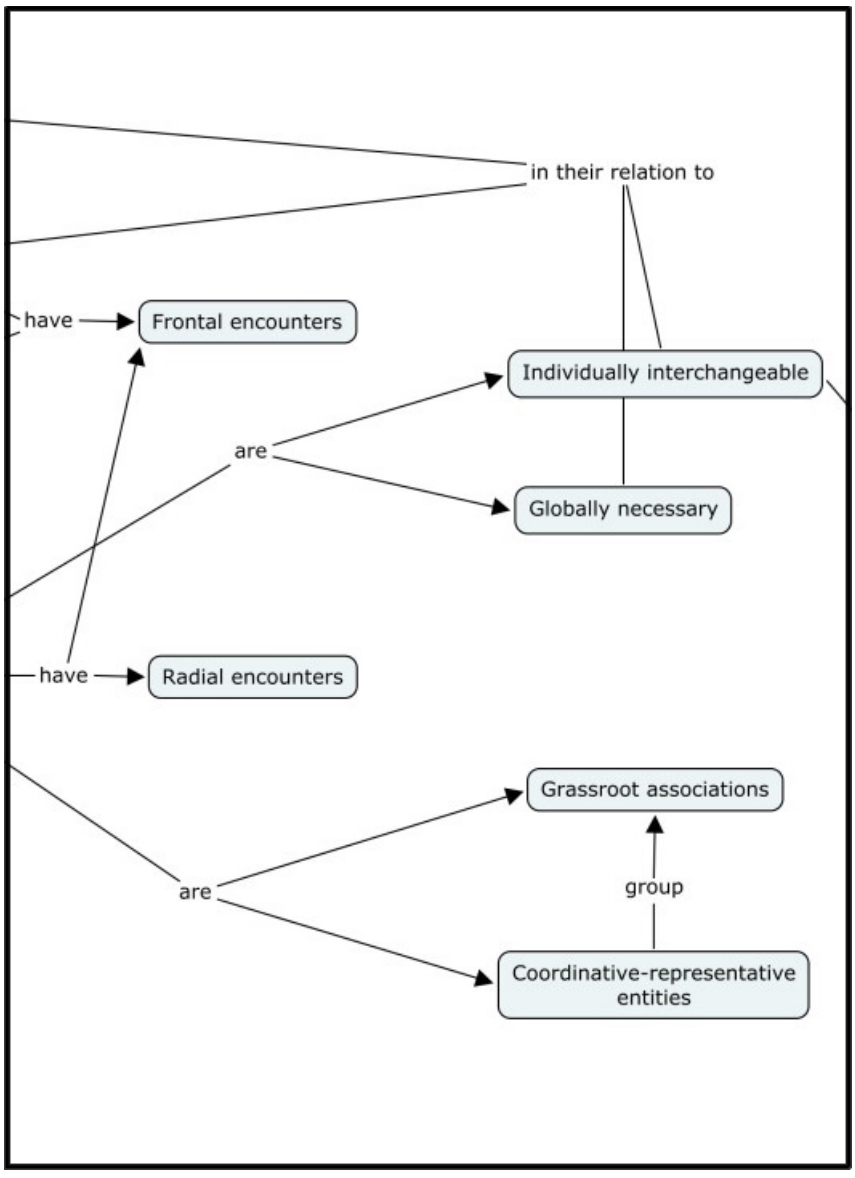
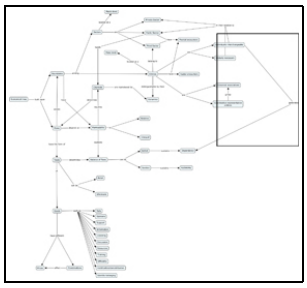
Identity-belonging

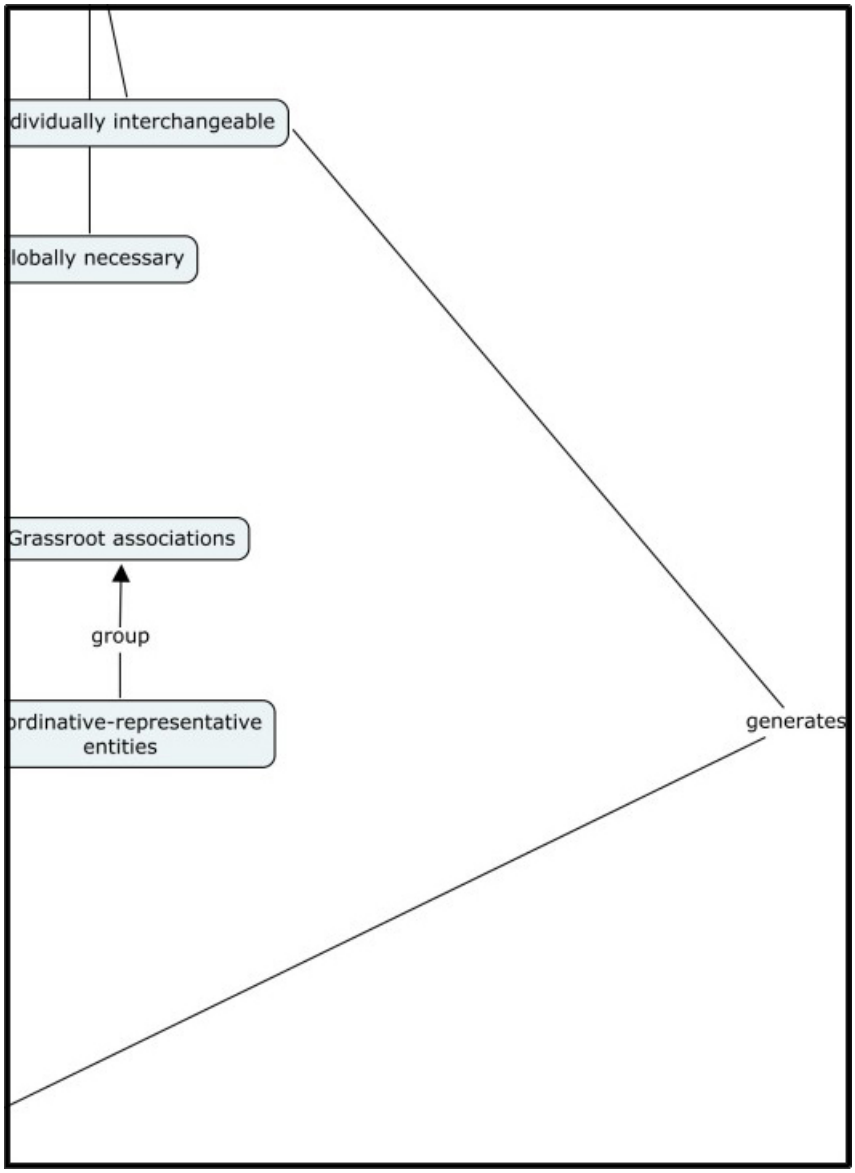



Macro level
located at a
Private Sector
Sectors
are
Public Sector
ha
builds
Third Sector
Meso level
located at a
belong to
Entities
Channels
are reproduced by
distinguishable by their
Dynamics
etermine
requires

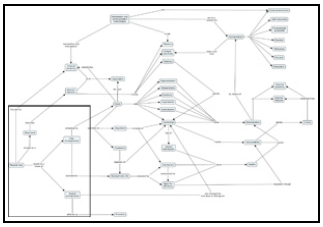


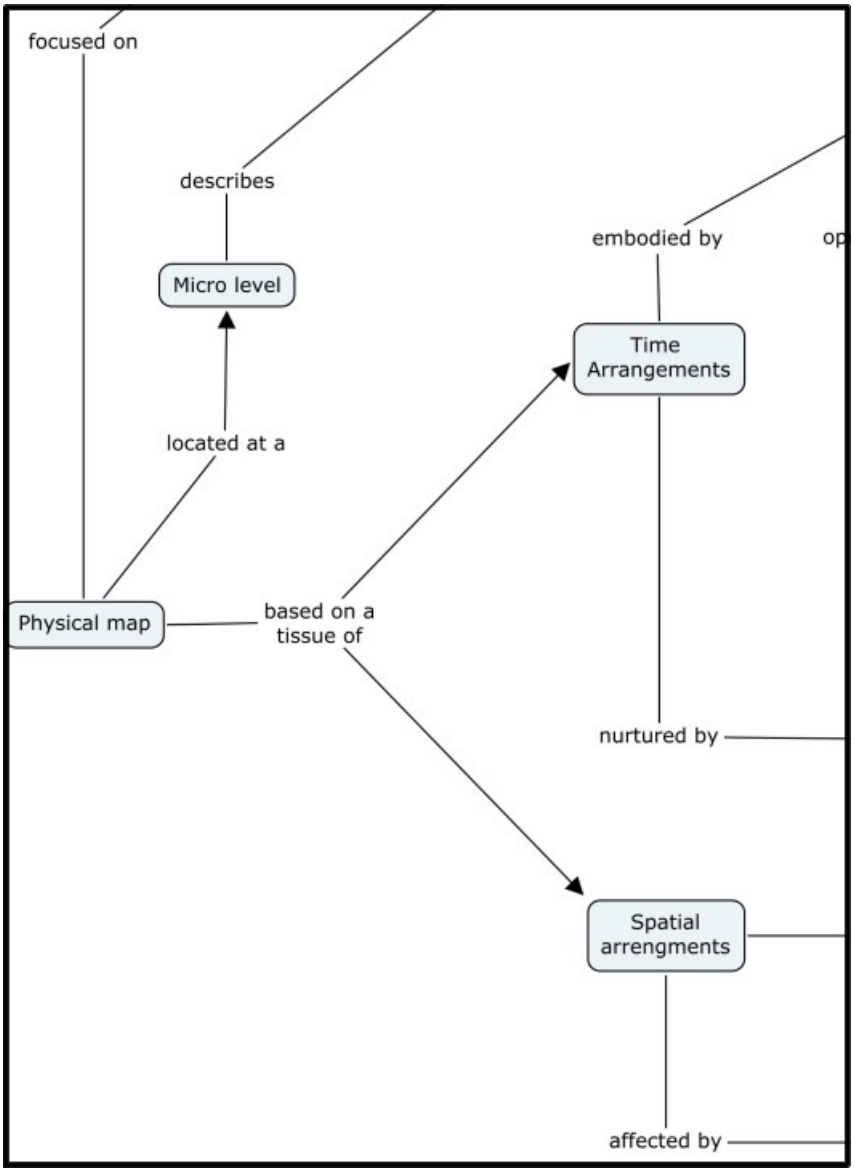

in their relation to
have
Frontal encounters
Individually interchangeable
are
Globally necessary
have
Radial encounters
Grassroot associations
are
group
Coordinative-representative entities

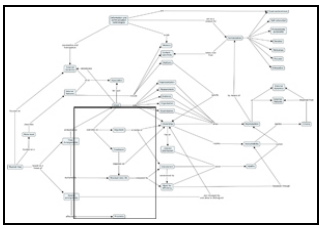


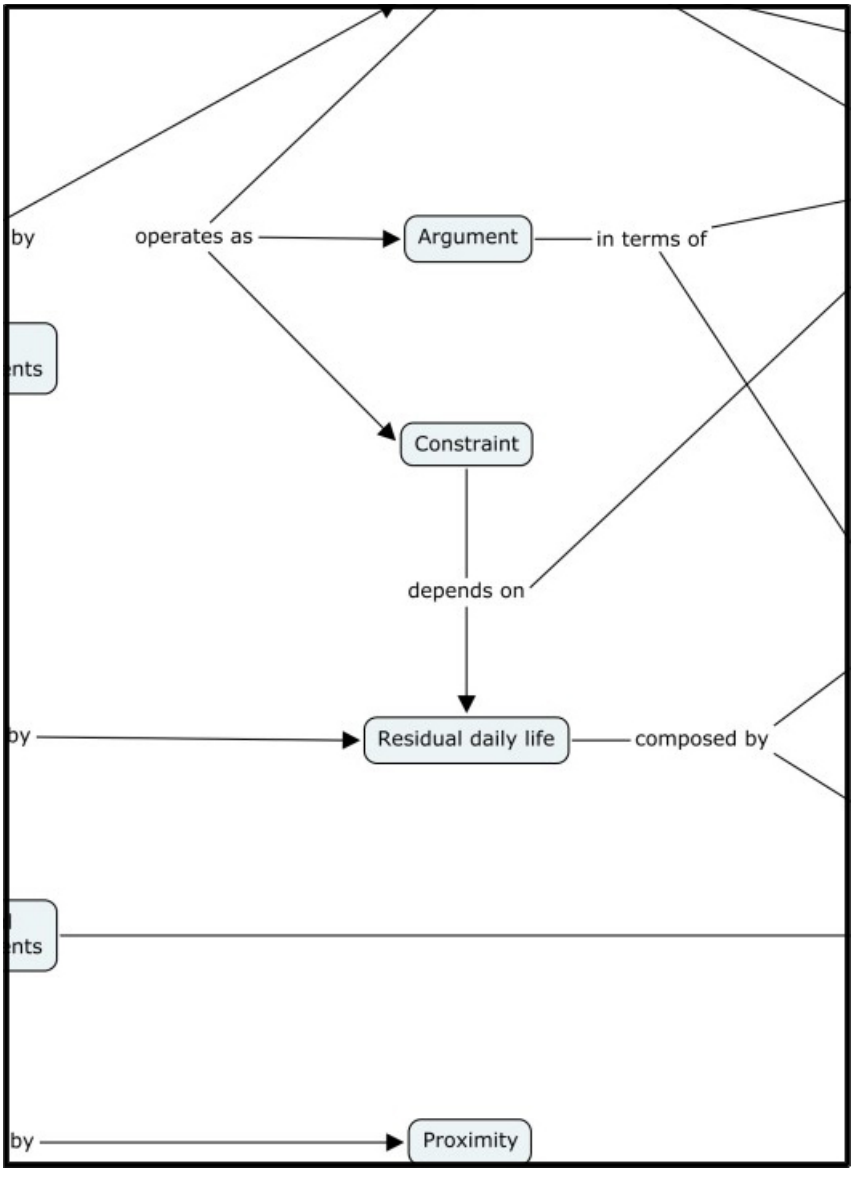

dividually interchangeable
lobally necessary
Grassroot associations
group
rdinative-representative entities
generates

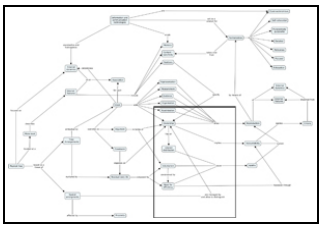
3b. Map of organizational arrangements

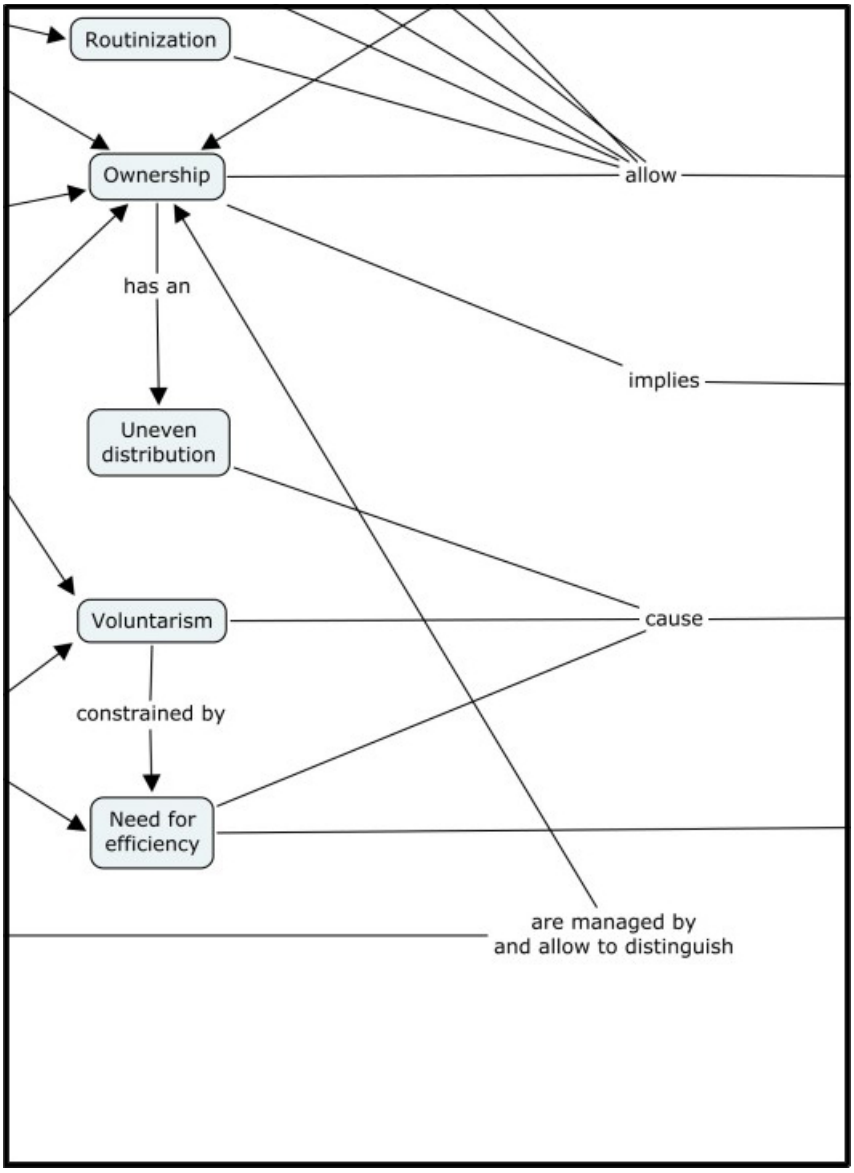


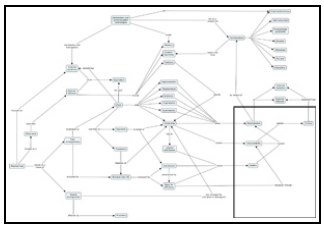


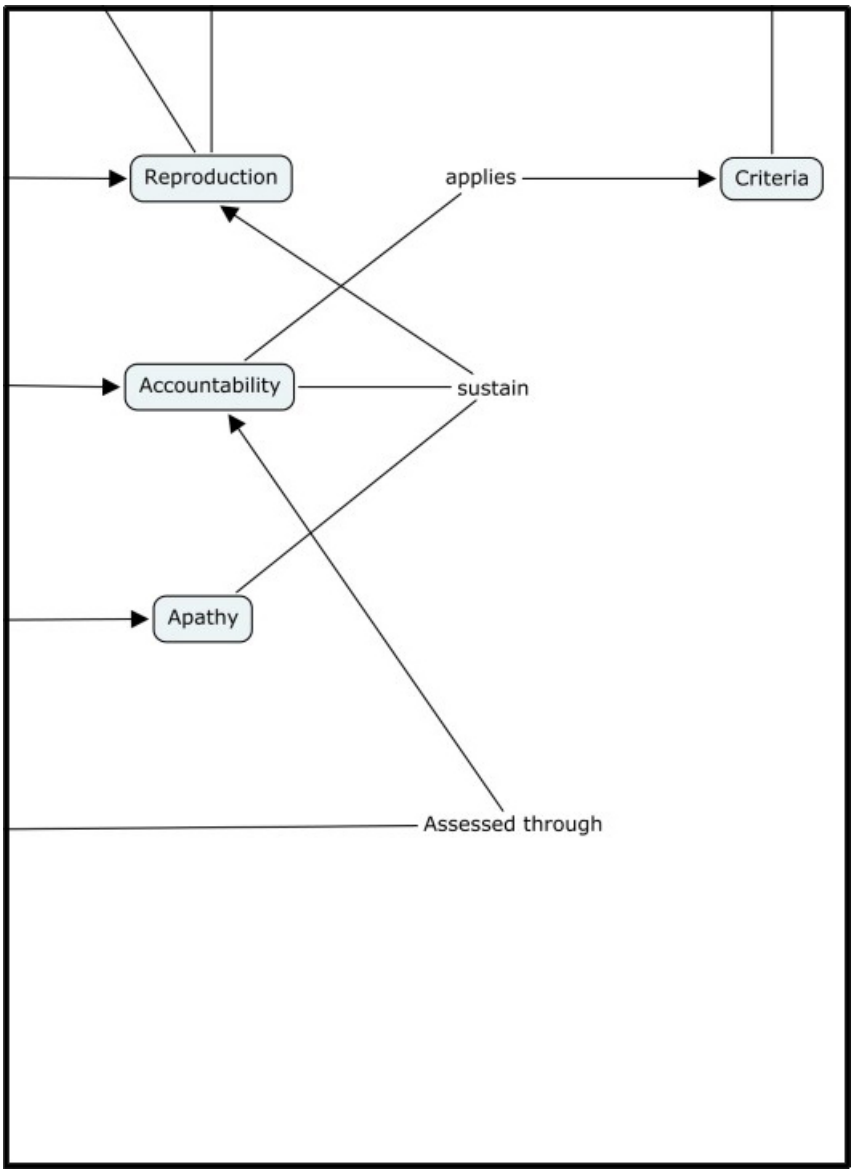


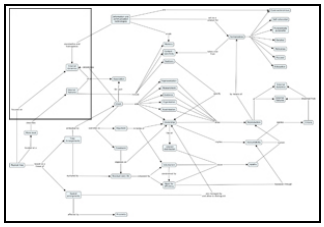

by
operates as
Argument
in terms of
nts
Constraint
depends on
by
Residual daily life
composed by
nts
by
Proximity

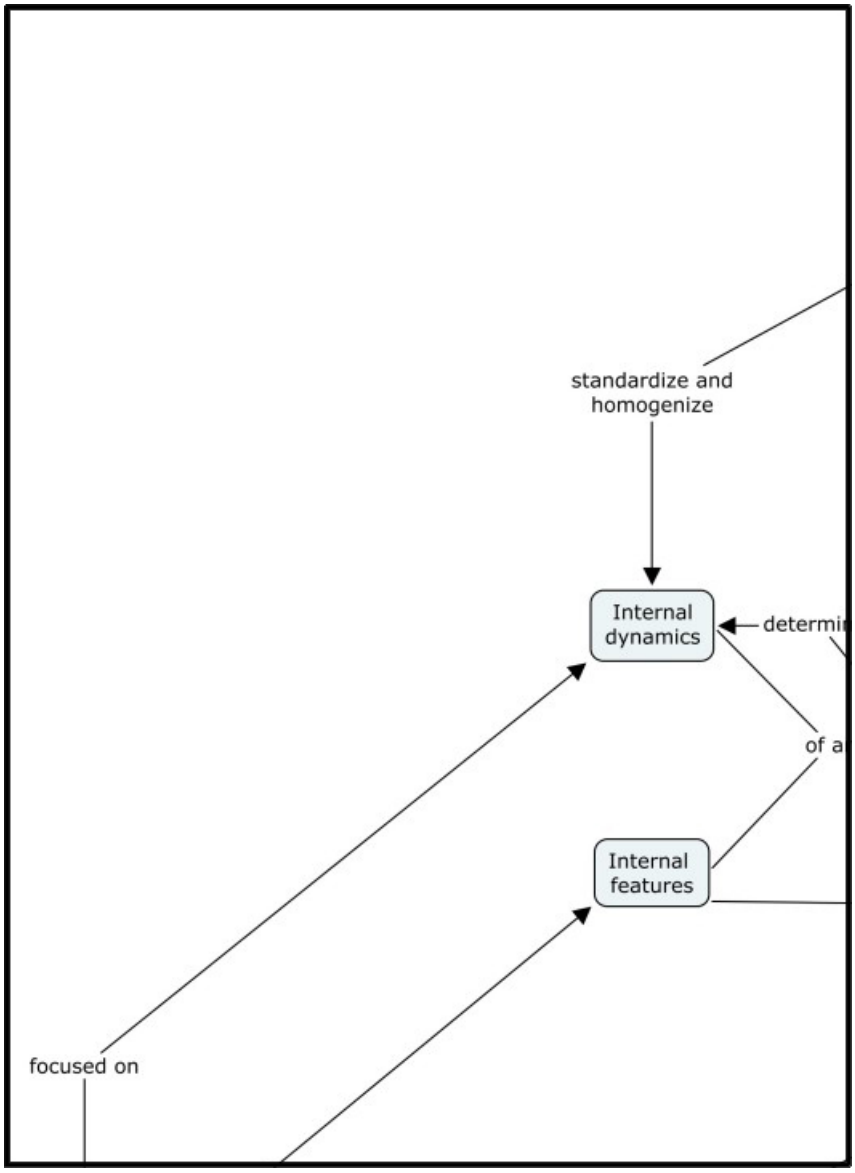


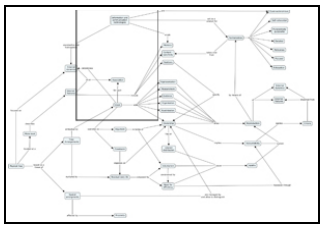

Routinization
Ownership
allow
has an
implies
Uneven distribution
Voluntarism
cause
constrained by
Need for efficiency
are managed by and allow to distinguish

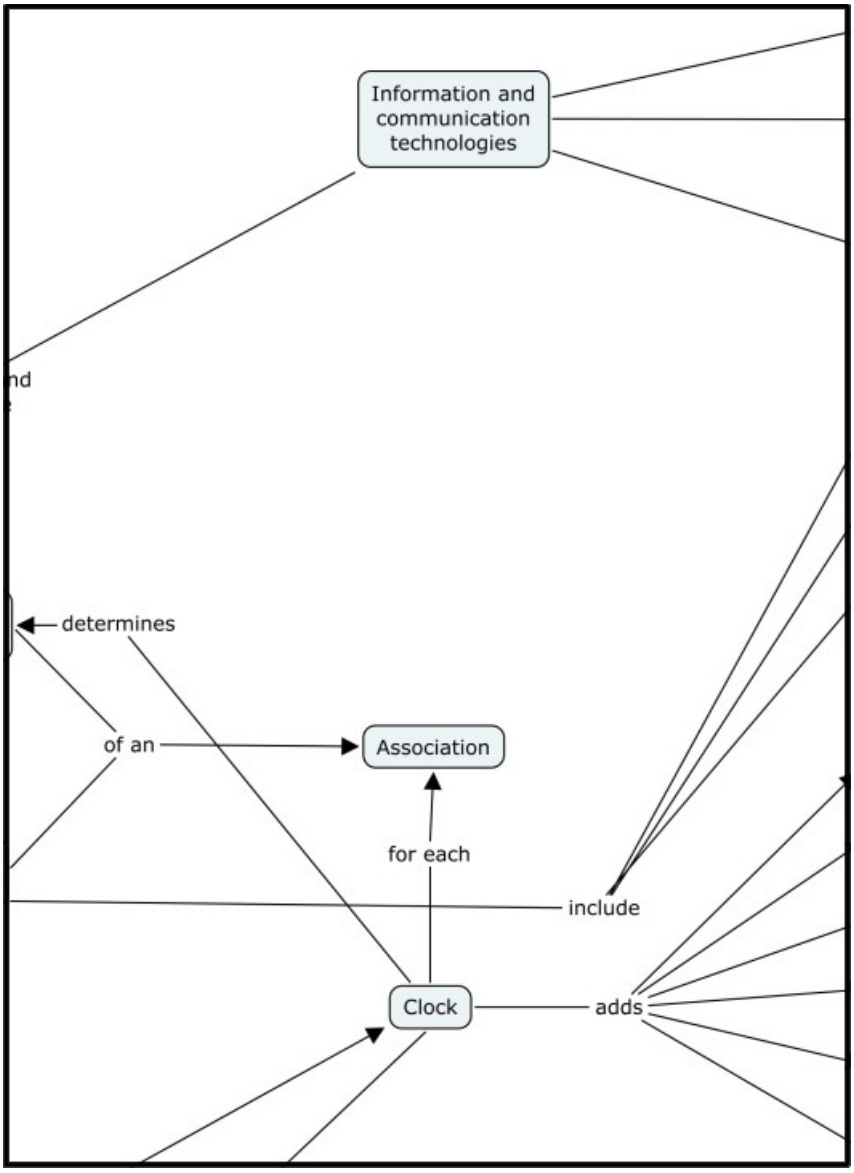


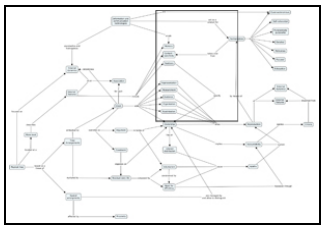

Reproduction
applies
Criteria
Accountability
sustain
Apathy
Assessed through

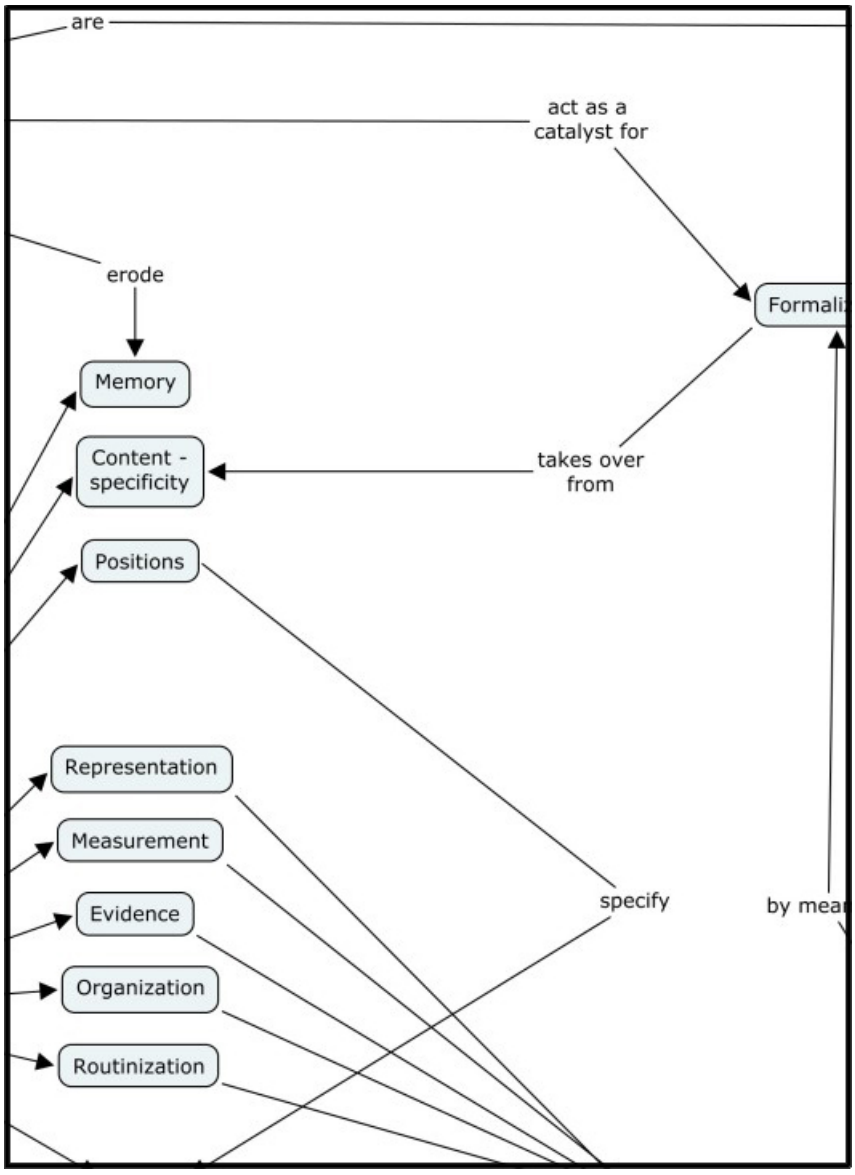


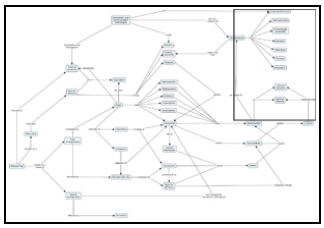

standardize and
homogenize
Internal
dynamics
determi
of a
Internal
features
focused on

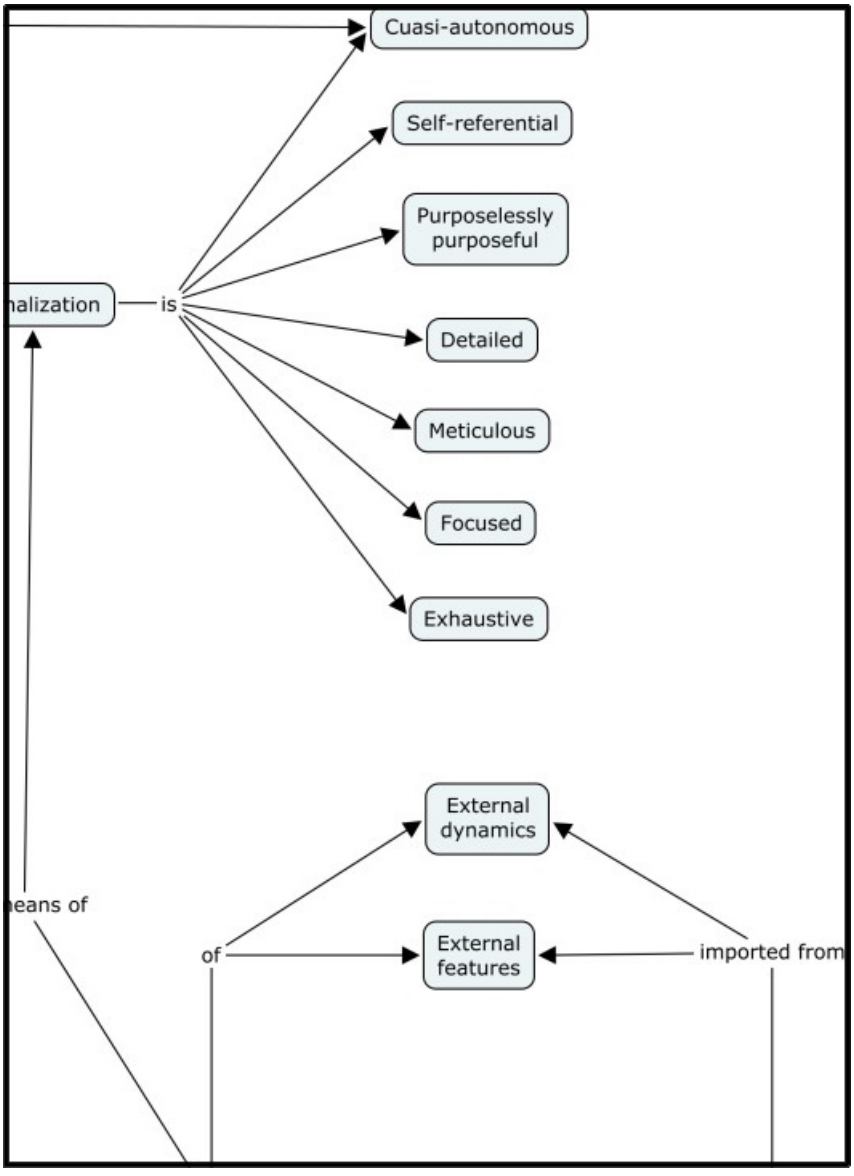



Information and communication technologies
nd
determines
of an
Association
for each
include
Clock
adds

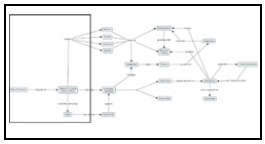


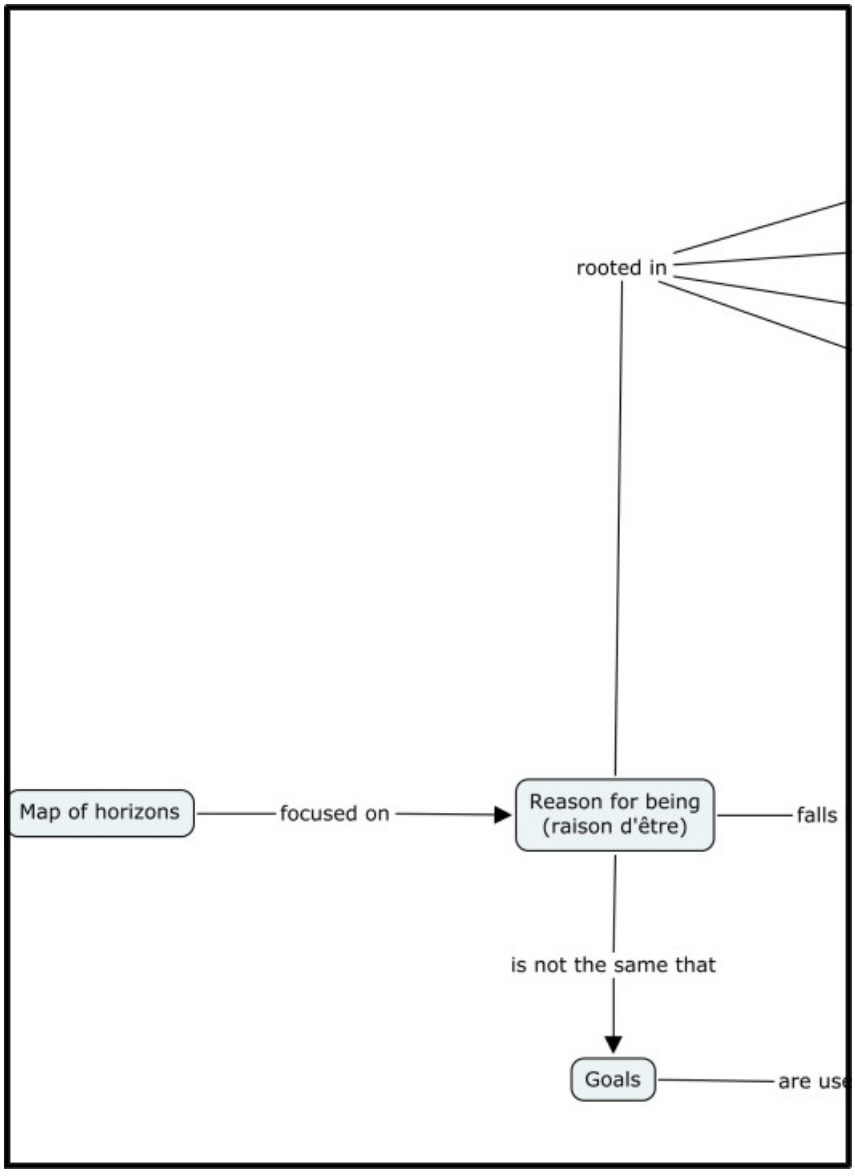

are
act as a catalyst for
erode
Formali
Memory
Content - specificity
takes over from
Positions
Representation
Measurement
Evidence
Organization
Routinization
specify
by mea

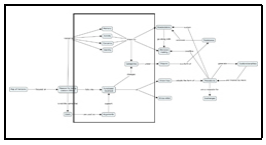


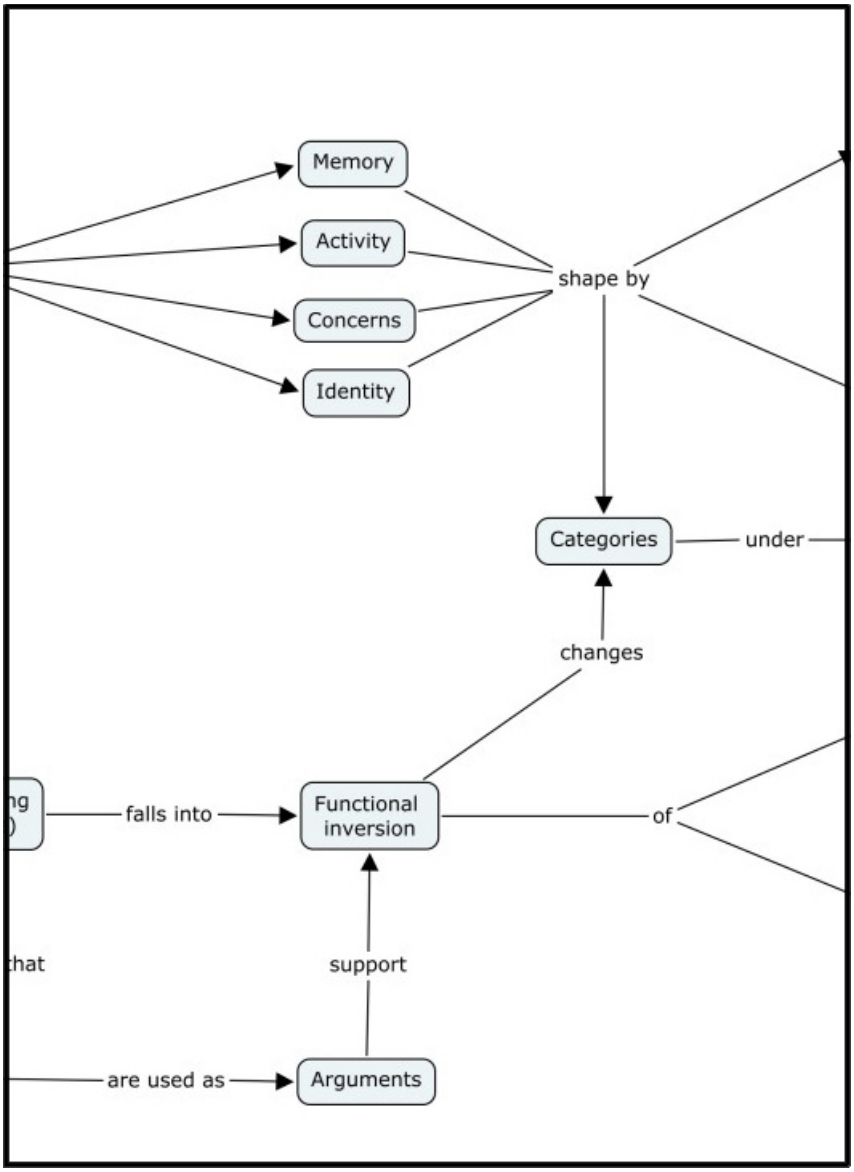

Cuasi-autonomous
Self-referential
Purposelessly purposeful
nalization
is
Detailed
Meticulous
Focused
Exhaustive
External dynamics
eans of
of
External features
imported from

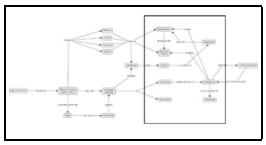
3c. Map of expectations

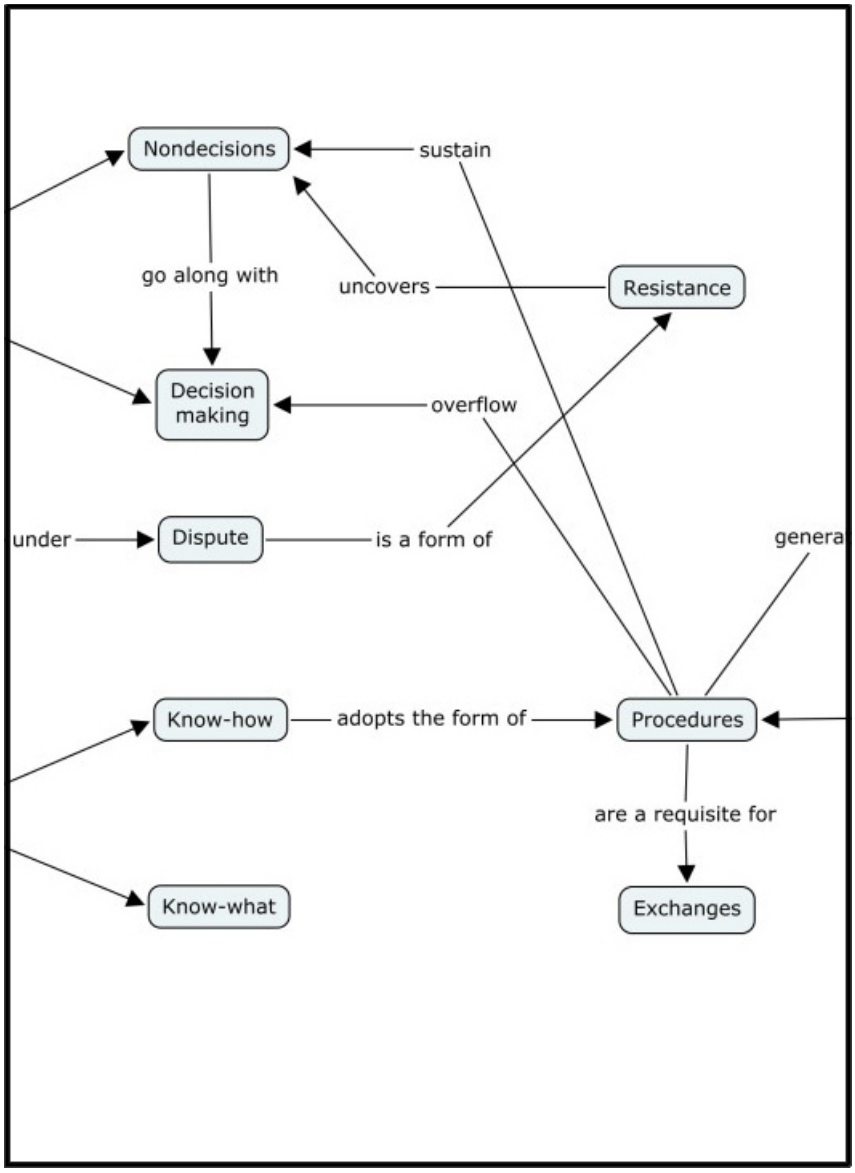


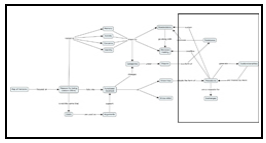


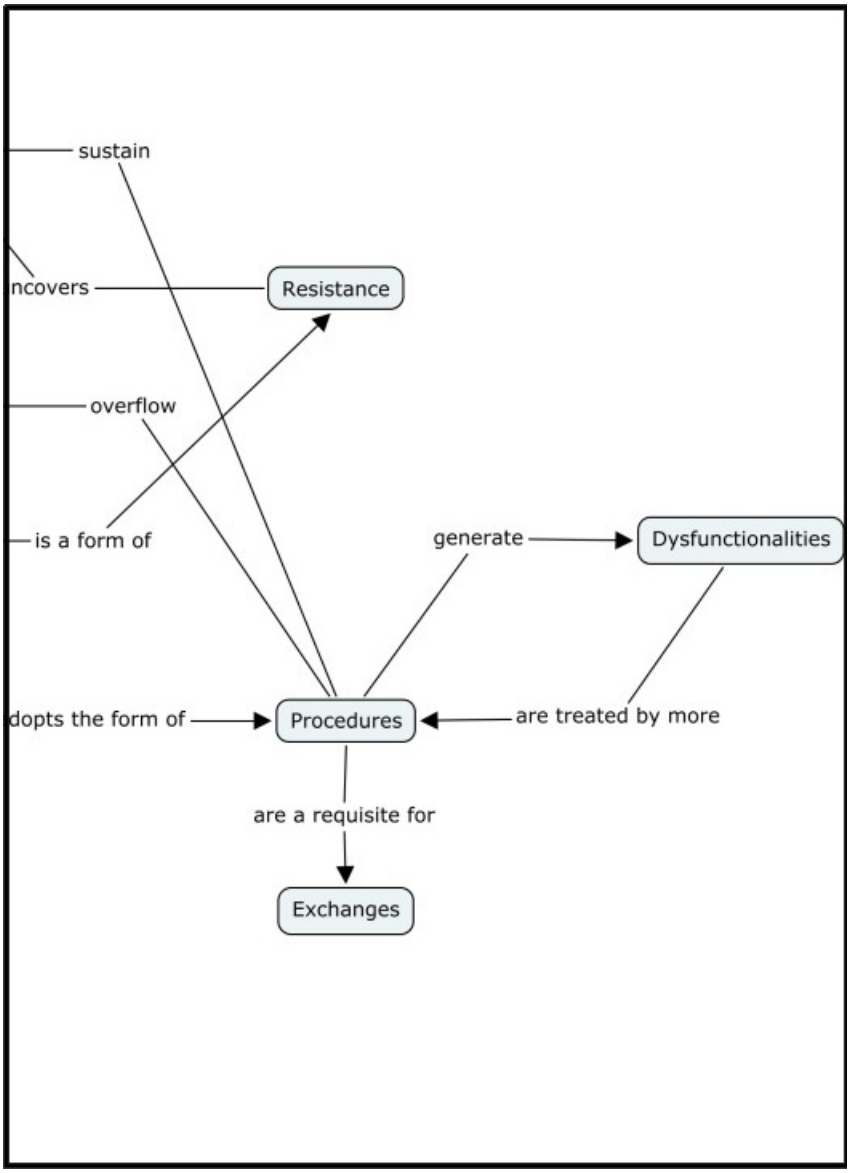



Memory
Activity
Concerns
Identity
shape by
Categories
under
changes
falls into
Functional inversion
of
support
are used as
Arguments



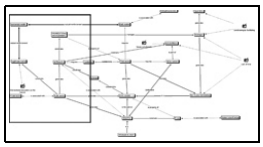

Nondecisions
sustain
go along with
uncovers
Resistance
Decision making
overflow
under
Dispute
is a form of
genera
Know-how
adopts the form of
Procedures
are a requisite for
Know-what
Exchanges

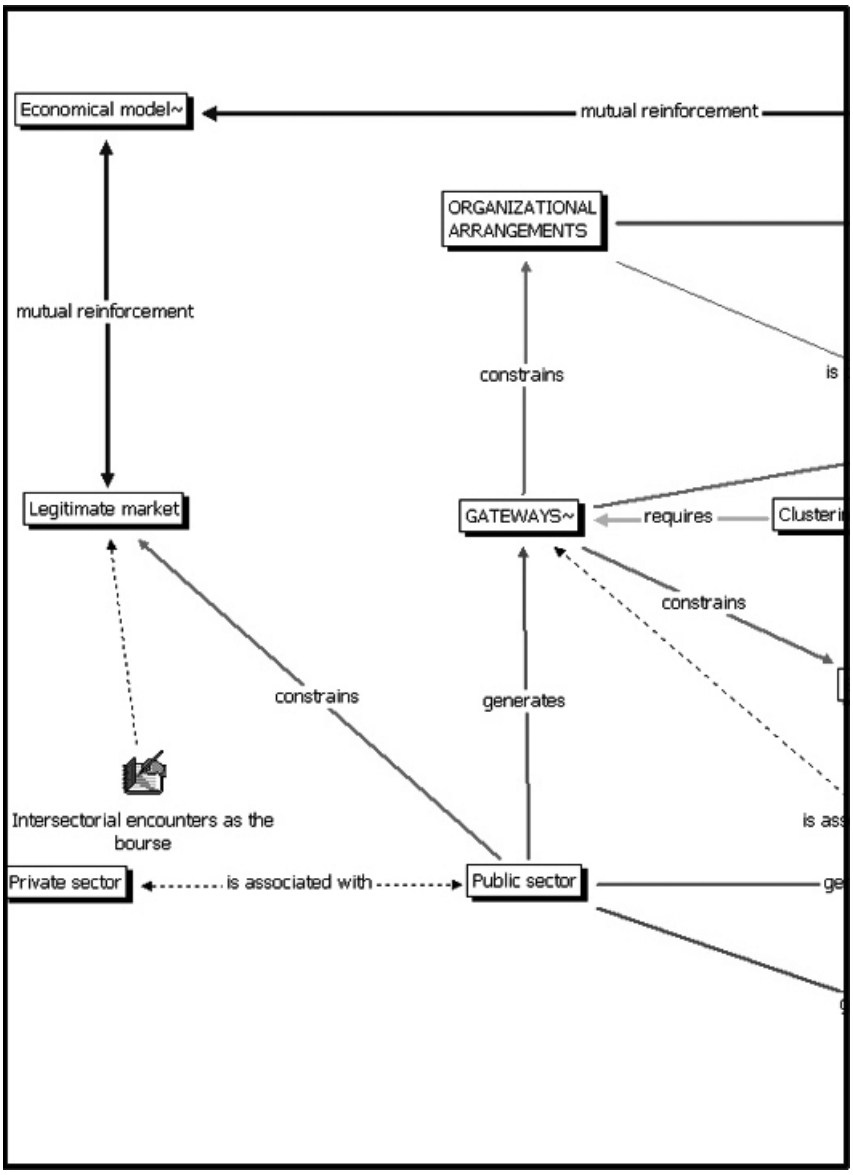


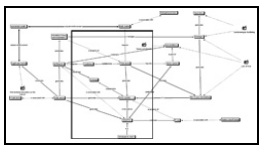

sustain
ncovers
Resistance
overflow
is a form of
generate
Dysfunctionalities
dopts the form of
Procedures
are treated by more
are a requisite for
Exchanges

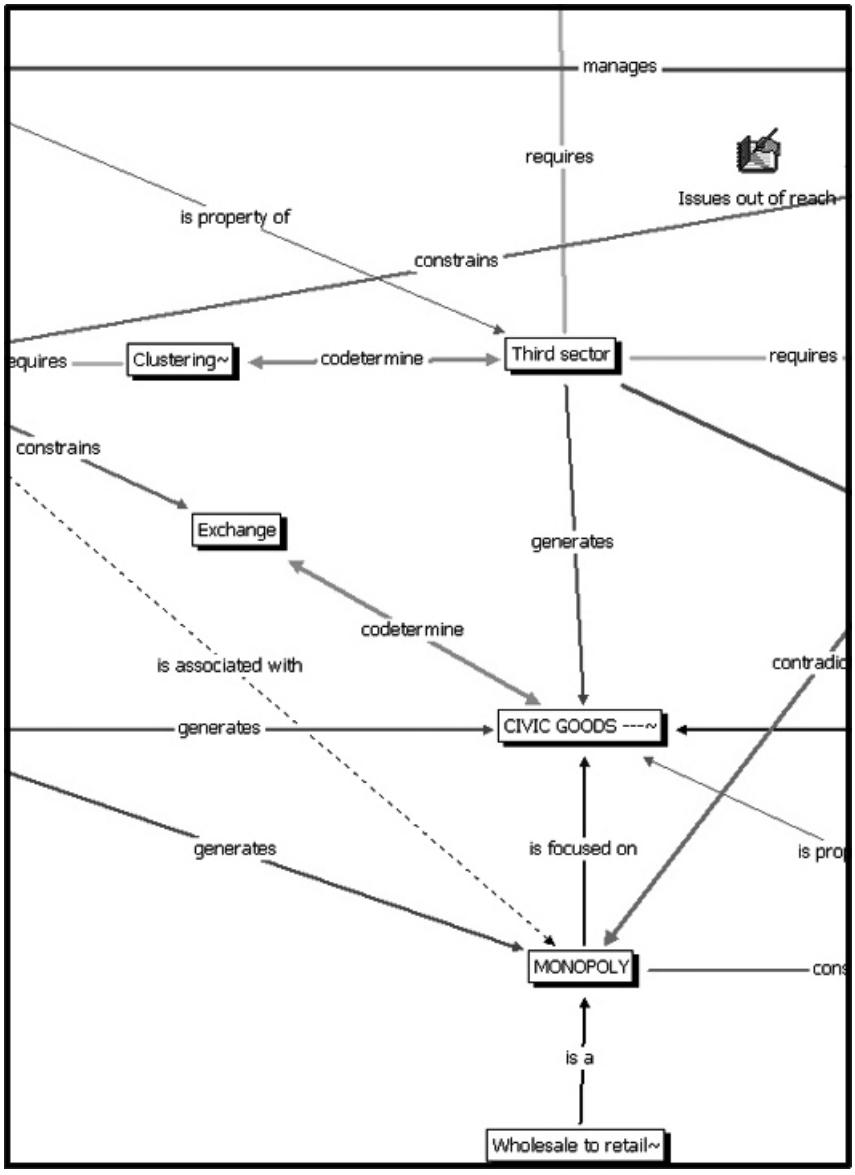
Appendix 4. Sample of networks (in-depth analysis)

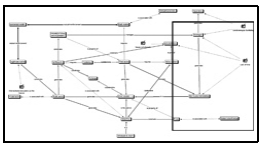
4a. Civic market

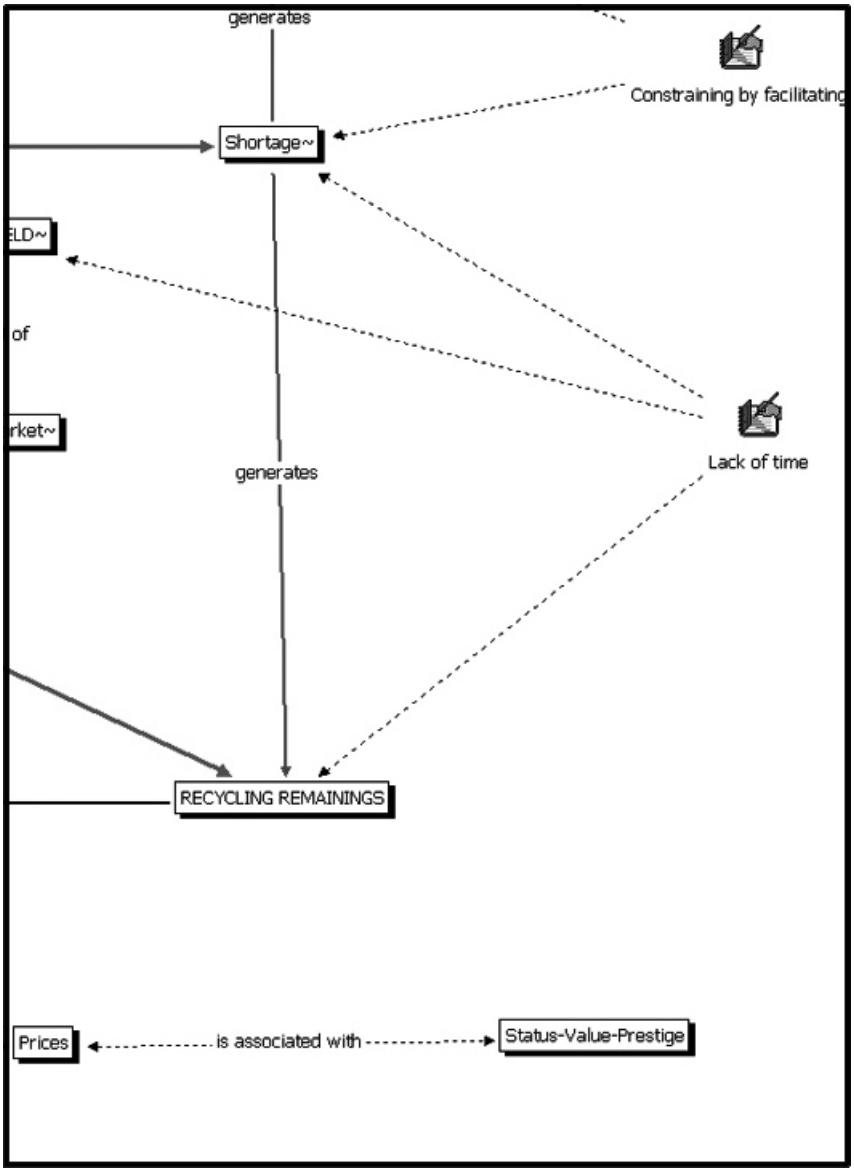


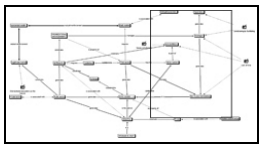


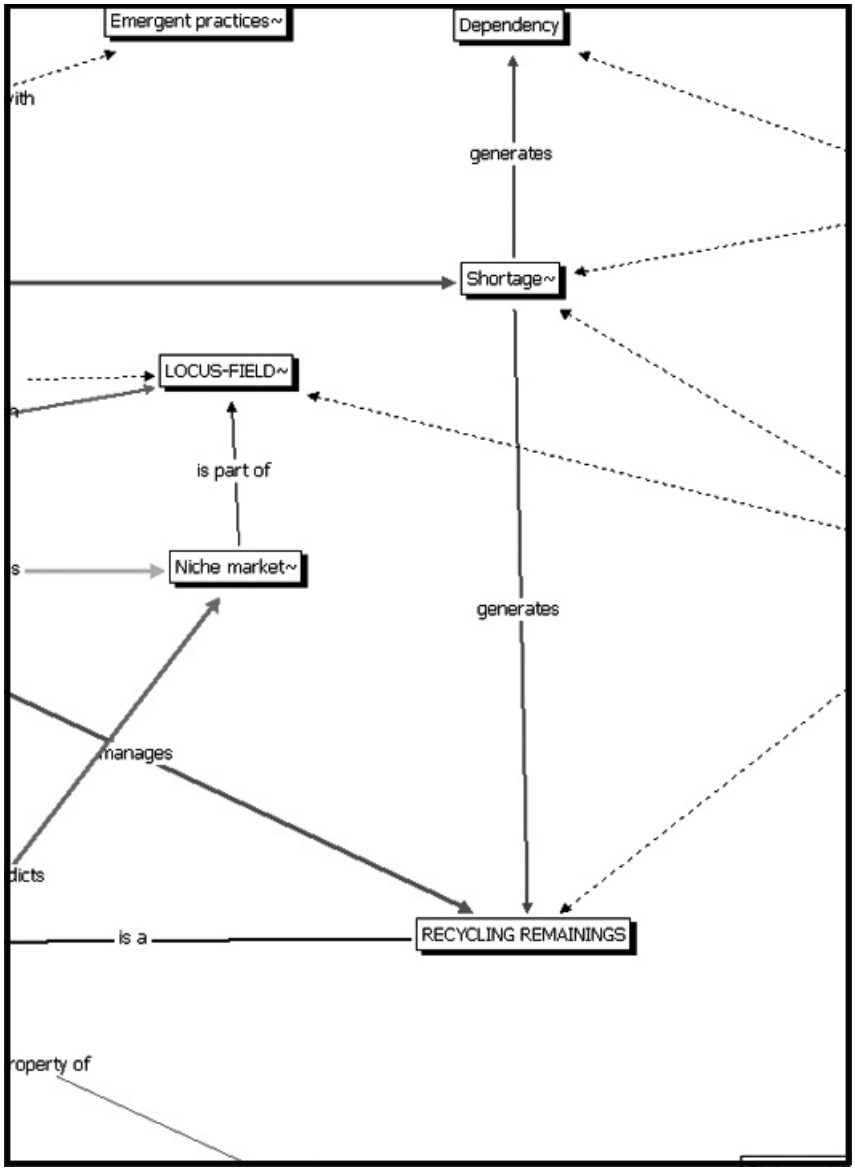



manages
requires
Issues out of reach
is property of
constrains
equires
Clustering~
codetermine
Third sector
requires
constrains
Exchange
generates
codetermine
is associated with
contradic
generates
CIVIC GOODS ---~
generates
is focused on
is pro
MONOPOLY
cons
is a
Wholesale to retail~

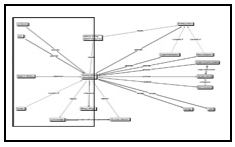


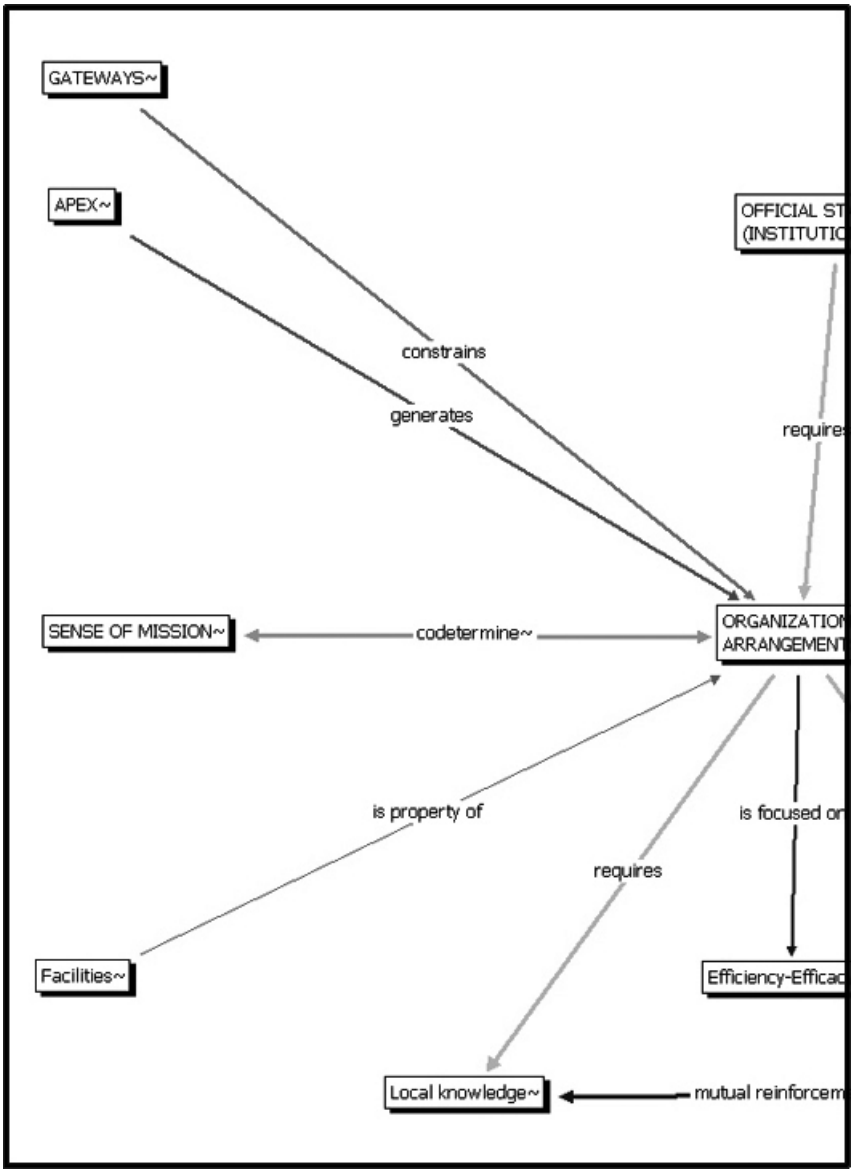

generates
Constraining by facilitating
Shortage~
ELD~
of
rket~
generates
Lack of time
RECYCLING REMAININGS
Prices
is associated with
Status-Value-Prestige

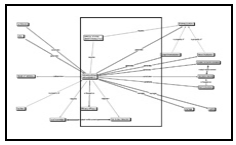


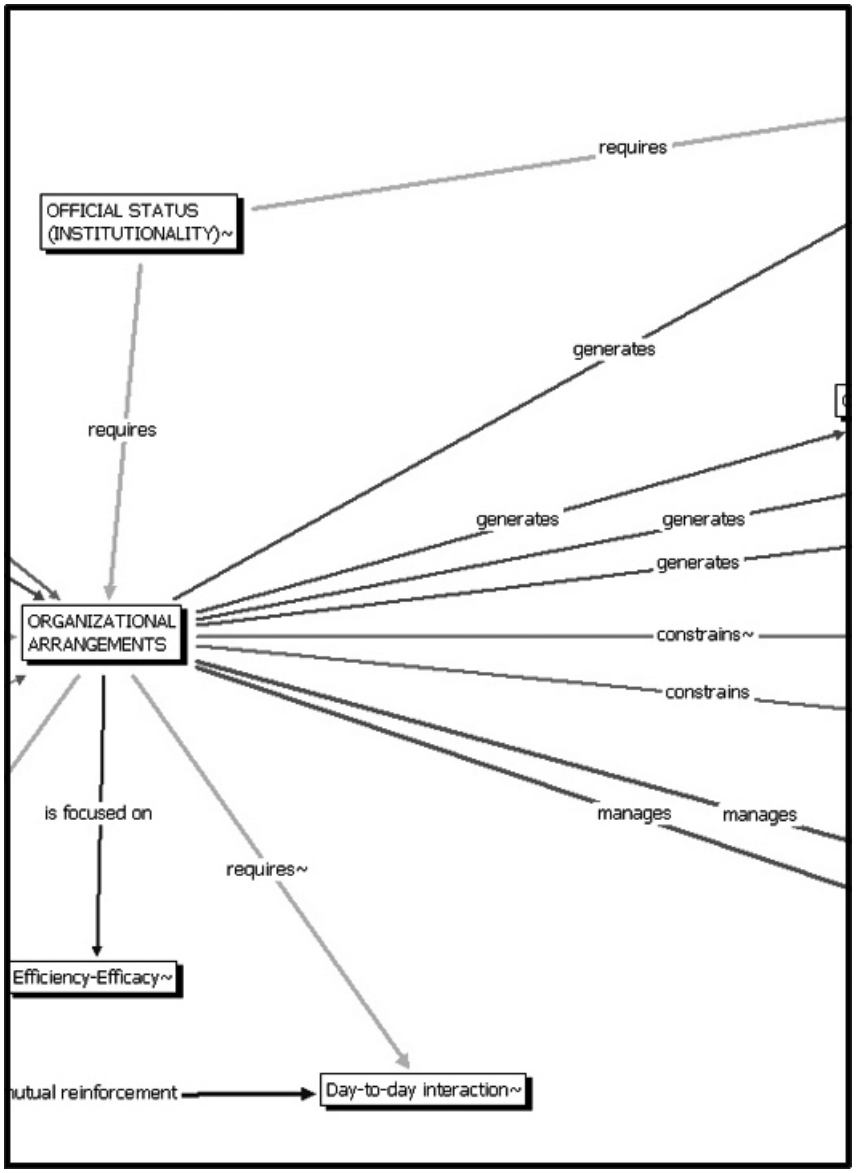

Emergent practices~
Dependency
generates
Shortage~
LOCUS-FIELD~
is part of
Niche market~
generates
manages
is a
RECYCLING REMAININGS

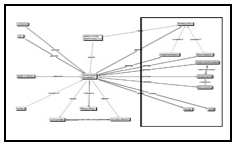
4b. Organizational arrangements

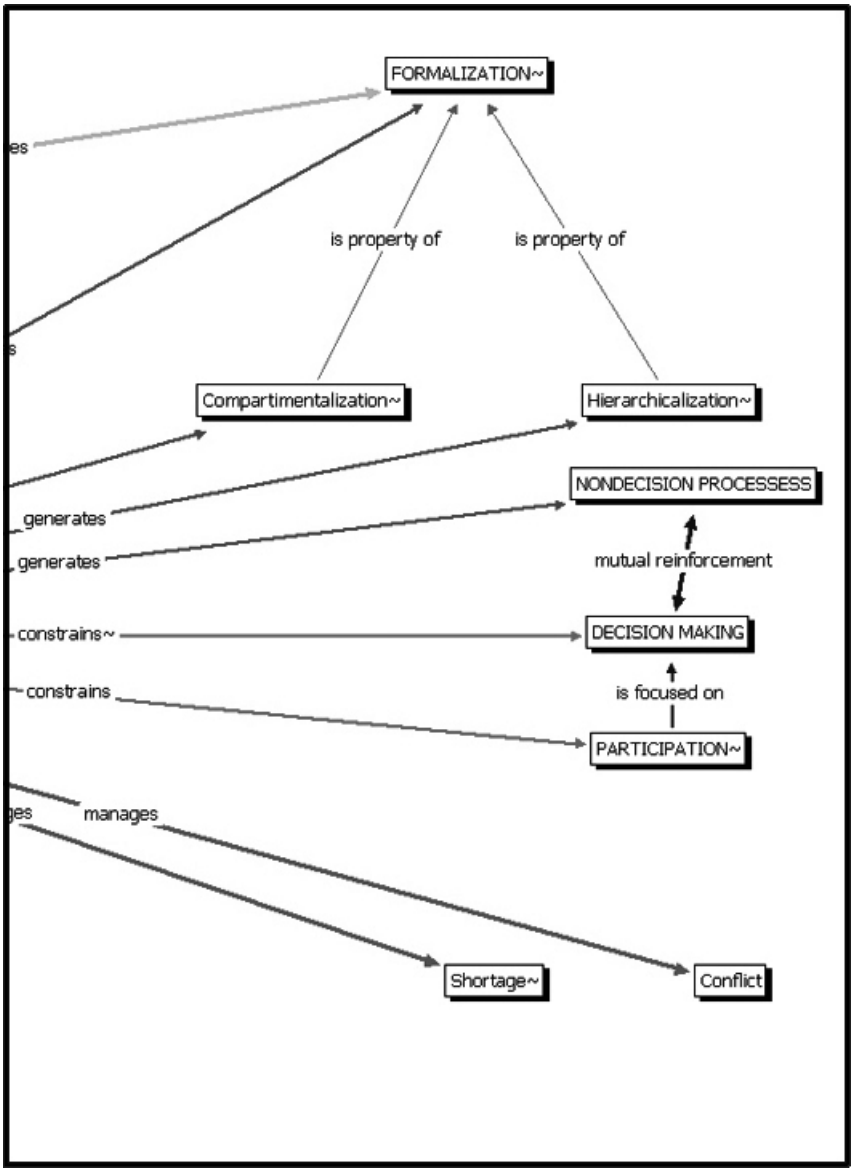




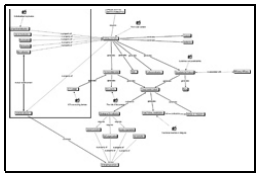


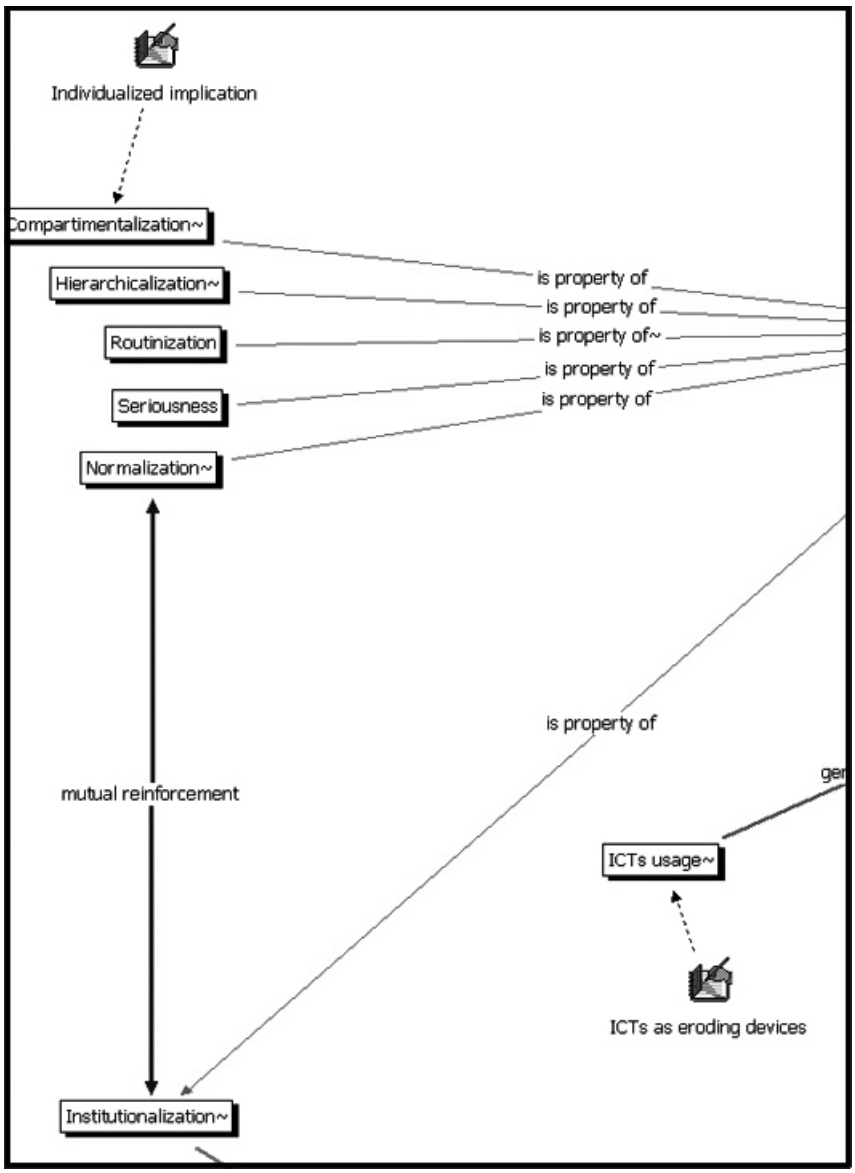

requires
OFFICIAL STATUS (INSTITUTIONALITY)~
generates
requires
generates
generates
generates
ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
constrains~
constrains
is focused on
manages
manages
requires~
Efficiency-Efficacy~
utual reinforcement
Day-to-day interaction~

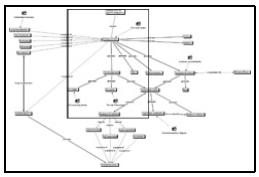


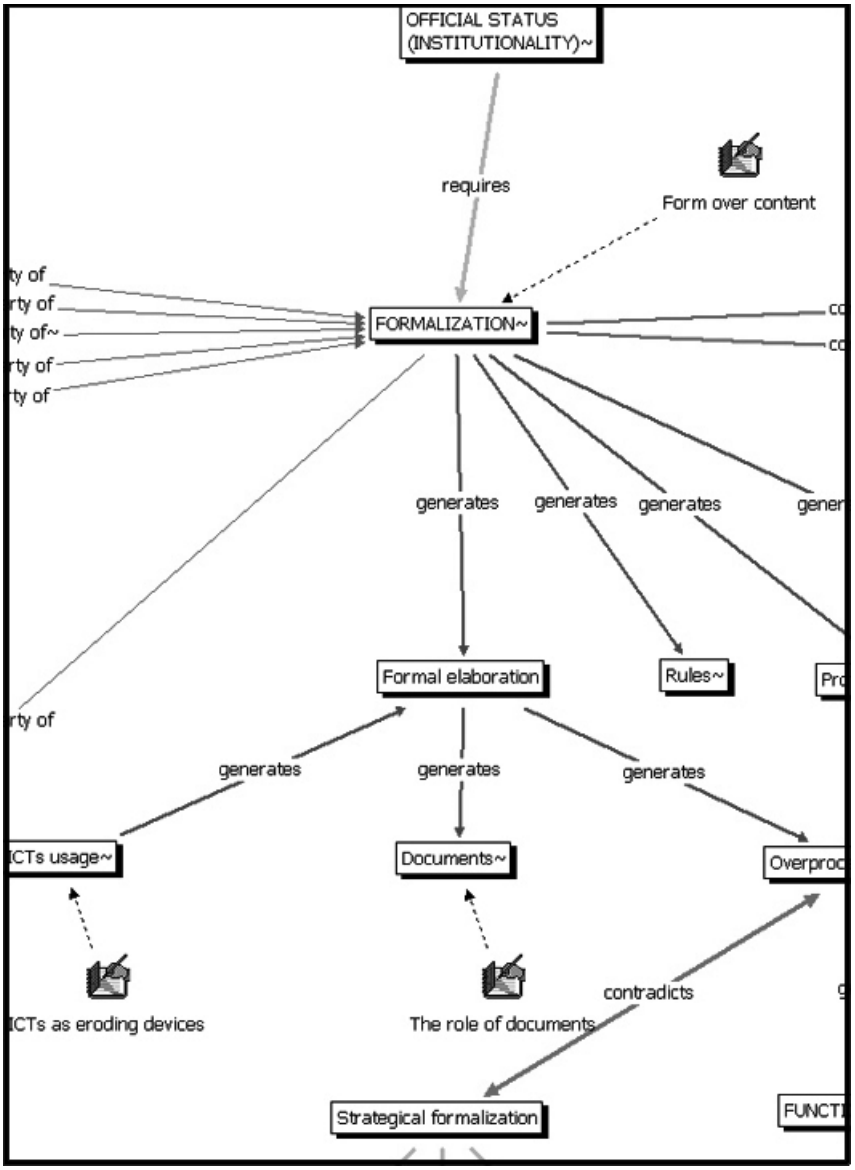

FORMALIZATION~
es
is property of
is property of
s
Compartimentalization~
Hierarchicalization~
NONDECISION PROCESSESS
generates
generates
mutual reinforcement
constrains~
DECISION MAKING
constrains
is focused on
PARTICIPATION~
ges
manages
Shortage~
Conflict

4c. Formalization








OFFICIAL STATUS (INSTITUTIONALITY)~
requires
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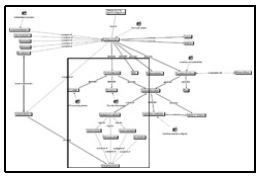
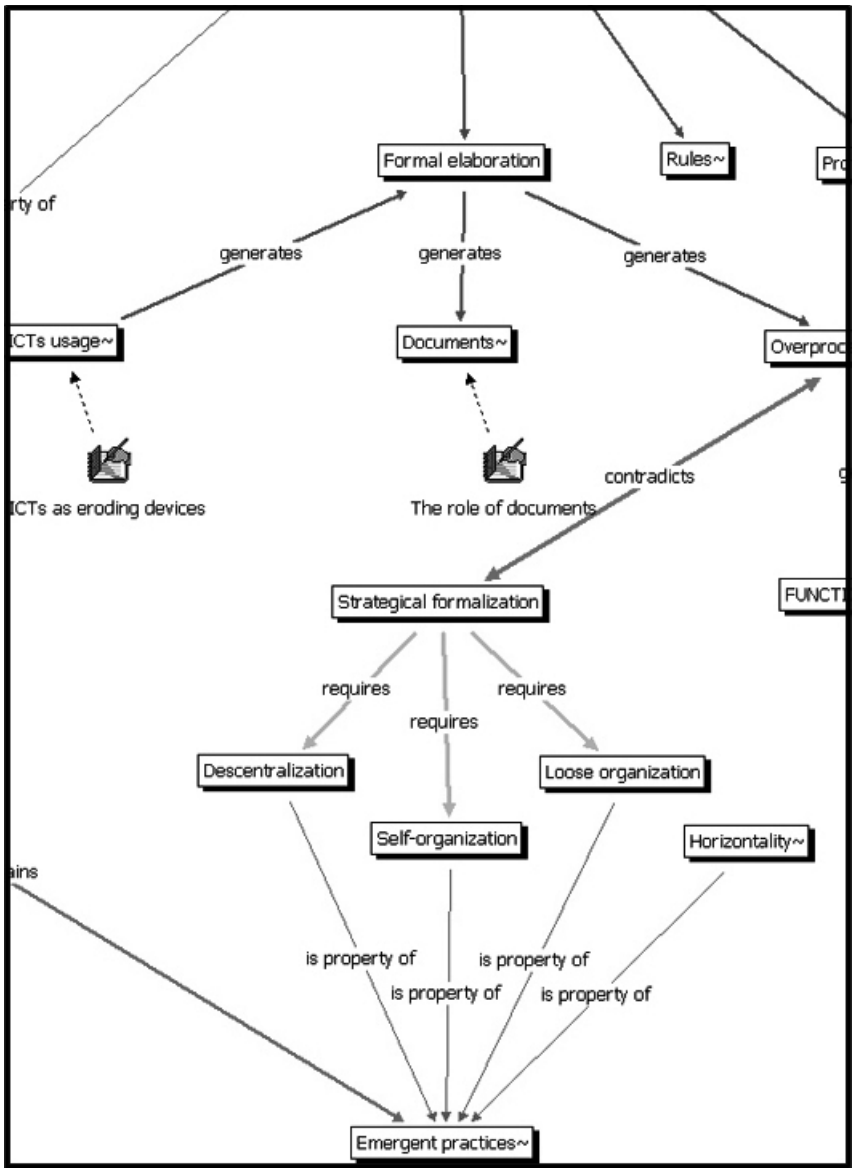
The role of documents
contradicts
Strategical formalization

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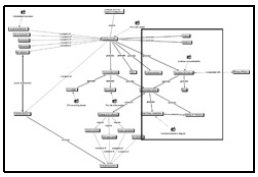

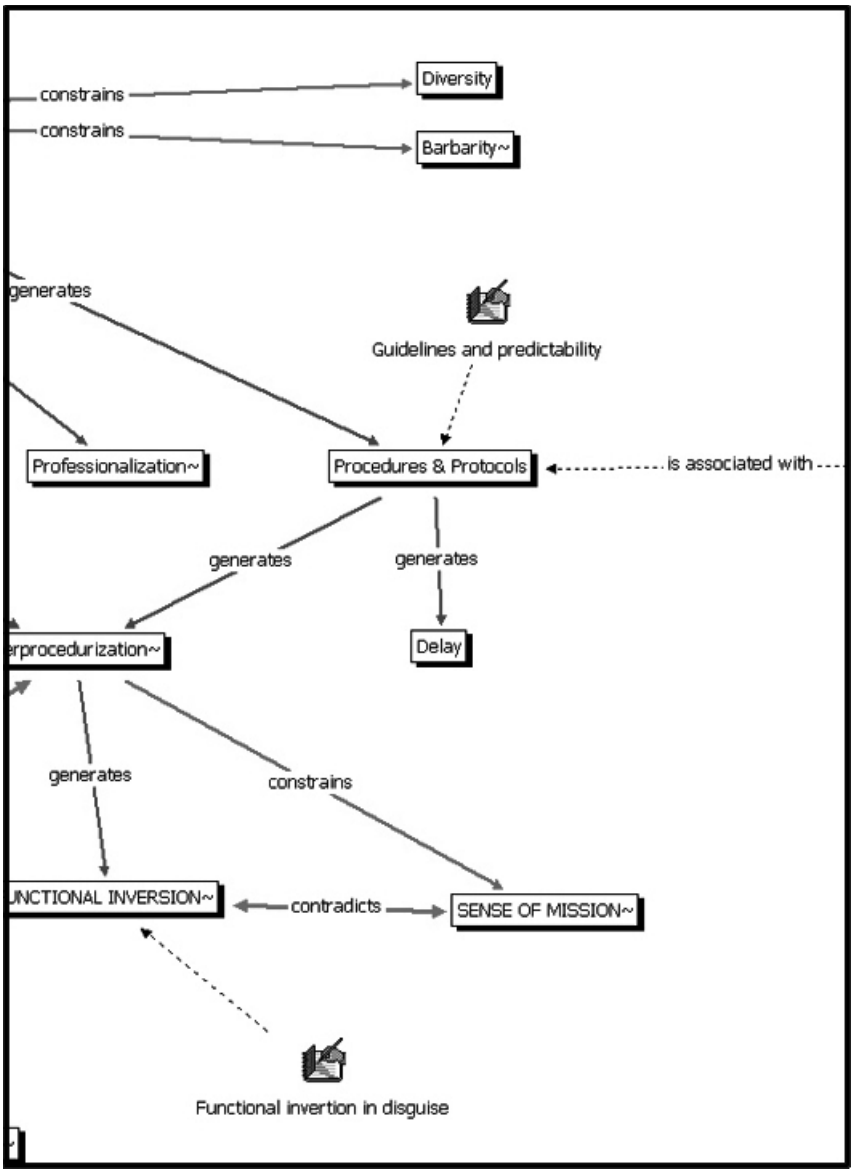
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Barbarity~
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Guidelines and predictability
Professionalization~
Procedures & Protocols
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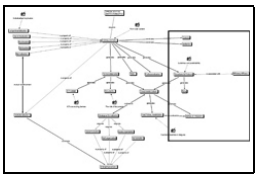
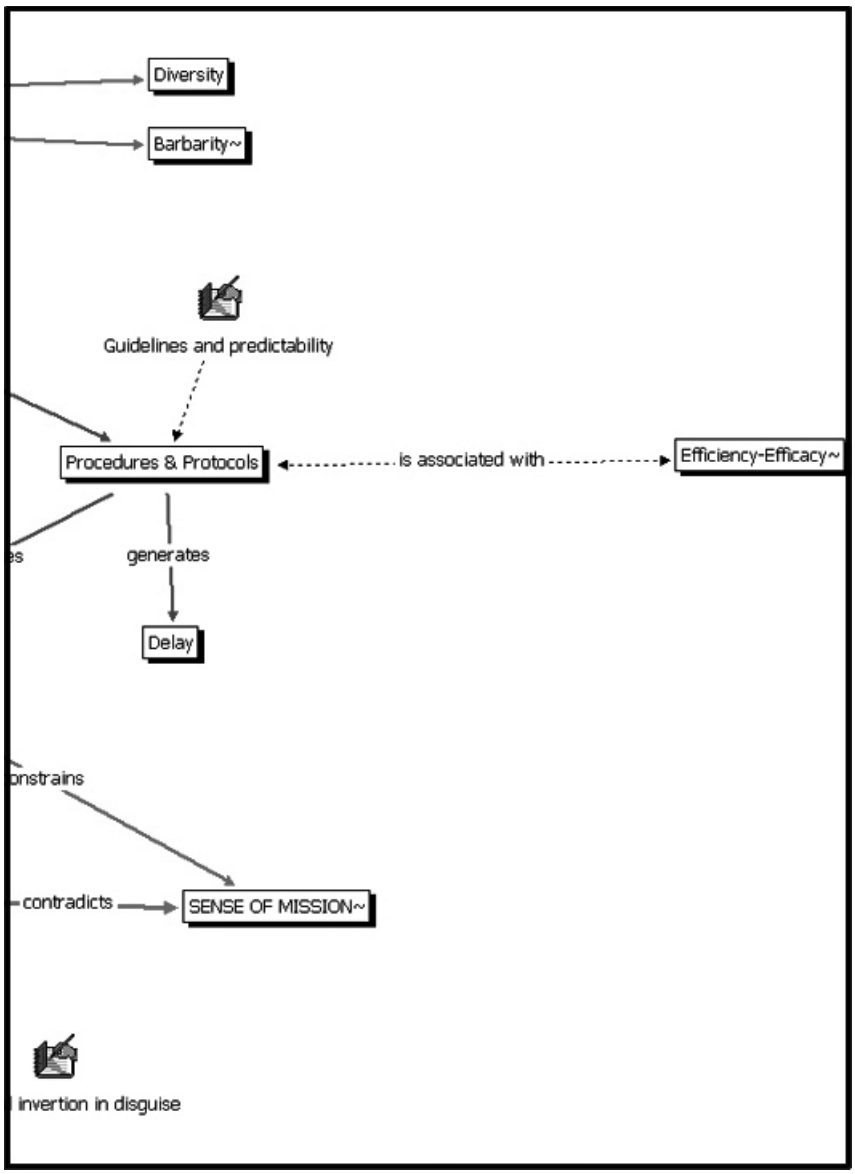
SENSE OF MISSION~
Functional invertion in disguise

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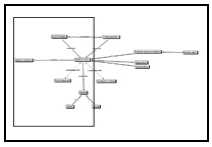
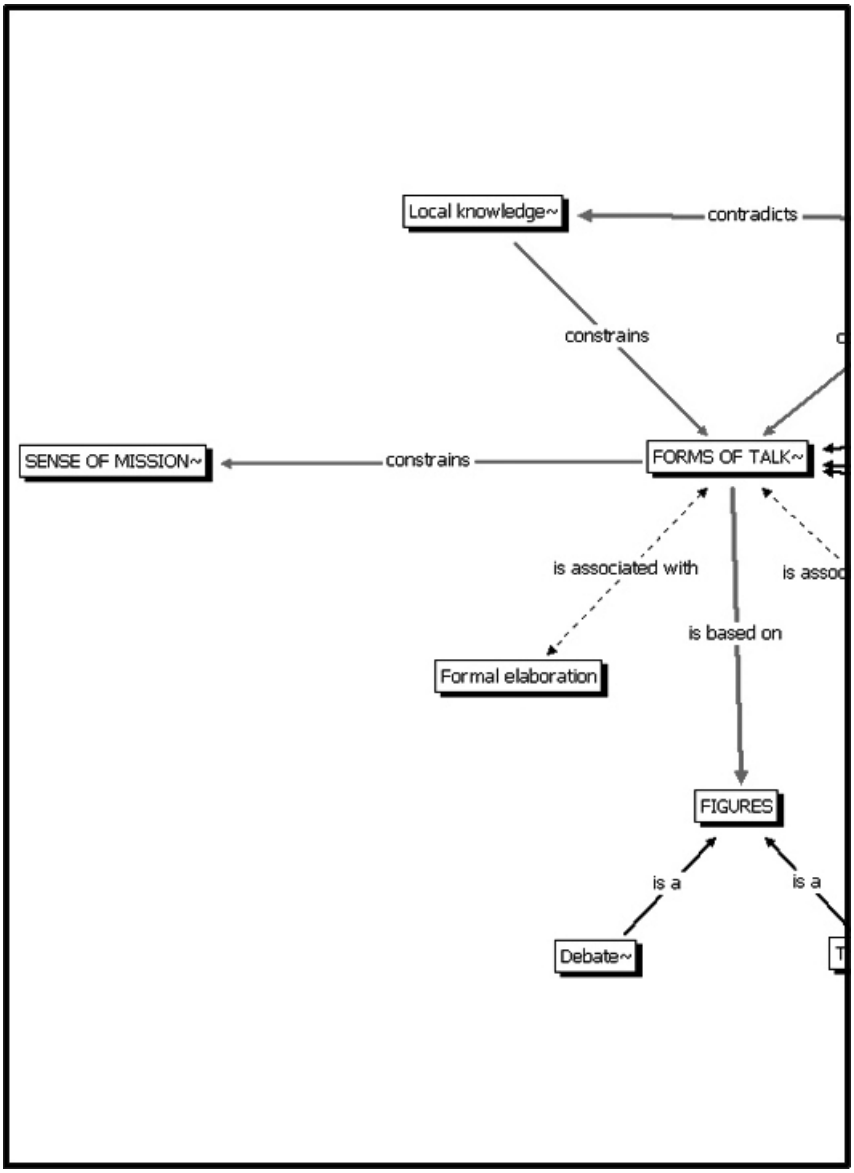
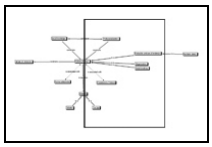
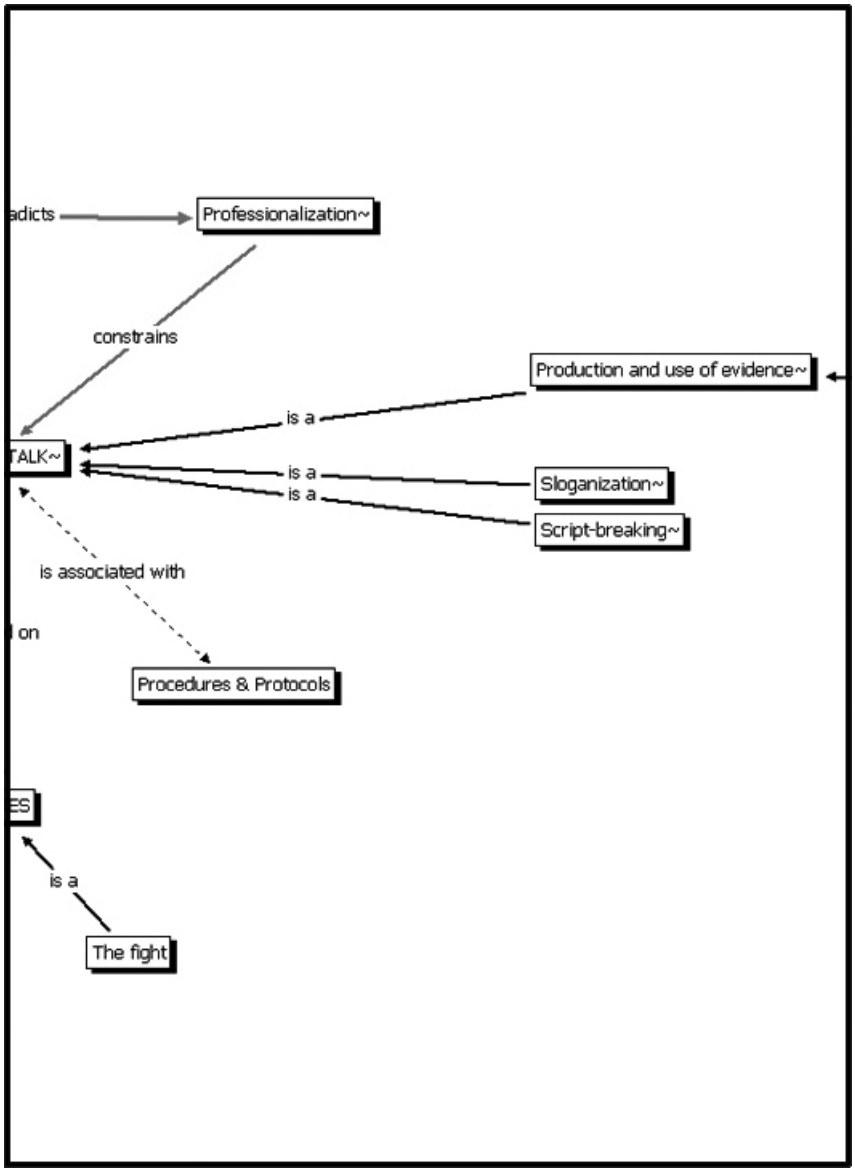
4d. Forms of talk





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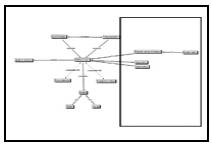

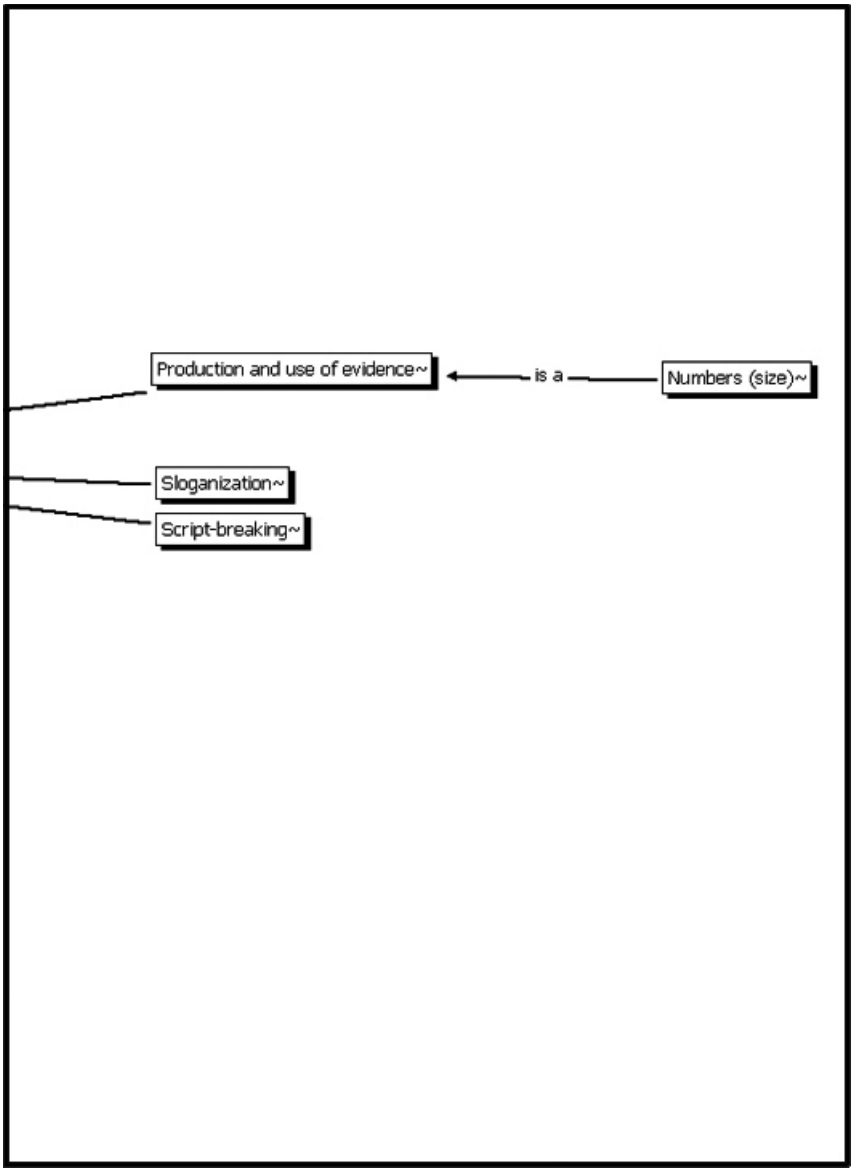
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is a
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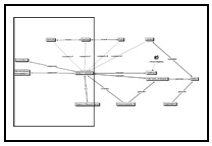
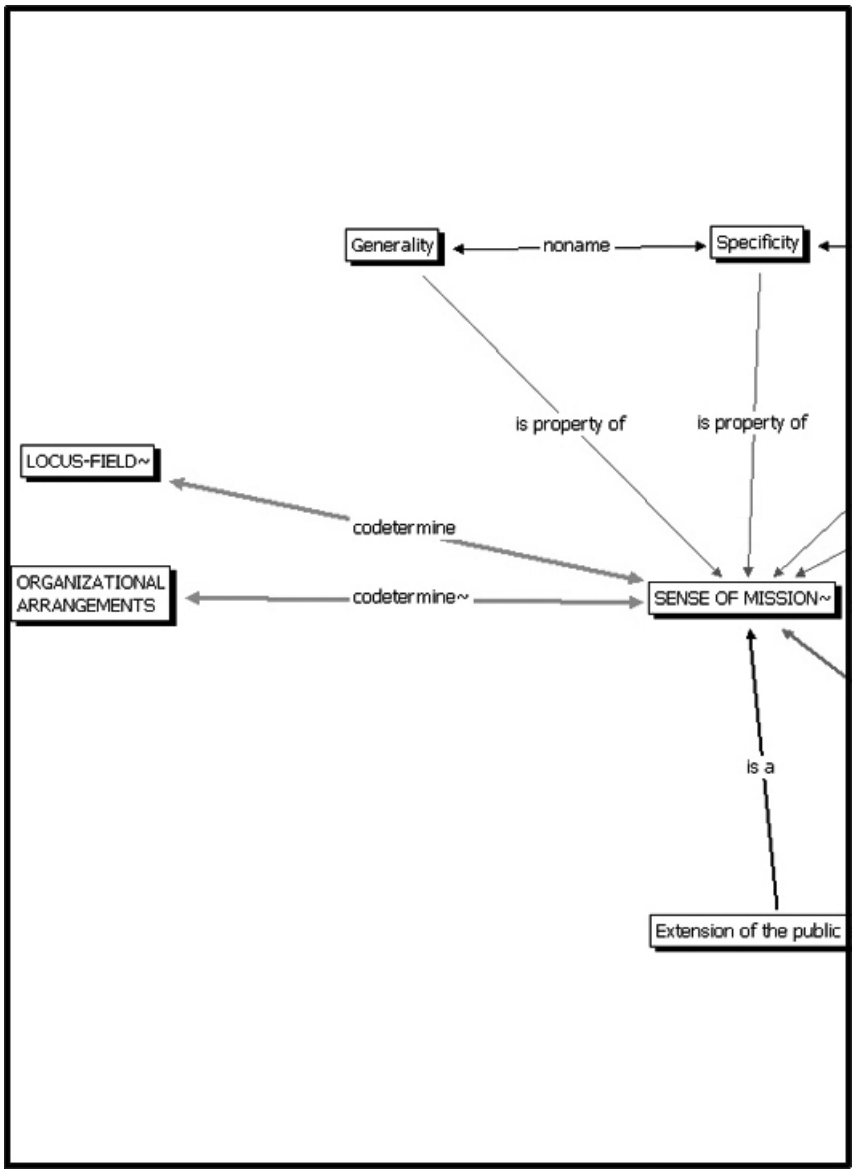
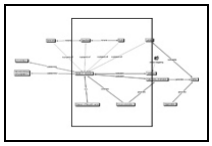
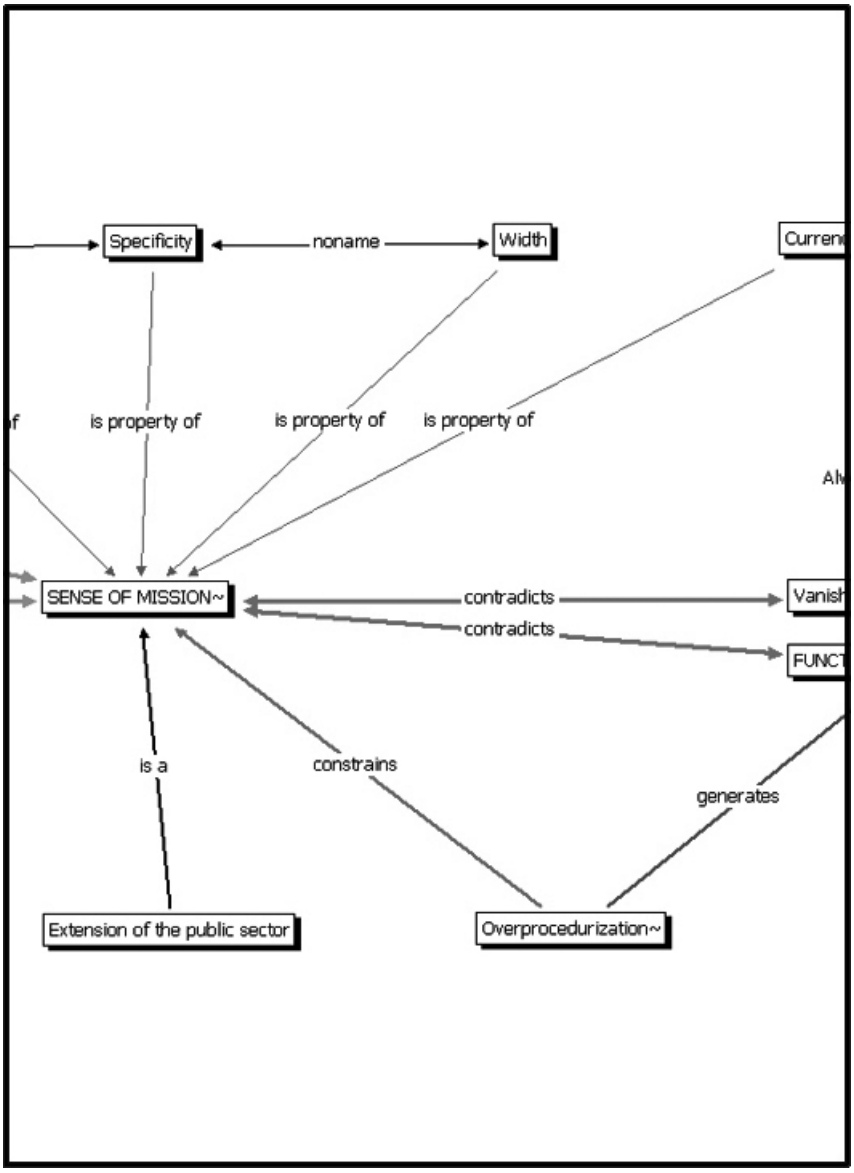
4e. Sense of a mission





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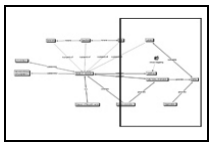
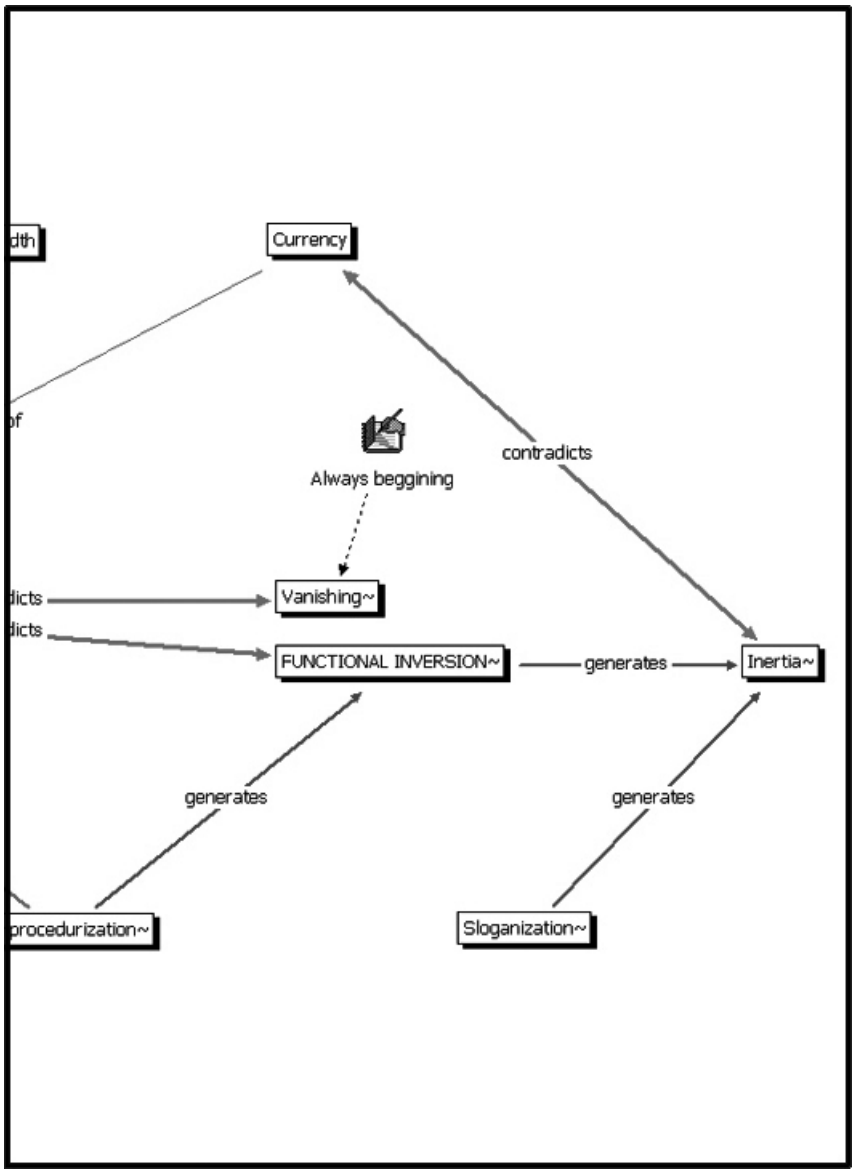
Overproceduralization~




Currency
Always beggining
contradicts
Vanishing~
FUNCTIONAL INVERSION~
generates
Inertia~
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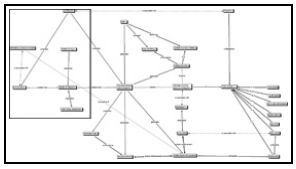
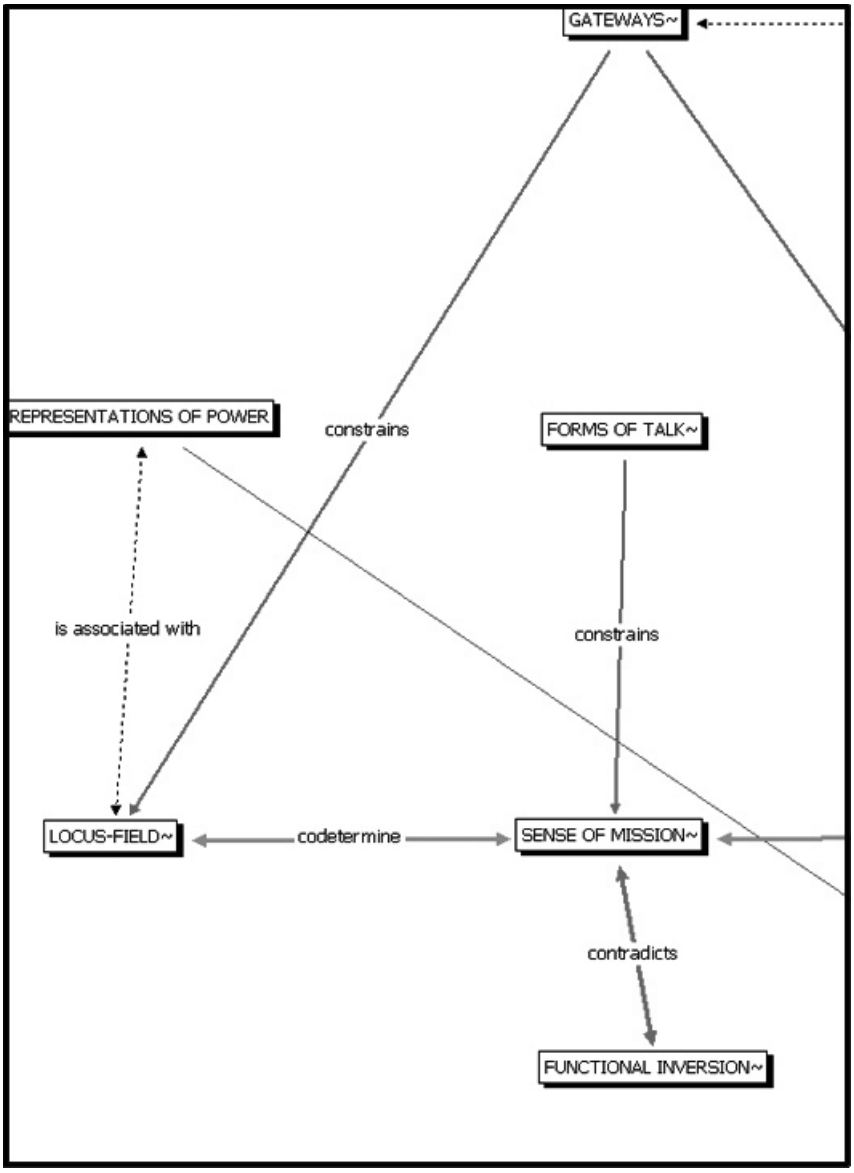
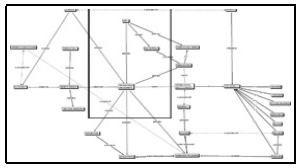
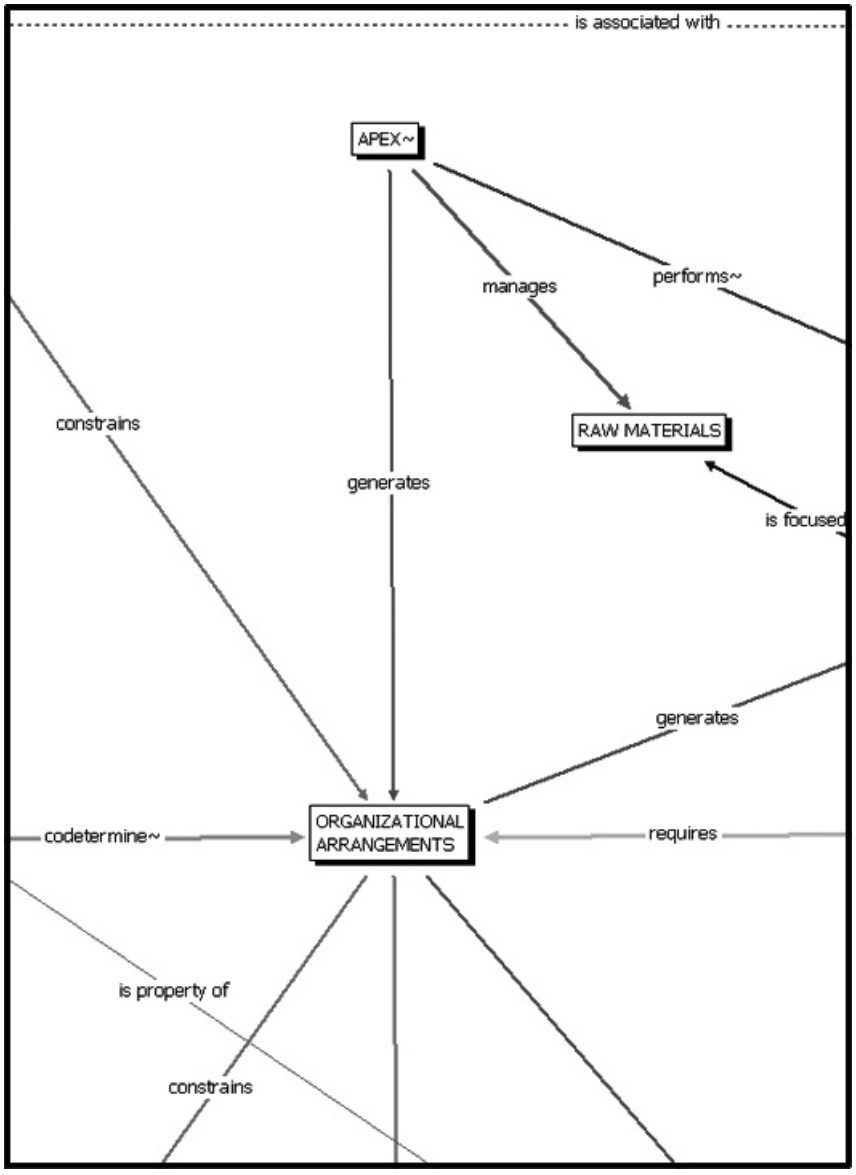
Sloganization~

4f. Axial codes








is associated with
APEX~
manages
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RAW MATERIALS
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is focused
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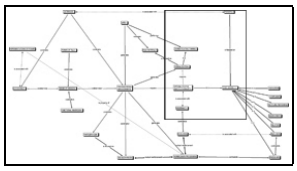
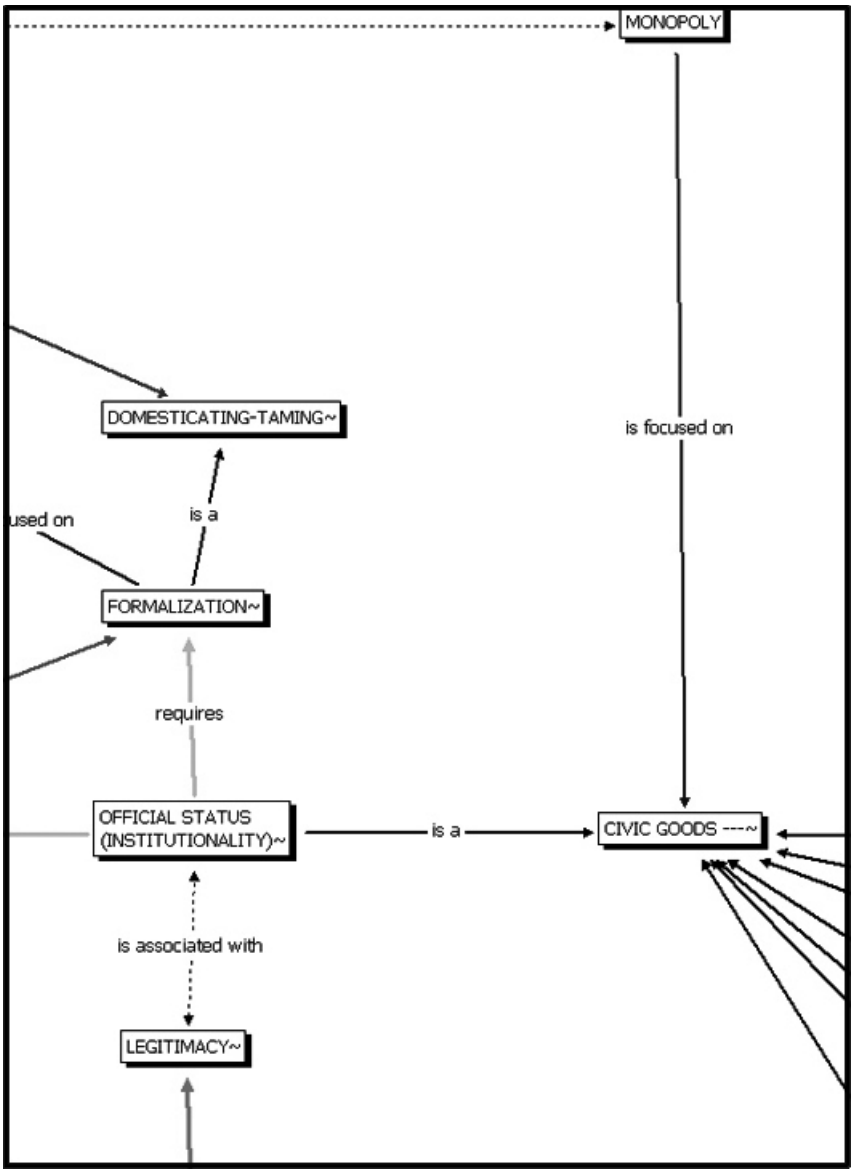
ORGANIZATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
requires
is property of
constrains




MONOPOLY
is focused on
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FORMALIZATION~
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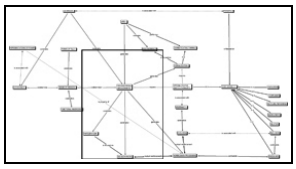
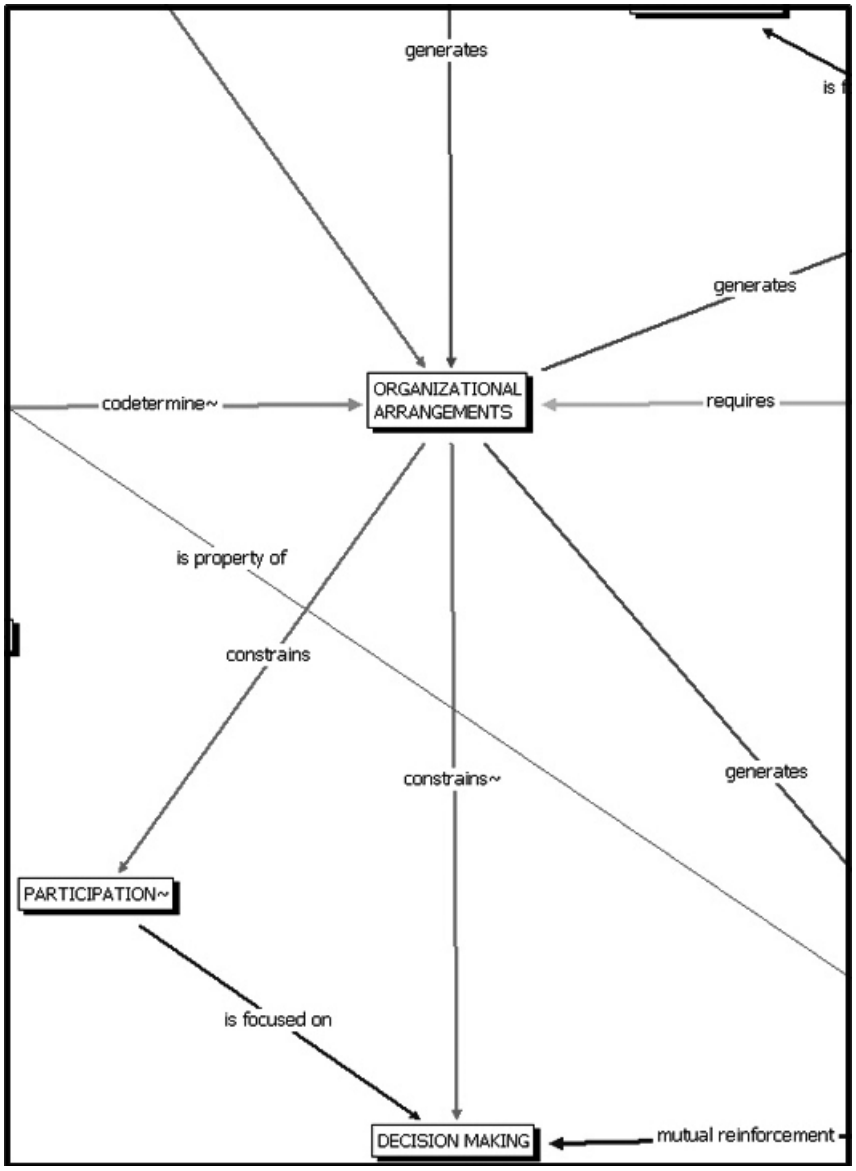
is associated with
LEGITIMACY~

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DECISION MAKING
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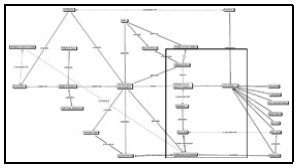

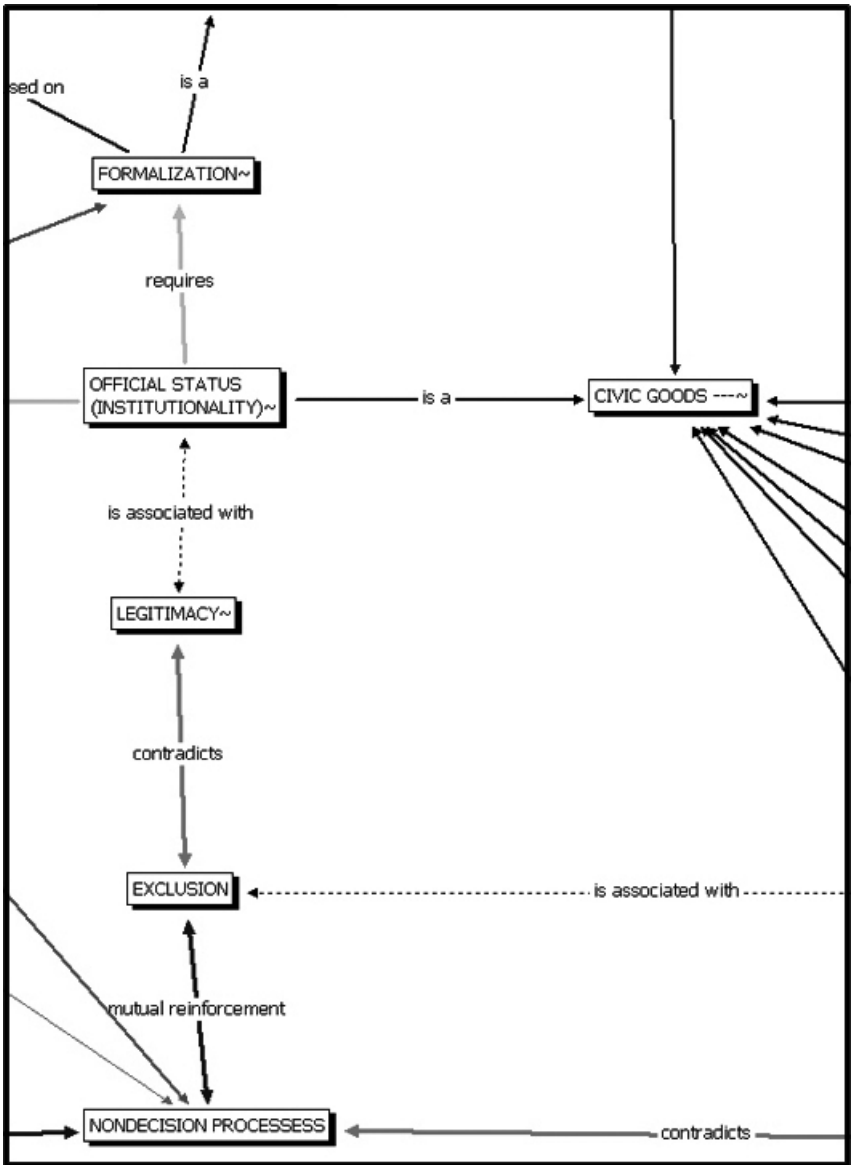
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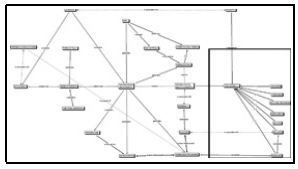

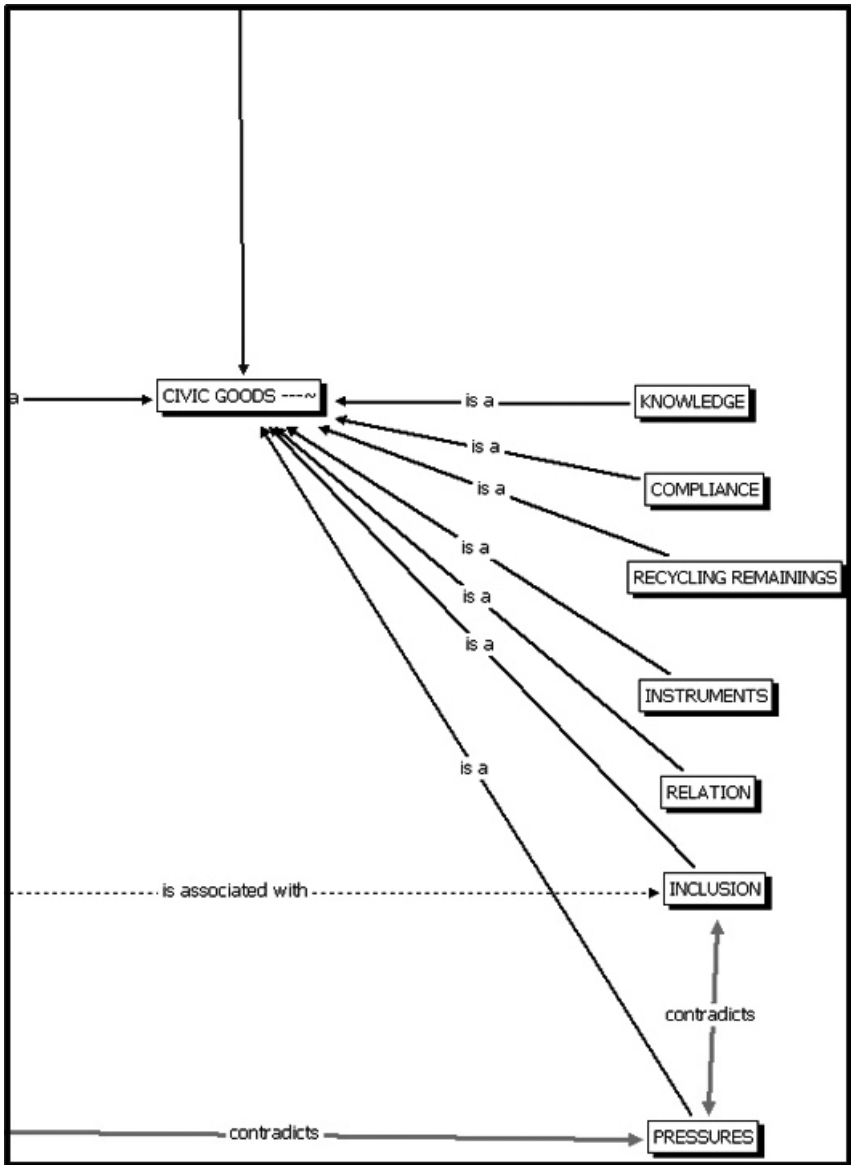
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PRESSURES

Appendix 5. Elaborations on the market of civic activities

5a. Instrumental and substantive civic goods

In order to clarify this distinction, it might be useful to consider a situation in which *consensus* has the status of a civic good. The following excerpt comes from the observation of an assembly of the Catalan section of *FEDER*, a coordinative-representative entity that groups associations of individuals that suffer from rare diseases. During the meeting, one of the members of the board offered an explanation of a void in the entity's statute:

> Ella quería saber por qué no se recogía la figura del consejo autonómico en los estatutos de [la entidad]. Antes de que Federico [un miembro de la junta directiva] pudiera intervenir, Isadora [otro miembro de la junta directiva] tomó la palabra y explicó que había un proceso participativo, aún incompleto, para elaborar los estatutos de [la entidad]. Añadió que el proceso consistía en pasar el borrador a las delegaciones y las asociaciones federadas, para que éstas hicieran sugerencias sobre enmiendas o aspectos a añadir, y que luego, la junta recogería las sugerencias, buscaría la forma de integrarlas, y volvería a pasar el borrador a las asociaciones, para llegar a una versión final consensuada[120]. 13:44 (78:78)

Several notes can be underscored on the basis of a careful reading of this description. *Consensus*, as treated in the situation, appears as a property that a

[120] She wanted to know why the figure of an autonomic council was not included in the entity's statute. Before Federico (a member of the board) could answer the question, Isadora (another member of the board) took the stand and explained that there was a participative process in course, in which the statute [of the entity] was being elaborated. She then added that the process consisted in distributing the draft to every delegation and federated association, so they could make suggestions on amendments or additions, and that, later, the board would collect those suggestions to integrate them and then distribute a second draft to the association, so they could finally arrive to a final version by consensus.

given object can have or not, depending on the way in which it is elaborated. According to this, *consensus* itself requires of certain conditions in the process of elaboration of the object to which it has to be associated. Another important note is that *consensus* can reach the status of *civic good* before its effective production. Both issues, the necessary association of *consensus* to processes and objects and its value before and after its effective production, are related to the fluctuating character of civic goods that was mentioned before.

But maybe the most outstanding issue that can be drawn from the observation is that of *consensus* as something that is worth to achieve by its own right. In the situation described above, *consensus* is a good that is pursued because of its intrinsic value, a desirable outcome that does not require to be justified. As for the kind of need that *consensus* seem to fulfill, it can be said that the consideration of the moment in which *consensus* is brought into the conversation offers specific clues that points towards complaining. Indeed, an object such as a statute should be widely accepted by those whose activities are going to be prescribed and proscribed by it.

The next excerpt comes from an interview to the Catalan delegate of *AjA*, a state-wide foundation that carries out development projects in Third World countries under the frame of international cooperation. The intervention was made when the interviewed was explaining the integral character of the projects they develop.

> [...] No es sólo preocuparse por la educación, sino satisfacer unas necesidades básicas y luego, pues un desarrollo. El hecho de que los niños estén en la escuela permite a los padres poder ir a trabajar de una manera mm… bueno, independiente, y al mismo tiempo lo que hacemos es capacitar también a los padres, ¿no?, es decir que estos recursos que se inviertan, pues realmente, bueno, pues que… que… real… bueno, que puedan ser… en definitiva, autosos… autosostenibles[121]. 16:6 (88:88)

In the view described above, training – *capacitar* – is not an end itself, but a mean to achieve something else – self-sustainability. Anyway, as long as training is the

[121] It is not only about taking education into account, but also about satisfying basic needs and then, development. The fact that children are at school allows their parents to go to work with independence and, at the same time, what we do is to offer training to the parents too, OK?, that is to say that this resources have to be invested, in a real... well... so they can be, finally, self-sustainable.

product of civic activity and, at the same time, gets to be required by the same activity in which it is produced, it can be treated as an activity that acquires civic value. The relevant difference between this good and the former one is that, unlike the case of *consensus*, training has a tactical value.

5b. A case of facilitation as civic good

By providing this kind of services, a TS entity acquires a particular status with regard to its grassroots. Based on this status, the facilitation activities that the entity can provide are not only provided according to demands of the grassroots. They are also actively promoted and offered according to what the entity considers desirable for the grassroots. In the following excerpt, the project manager of the *CBS* offers an account of the kind of attention that the entity offers to women groups of the territory in which the consortium operates:

> Ella trabaja con un grupo pequeño de mujeres que me imagino que, bueno, una de las líneas del consorcio es intentar fortalecer a los grupos de mujeres, ¿sabes?, y bueno, ir eh... impulsando un poco la idea de... eh... su formalización, en el caso de que el grupo así lo quiera, o sea, en un formato de asociación o... cosas por el estilo... mmm... sabemos que algunas sí están interesadas, otras no, pero... bueno, es un poco tratar de caminar con ellas para ver si hacen esta evolución, este proceso. Mmm... ...no hay más grupos aquí de mujeres, más que estos pequeños... son muy dinámicas, son muy activas, pero no hay... no hay asociaciones de mujeres... eh... bien fuertes o... bien organizadas, o con capacidad de gestionar proyectos o captar fondos, por ejemplo () este es un camino que bueno, puede tutelar en su momento el consorcio si hay grupos que estén interesados en hacerlo[122]. 18:1 (92:92)

[122] She works with a small group of women that, I imagine that, well, one of the lines of the consortium is to look for the reinforcement of women groups, you know? and, well, to foster somehow the idea of... their formalization, in the case that the group is interested in it, that is to say, in the form of an association or... something like that... mmm... we know that some of them are interested, other aren't, but, anyway, it's like trying to walk with them to see if they want to go through this evolution, this process. Mmm... there are no women groups other than these small ones... they are very dynamic, very active, but there are no strong women associations... hum... well organized, or with capacity for managing projects or getting funds, for instance. () this is a path to which the consortium can guide if some group is interested in it.

The consortium offers guidance for those groups that are interested in constituting themselves as a formal organization. Here, the task of the consortium consists not only in offering resources, information, and advice, but also, in promoting the possibility of forming a well-structured association, so that the women groups can take into account the potential benefits derived from the change.

The distinctions produced by the performance of *facilitation activities* are the same than those of the *administrative activities*. Nevertheless, they are oriented to aims other than those regarded to the maintenance of the entity itself. In a manner similar to that of the administrative activities, *facilitation activities* assure the preservation of the organization in as much as the organization is covering certain needs.

5c. Two cases of adhesion as a civic good

In order to make clear what can be exchanged for *adhesion*, two excerpts from an interview with the project manager of the *CBS* are shown. At the moment of the first excerpt, the interviewee was explaining why groups of women had had such a limited involvement in the participatory plan in which the consortium had been working in the past months:

> ...una de las líneas del consorcio es intentar fortalecer a los grupos de mujeres, ¿sabes?, y bueno, ir eh… impulsando un poco la idea de… eh… su formalización, en el caso de que el grupo así lo quiera, o sea, en un formato de asociación o… cosas por el estilo… mmm… sabemos que algunas sí están interesadas, otras no, pero… bueno, es un poco tratar de caminar con ellas para ver si hacen esta evolución, este proceso. Mmm… no hay más grupos aquí de mujeres, más que estos pequeños… son muy dinámicas, son muy activas, pero no hay… no hay asociaciones de mujeres… eh… bien fuertes o… bien organizadas, o con capacidad de gestionar proyectos o captar fondos, por ejemplo. () Este es un camino que bueno, puede tutelar en su momento el

> consorcio si hay grupos que estén interesados en hacerlo[123]. 18:1 (32:32)

Note that, at any time, the possibility of formalizing groups of women in the form of associations has been explicitly put as a requisite for a major involvement. Nevertheless, it is argued that any real chance of developing a serious work, managing funds and the like, requires of those groups to go through a guided process of becoming a formal organization. The guidance, in this case, has to be provided by the *CBS* itself. What the group – the grassroots – gets in exchange of its adhesion to that process is an increase in its chances of having a say in decision making processes that take place inside the *CBS*. In other words, there is a subtle indication for non-formalized groups to adjust their practices to the standards that this representative-coordinative entity holds.

About the second excerpt, it belongs to a moment in the interview in which the interviewee was explaining her conception on how resources should be used:

> El recurso puede ser un elemento movilizador y motivador, ¿eh?, tenemos algo sobre lo cual trabajar, vamos a decidir entre todos como vamos a mmm… mejorar eh… una plaza o un eh… o… o la zona por ejemplo del (), que es una zona de [el nombre de un sitio] que es una zona que en este momento hay una… nivel de deterioro muy importante, ¿vale? Este sería el elemento motivador. Esto te permite a ti, eh… como equipo poder convocar, ¿eh? a gentes de diferentes características, para que se sumen a la decisión y a la definición, pero, indudablemente, no puede quedarse ahí, es decir, esta dinámica debe ir más allá de lo que supone el recurso. Una vez que solucionamos el recurso de la plaza… el problema de la plaza o de una calle, se acabó… o realmente pasamos al siguiente. Yo estoy convencida que cuando se empieza a trabajar desde esta dinámica de… desde esta dinámica de implicación, desde esta dinámica de… realmente de

[123] ...one line of the consortium consists of trying to strengthen groups of women, right?, and, well, hum... impel, even a little, the idea of their... hum... formalization, if the group wants to, so, in the form of an association or something like that... mmm... we know that some of them are positively interested, others no, but... well... there are no more groups of women here, only these small... they are very dynamic, very active, but there's not... there are no women's associations... hum... strong or... well organized, or with capacity to manage projects or get funds, for instance. () this is a road in which, well, the consortium can function as a guide if there are groups interested in walking on it.

> construcción para la solución de los problemas comunes, no hay vuelta atrás[124]. 18:39 (156:156)

Again, there is not a clear request for adhesion to procedures. What we find is a context in which the effective use of resources intended to address local needs requires for those affected by such needs a specific form of involvement. This form of involvement is prescribed by a repertory of participatory principles loosely coupled with structured guides for action. In as much as these principles and guides are consistently required, they get to normalize *adhesion* as the usual, almost obvious way of putting resources to work. As in the former excerpt, there is an implicit exchange in which agents are asked to adopt a series of practices that arise from certain procedures. What they get in turn is a mediated access to resources that are needed when addressing specific local problems.

5d. Consultancy and advices as civic goods

As will be shown in the next lines, both routes are relevant for understanding *consultancy and advice* from an economic point of view.

With regard to the first route – seeking for *consultancy and advice* whenever expert orientations are required –, there are some minimal conditions that have to be covered so that the provision of knowledge can be achieved. One of such conditions is the way in which the request is formulated. The formulation of the request implies that agents requiring *advice* have at least an approximated idea on the kind of orientations they need and on the kind of professional that can offer those orientations. Also, the formulation of the request implies a series of specifications that later might be adjusted as a result of the agreement under which a *consultancy* provider starts his collaboration with the entity. As said above, these specifications establish the terms of the exchange and provide a

[124] Resources can be elements of dynamization and motivation, right? We have something on which we can work, we all are going to decide how we are going to... mmm... improve... hum... a public square or a.... hum... for instance, the zone in (), which is a zone of [the name of a place] which is a zone that, currently, has an important degree of deterioration, right? This would be the motivating element. This allows you, hum... as a team, to summon, right?, people with different characteristics, so they can take part in the decision and in the definition, but, undoubtedly, this cannot be the end, that is to say, this dynamic must go beyond what resources imply. Once that we have solved resources for the public square... the problem of the public square or a street, it is over... or we pass to the next. I'm convinced that once you start working according to this dynamic of... with this dynamic of implication, with this dynamic of... truly, of construction for solving problems in common, there's no turning back.

framework in which the process of *consultancy and advice* has to be understood and performed.

Yet, there is another condition. It makes reference to the acquisitive capacity of the entity, which in this case can be conceived as the probable value of the activities it can offer in exchange for *advice*. This condition is crucial because it defines to a large extent the specifications of the request for *advice*. When estimations on the kind of *advice* required point towards a long process of collaboration, TS entities might require financial support so that they can hire an expert. Here, entities make use of institutional channels in order to try to obtain resources from the government. Whether the attempt is successful or not, what has to be underlined here is that there are ways for acquiring *consultancy and advice* that pass through institutional channels and have to be understood in terms of institutional relations. Other forms of acquiring *advice* through institutional channels might be found in the signature of alliances, contracts or partnerships with for-profit enterprises, higher education institutions or professional associations. As for the possibility of getting *advice* from another TS entity, the form might be that of formal partnerships, but there are other possibilities. When considering the fluency and frequency of contacts among some TS entities, or even more, their implication in joint undertakings, exchanges that allow for the mutual provision of *advice* are easier.

But not every need for *advice* can be covered through institutional channels. *Advice* can be provided by members of an association in an individual way, which means that the link by which knowledge is provided is based on personal relationships. Whether it is due to a lack of resources or to difficulties – foreseen and actual – in establishing a formal partnership with another organization, TS entities are frequently forced to seek *advice* by other means. Here, the most common way of proceeding consist of taking advantage of personal relationships or looking for individuals whose ideological orientation matches that of individuals that are at the core of the entity. When this happens, the kind of exchanges that allow the entity to acquire the orientations it requires is different from that of institutional channels. The specifications of the request are put in a more open and flexible manner. The user, at least at the beginning, is depicted more as a person and less as an entity, and the provision of *consultancy* is performed as an extra – pro bonus – assignment.

As for the second route for fulfilling the need for specialized knowledge, TS entities can incorporate the capabilities for providing themselves with that knowledge by hiring or involving on a regular basis individuals with the required capabilities or by training some of their members so that they can develop such capabilities. In both cases, the change that implies moving from an external provision of specialized knowledge to an insourcing modality has relevant implications on the functioning of the entity. One of these implications is a professionalizing effect. When professionalization occurs, the entity shifts or modifies some aspects of its own activity and conditions of functioning so that they are congruent with the disciplinary specificities – rules, assumptions, methods and procedures – of a given area of knowledge. The magnitude of those modifications depends on the distance between (a) the area of knowledge to which the objects upon which professionalization is produced belong, and (b) the area of knowledge in which the objects included in the reason for being of the entity can be located. The greater the distance between both areas, the greater is the magnitude of shifts or modifications in the functioning of an entity. When the magnitude of modifications is substantial, even the reason for being of the entity can be subjected to changes. One of the most interesting changes is that by which the professionalizing turn of an entity leads it to start offering *consultancy and advice*.

As mentioned before, delivery systems are crucial for *consultancy and advice*. This is particularly relevant considering the extent to which this form of activity is usually subsumed in the production and exchange of other activities (mainly those of compliance and pressure). There is something with the malleable character of *consultancy and advice* that makes of these activities a good area of observation for understanding the functioning of the market in which they are treated as goods. Think for example in the multi-directional chains through which *advice and consultancy* are performed. In such chains, a TS entity might face demands or even plain complaints from the part of its grassroots regarding a given issue. When dealing with the issue – when shaping it –, the entity might realize that there are important voids of knowledge that need to be fulfilled in order to build a proper solution. Those voids, which can be posed in terms of 'why' or 'how to', might point towards the government or other TS entities as the ones that are able to offer *advice*. If *advice* from institutional sources cannot be obtained, or if, once it has been obtained, it is not satisfactory according to the entity's expectations, the core

of the entity might try to take advantage of its network of personal relationships in order to get the much needed *advice* out of institutional channels. In both cases – *advice* through institutional channels or out of them –, the entity should then have to adapt the contents and format of received *advice* so it can be delivered to the grassroots.

In the following excerpt, the President of a neighborhood association explains his point of view on the role of *advice*, how it should be provided, and how his entity manages to obtain it:

> ...ya hace años que reivindicamos que en los casos complejos la administración debería pagar asesores ah… alternativos ah… a los movimientos sociales, y además () creo que es la única forma digamos de que haya democracia de verdad y participación. Lo que ocurre es que en la práctica… a veces lo consigues y a veces, muchas veces no. Y entonces tienes que tirar mano de… de gente de confianza o buscarte la vida, ¿no?, buscar a alguien "¿conoce a un arquitecto que nos pueda asesorar?" , ¿no?, "¿conoce un abogado?" , ¿no?, bueno, y entonces, haces lo que puedes, ¿no?, buscas… hombre, como en casi todos los campos hay grupos profesionales un poco alternativos, pues siempre es fácil, acabas encontrando, ¿no?, pero no… no siempre, no siempre es fácil[125]. 20:30 (154:154)

As it is exposed, the exchanges by which funds for *advice* are obtained are conceived as a right that is justified by the necessity of an informed implication – a requisite for 'real' participation and, thus, for achieving democracy. It has to be underscored that even in specific exchanges like this, invoking the idea of democracy is a common action. But there is another important implication. Professional advice is expensive and its acquisition on a regular basis is often out of the reach of many TS entities and in consequence it gets to be an important

[125] ...it's been years since we starting defending that, in front of complex issues, public administration should offer funds so that social movements can get alternative assessors, besides () I think that's the only way of, let's say, having real democracy and participation. What happens is that, in practice... sometimes you get it and some times, many times, you don't. And then you have to look for people you trust in or solve it all by yourself, OK?, look for somebody. 'Do you know an architect who can give us advice?' OK?, 'Do you know a lawyer? Well, finally you do what you can, OK?, you look for... well, as in almost every field there are professional groups a little bit alternative, it is easy, you finally find what you're looking for, OK?, but sometimes, sometimes it's not easy.

issue, one that the core of the entity has to deal with. Note that scarcity appears as a usual condition of functioning ('you do what you can').

With regard to the provision of *advice* out of institutional channels, the basis for the exchange seems to be found in the existence of a previous relationship that belong to spaces other than that of the entity, or in some sort of ideological coincidence (note that the interviewee speaks of alternative professional groups). This basis settles the conditions for defining the specifications of the exchange between the user – an individual that speaks as a representative of the entity or as a friend or acquaintance – and the provider – the individual or group that agrees to offer *advice*. One might advance that depending on the course of the exchange; the frame for the relationship can remain out of institutional channels or can be progressively displaced towards them. In the case of the latter, the kind of activities that are offered in exchange for *advice* would also be expected to change. Instead of offering *good conscience* to a friend or acquaintance that devotes some of his spare time to share his knowledge with the association, exchanges that follow institutional channels might also require *adhesion*, *support* or *labor* in return.

Finally, let us have a word on the mention of spare time. Getting *advice* form acquaintances appears as a second option. One of the possible explanations for this is that as long as the frame for the exchange is located out of institutional channels, *advice* seekers must find what they need in the availability of individuals to use the time that is left of their daily activities, mainly their jobs. Given the state of scarcity, the core of an entity should find ways of taking advantage of the remainings of daily life.

Taking advantage of those remainings is a crucial activity for TS entities. In the next excerpt, a member of a neighborhood association addresses the state of scarcity in which his association operates and clarifies the expected role of *advice* providers.

> ...la mayoría de gentes esta… yo me he jubilao este año, ya te lo he dicho, pero todos están liados a… trabajo () gente voluntaria que trabaja por el barrio y tal, ¿no? y entonces dentro de esas cuestiones pues nos hace falta… pues gente experta, experta…

> todos no somos expertos, pero no hace falta que nos dirijan, sino que nos planteen cómo se hace…[126] 23:85 (482:482)

One aspect that deserves to be underlined is that of a sense of being overwhelmed by the activities of the entity. The implication of active members has a voluntary character, which means that what these members do for a living – their jobs – is located out of the space of the entity. The interviewee is also saying that this dedication of 'extra hours' is not enough for his association. Such 'extra hours' do not cover the amount of work that the successful developments of current undertakings require. Besides, considering the qualifications of those that offer 'extra hours', the kind of expert knowledge that some issues require can hardly be fulfilled. When our interviewee says 'not all of us are experts', he is defining a gap between required and actual capabilities, and the way this definition is done is crucial for understanding the value given to *advice* and the consequent search for a provider.

Yet there is another aspect of this excerpt that is worth to be considered. The interviewee declares that his entity does not need to be lead or to receive instructions that have to be followed by the book. What his entity need is to learn how to manage certain things or perform certain task. Besides of the equalization between *advice* and practical guidance, what is at stake here is the definition of the frame in which *advice and consultancy* should be provided. The most important element of this frame is the kind of relationship that has to be established between advisers and advisees. In front of those insistent and frequent claims for a relational frame in which the asymmetries that the unequal possession of expert knowledge implies can be neutralized or tempered, one can ask for the practical concretion of such neutralization. Do the forms of delivering *advice* vary when people want to be leaded by the expert and when people just want an input for a better understanding? Do the forms of using *advice* vary depending on the presence of one position or the other? And even more important, is it conceivable that a TS entity expresses that an expert's *advice* should be meticulously and unquestionably followed?

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126 ...most of these people are... I've been retired this year, I've told you that before, but they are all busy with... work (), voluntary people that works for the neighborhood and stuff, OK? And then, about these issues, well, we need experts, expert people... not all of us are experts, but there's no need for us to be leaded, we just need to see how some things are done...

Indeed, it is not likely that a TS entity should even conceive the situation of receiving *advice* in terms of an unconditional ascription to guidelines. This lead us again to the presence of a sense of what is good to think of and the filtering of thoughts it generates so that, finally, only proper thoughts can emerge. It is not that the processes of receiving and using *advice* vary according to the principle to which they are supposed to be subordinated. Variations appear, but their sources are to be found in other conditions (e.g. the specific issue upon which *advice* is received, previous knowledge of members of the core of the entity on the issue, the presence of polarized positions, imposed deadlines, and so on). And still, it is necessary to label the exchange in this particular manner, to clarify how the receiving of *advice* should be conceived and how it should not.

Now let us go back to the interview with the President of a neighborhood association. In the following excerpt, the interviewee relates the intervention of a professional in a fight in which the neighbors were trying to exert pressure so that the local government changed its original proposal of opening a wide avenue. As a counterproposal the core of the entity had promoted the idea of building a 'rambla', a small boulevard with only two lines, one for each way, and a wide middle sidewalk:

> ...al final el arquitecto que finalmente cogió el tema, cuando ya la lucha estaba muy madura, nos planteó que la… bueno, que la reivindicación de rambla estaba mal planteada, básicamente porque esta es una zona con unos desniveles brutales, ¿no?, entonces claro, entonces él planteaba dos cosas: una, que la rambla, claro, una rambla con tráfico en los dos lados a veces es un poco incómoda, y que una rambla con los desniveles tenía que ser estrecha… bueno, no había… Entonces él lo que proponía era una solución que era intermedia, que era, bueno… hay un cierto… corte central en la vía, pero básicamente reducir carriles, ¿no?, o sea, convertir la avenida en una avenida que no es una vía de 6 carriles como planteaban y hacer aceras anchas a los lados que tenían mucho más uso, porque… bueno, al… al núcleo… de la asociación, nos convenció, ¿no?, y bueno, tuvimos que llegar a

> una asamblea, a decir a la gente ah… que no, y que se votaba[127].
> 20:12 (62:62)

As can be seen, the architect, which in this case is the provider of *advice*, starts by questioning the original counterproposal and offers another option. The possibility of building another counterproposal requires of the provider a minimal understanding of the point of view of advisees, specifically the needs that are at stake, and the characteristics and aims of the effort in which his expertise is required. Such understanding can only be achieved in the course of interactions with the core of the entity, whose members are expected to have a complete and organized perspective over the issue. Moreover, considering that the shift from one counterproposal to another is based on a process of dialog in which the new counterproposal have to be justified by arguments related to the area of expertise of the professional, it can be expected that members of the core of the entity are qualified as valid speakers.

Once that the second counterproposal is accepted by the core of the entity, a complex task appears as the next step: translating to the grassroots the arguments in which the new counterproposal is based so that the core of the association can count with their support. Here, the burden of the effects of *advice* falls on members of the core of the association. The task, which belongs to the chain in which many knowledge-related activities are subsumed, requires more than a translation, because a decision that was already made has to be revisited. This is partially due to the fact that the shift has been produced in a space in which the grassroots can hardly participate.

As for the distinction that separates experts from lay people, it can be said that such distinction is neither absolute nor dichotomous. Depending on the moment of that chain of activities in which *advice* has its part and on the aspect of the issue

[127] ...at the end, the architect that finally started working with us, in a moment in which the fight was very mature, told us that the vindication of the avenue was wrongly posited, basically because this is a zone with enormous slopes, OK? Then, of course, he proposed two things: one, that the avenue, sure, a two-way avenue sometimes can be uncomfortable, and that an avenue with great slopes would have to be narrow... well, there wasn't... Then, he proposed an intermediate solution, which consisted of, well... there is some sort of central division in the road, but he basically proposed to reduce the number of lanes, OK?, which is to say that the avenue shouldn't be an six-lane avenue as it was posited in the original proposal, and building wide sidewalks in both sides, which would be much more functional, because... well... he managed to convinced us, the core of the association, OK? And well, we had to pose the new proposal in an assembly, we had to say 'no' to the people [that supported the original vindication] and that it was necessary to vote.

that is highlighted, the same agent can play one role or the other. Besides, being lay or expert is the result of locating agents in a given point of a scale in which each role occupies an extreme position. How and where the line is drawn, and how the resulting ascriptions provide a frame for orientating one's own performance and making sense of others' performances are questions that have to be addressed in other plains, and this will be done in the following chapters.

The last excerpt devoted to *consultancy and advice* as civic goods includes some words from the President of a neighborhood association. The interviewee explains how his entity managed to get funds for professional advice. The issue on which *advice* was required was a wide-range project of urban development designed by the local government and representatives from the Private Sector:

> ...en el tema del 22@, que es un proyecto urbanístico con sus dificultades y sus características, cuando se inició el proyecto del [], planteamos la necesidad de tener un técnico de nuestra confianza para que nos orientara en el plano urbanístico y orientara a los vecinos afectados, pero a cargo de la administración municipal. Esto se ha conseguido, o sea, y esta… diríamos, esta manera de… de… complementar la participación con técnicos… ah… que asesoren al movimiento vecinal se está llevando a cabo en el tema de técnicos de ingeniería o de geólogos, en el tema del AVE, por ejemplo, o en el tema de la Sagrada Familia para el proyecto urbanístico de la… de la plaza. Porque entendemos que si no tenemos unas personas capaces de… de… competentes en la materia… yo por ejemplo siempre lo digo, yo soy delineante, he sido delineante de dibujo y de proyectos, pues tengo mi profesionalidad, pero en materia urbanística o materia arquitectónica no puedo competir porque no… no es mi profesión, ni tengo que hacerlo. O sea, cuando los vecinos nos ponemos a hacer de técnicos… de técnicos, que no es nuestra profesión, fracasamos, porque no somos técnicos. Tiene que haber técnicos que nos asesoren y que nos orienten, siempre y cuando, que, las decisiones políticas las tomamos los vecinos, no los técnicos. ‘tonces, esta manera de participar, en

> este caso concreto, pienso que hay que exigirla cada vez más[128].
> 22:37 (158:158)

As in the first excerpt of this section, the provision of *advice* on a regular basis is expensive, and requires an acquisitive capacity that is unusual for many entities. Besides, the value of *advice* depends on the presence or absence in the entity of members that count with the expertise related to the subject that requires specialized knowledge. Finally, as in the second excerpt, the interviewee underlines the terms in which the relationship through which *advice* is provided should be conceived. Technicians are to offer recommendations and ideas, while members of the entity – neighbors in this case – are to make decisions. Again, it is necessary to stress that, according to this specification, the insistence in circumscribing the role of advisers to provide information on significant aspects and the role of advisees to using that information when making decisions does not seem to be accurate when considering the outcome of the decision. If *advice* is delivered properly, the conditions for making a decision that is congruent with the direction implicitly or explicitly included in the contents of received *advice* are likely to be established during the delivery. If this is true, what is thought of as decision making is finally a mere ratification of the contents of the *advice*.

5e. Specificities of diffusion as a civic good

First of all, one has to ask for the kind of practices and relations in which *diffusion* arises as an intention, acquires its shape and gets to be recognizable as such. As for the emergence of the necessity of getting others to know something in certain manner – which is equal to the intention of *diffusion* –, be it the general population

[128] ...in the [the name of a long-range project of urban development] project for instance, which is an urban development project with its difficulties and characteristics, when the [] project started, we posed the necessity of counting with a technician to whom we could trust, so that he could give us advice in urban development matters and guide affected neighbors, but being paid by the City Council. This has been achieved, that is to say that... and this way of... let's say, this manner of complementing participation with the aid of technicians... hum... that give advice to the neighborhood movement is being used in fields such as engineering technicians or geologists, with regard to the fast train, for instance, or, with regard to the urban project of the public square in front of the Sagrada Familia. Because we think that if we don't have individuals capable of... qualified in the field... For instance, I usually say this, I am a draftsman, I've been draftsman of drawings and projects, so I have my professionalism, but in urban development matters or architectonic matters I'm not qualified for offering advice, because those are not my professions, and I don't have to do it. So, when we neighbors try to act as technicians... as technicians, which is not our profession, we fail, because we are not technicians. There has to be technicians who can give us advice and orientations, as long as political decisions are made by neighbors, and not by technicians. Thus, I think that this form of participating, in this specific case, has to be demanded more an more.

or well-specified narrowed targets, it can be conceived as a practical effect. Such practical effect is the outcome of the articulation between those forms of knowledge upon which the core of the entity makes sense of its own activity and the sense of identity derived from the reason for being of the entity. Thus the pertinence of *diffusion*, of getting other to see some aspects of social life in a right, proper, useful or effective manner, is the result of a tacit prescription that is inherent to the interplay of knowledge of the world and self-knowledge. This is why the intentionality that leads *diffusion* is meta-linguistic and reflexive. Knowledge of the world relies on the rationality upon which distinctions from true or false, or right and wrong are built. Self-knowledge in turn, is attached to the sense of mission around which a collective undertaking, even an institutionalized one, which is the case for TS entities, deploys its activities. The final crystallization of this silent urge might not necessarily come from within the core of the entity. Request made by other entities, by the media or by organizations from other sectors might finally give this intentionality the form of *diffusion*. In all cases, the urge for getting others to know acquire the final form of *diffusion* by means of specific practices.

As for the achievement of *diffusion*, it relies on the mobilization of communicative capabilities and channels. The process of formatting the message, the specifications of the conditions for its delivering and the enactment of those specifications are the most important aspects of *diffusion*. These aspects not only define how *diffusion* finally comes into being. Simultaneously, they also enable and delimit the terms of the exchange that makes of *diffusion* an activity that functions as a good. In other words, issues of format are crucial in terms of aesthetics. The appearance, the form of the message shapes the object of the message. By producing a sense of familiarity – a re-cognition – through an aesthetic objectification of certain events, *diffusion* activities are close to marketing and publicity.

Diffusion attempts are raised and have sense in a complex matrix of interrelated agents, institutions and practices in which production and reproduction of knowledge is selectively performed. *Diffusion* is always developed through specific modes that range from a loosely planned distribution of printed materials, to a periodical presence in the mass media. Thus, it depends on means available, preferred formats, competing messages, expected interest from the part of the target and conditions in which the delivering is performed.

Formats of delivering have standards of their own that undoubtedly impose some constraints to the contents. The kind of message delivered in a television interview to a member of a coordinative-representative entity that groups grassroots entities of people with rare diseases is not the same that the one delivered through a handout or by means of fixated posters. Their contents might be intended to be the same. Nevertheless, in as much as formats are strongly dependent on the medium used and on non-written rules on how contents should be presented, the outcomes will be different. This is why when considering the combination of medium, standards, contents and purpose of any effort of *diffusion*; it might be adequate to address the functioning and outcomes of such combination in terms of distinctive genres.

The next excerpt includes a segment of an interview to the manager of the *ACAP* and the *UCCAP*. The interviewee speaks about the most common activities of both entities:

> …en otras temporadas… mmm… colaboramos con la diputación, por ejemplo, en unas charlas, esto va a ser más a primeros de año, pero los organizamos ahora también, colaborar en unas charlas ah… dirigidas a los padres de municipios pequeños. … donde participan el resto de profesionales del… de los otros dispositivos, la… la comadrona, el pediatra, y lo que queremos nosotros es que los conozcan a todos, que la gente los conozca, que la gente con niños en estas edades, conozcan a todos los profesionales que pueden atender a su niño en estos periodos, de 0 a 6 años, teniendo al centro de atención precoz como centro… como referencia, pero que se vea, que se muestre y que se… que se viva de alguna forma la interrelación entre todos los dispositivos de atención a la infancia[129]. 15:35 (225:225)

Regarding the format of *diffusion*, it can be described as a talk in which a network of experts offers some reasons and suggestions to create or modify the right view

[129] ...in other moments... hum... we collaborated with the Deputation, in talks, for instance, usually at the beginning of the year, but we are currently planning them too, collaborating in talks hum... addressed to parents from small municipalities... in which professionals from other childcare services... the local midwife, the pediatrician, and we want parents to know them all, we want people to know them, we want people with children of that age to know all the kinds of professionals that can take care of their children during these periods, from 0 to 6 years, with the early child intervention center as the core... as the referent, but we want to make these visible, to show them, to make them sort of live the interrelation among all childcare services.

of a public issue. Note how the format of this kind of talk requires in this case the collaboration among different instances – in this case, at least local government and local childcare services –, which means that the configuration of what the entity can offer as *diffusion* has to be adjusted to the functioning of such collaboration. This collaboration implies the establishment or maintenance of relationships that have an institutional character and thus translate the principles of their institutional functioning to the provision of *diffusion*. Both the institutional character of the network that performs *diffusion* and the status of experts that the providers of *diffusion* – the nodes of the network – have, are the bases upon which the authority of the speakers – at least on the subject that is addressed in the encounter – is built. Such authority has to be performed by means of exposing the speakers' credentials and by showing their mastery of an specialized terminology and forms of talk that are expected to be out the reach of a lay person. The co-presence of representatives of different institutions – a feature that can be remarked by the ownership and disposition of the spaces in which the talks are conducted – also serves to this purpose. This performance might be seen as a process of symbolic transference – some sort of osmosis – in which entities involved get confused and transfer each other their most salient attributes. As a result of its participation in these forms of *diffusion*, a TS entity increases its status in terms of expertise and institutional character.

As for the delimitation of the target, the tracing of the dividing line requires to be achieved throughout the whole process, starting with the emergence of the intention of *diffusion*. The line is one that, roughly speaking, separates those that know from those that need to know. In order to function, its feasibility – which is estimated through the operations by which the dividing line is drawn – has to be achieved during the preparation and conduction of the encounters. When an individual or group that is included in the target of *diffusion* has some previous knowledge or experience with regard to the issues that are addressed in the encounter, the dividing line is threatened. As a consequence, the situation has to be managed in a way that allows for the line to regain its feasibility, whether by previously discouraging expert-like interventions from these individuals or groups, by de-authorizing them when interventions of this sort appear, or by assimilating them to the other side of the line. One way or another, maintaining the line is crucial for *diffusion* to occur, at least when it has some format based on live, face

to face encounters. If the division is questioned, eroded or withdrawn, then *diffusion* ceases to exist as such and other forms arise – reiterative conversations or discussions, for instance –, or the encounter simply comes to an end.

As can be seen, getting *diffusion* to work implies the mobilization of some capabilities and organizational conditions and arrangements, the declarable side of which can be put in terms of communication skills. Nevertheless, these capabilities and organizational conditions also include an opaque, non-declarable side in which the settings for *diffusion* and the activities through which it is carried out recreate and accentuate the differences that make of *diffusion* something desirable or required. Individuals and groups that are part of the core of an entity are likely to get involved in the kind of situations required to acquire such skills or are otherwise pushed out of the core in some sort of simultaneous process of training and selection. The process depends not only on dispositions that enable agents to perform the tasks, but also of the degree of availability of agents to devote time to such tasks.

As the reader has probably noted, there are some similarities between *diffusion* and *fostering-promoting*. This is a pertinent question indeed. Both forms of activity are intended to operate a change in their targets and both are unrequested or, when requested, the request is made by a third party. Nevertheless, the specificities of each form do not occupy a secondary position, at least in what they have to do with the aims of our current analysis. The first of such specificities is related to the form and functioning of each activity. While *fostering-promoting* has basically the form of a suggestion, *diffusion* has the form of a charming talk. The second specificity can be found in the kind of effect that each activity is intended to produce. *Fostering-promoting* seeks to convince, to generate compliance. *Diffusion* in turn seeks to raise awareness and discussion. While this difference might seem too subtle for any distinction, its practical implications are the basis upon which the distinction is drawn. This means that the kind of practices through which *fostering-promoting* or *diffusion* are crystallized into recognizable, salient, shaped, activities are organized following different schemes. And yet, there is a third specific attribute, strictly relational, that not only allows for distinguishing *diffusion* from *fostering-promoting*, but also for dealing with their possible interrelations. *Fostering-promoting* and *diffusion* are frequently intertwined as the practices by which they come into being are engaged one another. But in every

case, one has a subordinated position in its relation with the other. This is why an observer might witness a *fostering-promoting* series of activities that consists of convincing people that they have to offer their opinions and proposals as a part of a public consultation or plebiscite. During the carrying out of the consultation, part of the activities might include the intervention of professionals in the media intended to explain people how hard it has been for former generations to gain the right for having a say in public matters. Here, the expert exerts a function that, from its beginning, has been conceived of as a mean. Different forms of activities like *diffusion* and *fostering-promoting* are thus susceptible from getting engaged, but there has to be an order of subordination that allows us to distinguish the primary form of activity from the secondary one. No doubt these engagements have effects, most of which reach the exchanges through which these forms of activity acquire their value.

Before start dealing with the next form of civic good, there are a few observations around the idea of *diffusion* genres that deserve to be included. *Diffusion* genres are strongly linked the kind of support or format through which they are practiced. Such formats include: (1) rough printed materials (handouts, brochures, pamphlets, hand-made posters); (2) fine printed materials (professionally designed posters, magazines, reports, journals, books); (3) Web-based media (Web sites with their different applications and variations); (4) special events (roundtables, conferences, meetings or expositions); and (5) presence in massive media (through news conference, interviews or by means of media coverage in general).

It has to be stressed that not all of the mentioned formats are accessible for every single TS entity. Writing, photocopying and distributing handouts and brochures are relatively low cost activities and require skills that under normal circumstances are not hard to find. Other activities in turn might require more resources and investments – editing and printing books –, more specialized skills – designing and maintaining a Web site – or a given status or notoriety – scheduling a news conference.

Thinking of ways of achieving *diffusion* in terms of genres is useful because it allows a better comprehension of the ways in which the strategical needs behind any *diffusion* activity are pursued according to the reason for being, status,

relationships, knowledge and resources of a given entity. While formats are not crucial *per se*, the conditions that allow a TS entity to take advantage of some formats are. In each case, there is an articulation of aspects that define: (1) the innovative or disruptive use of a given format; (2) the kinds of targets addressed, along with their representations; (3) resources and knowledge required in each case; (4) expectations of efficacy; (5) expectations of contesting messages or apathy and lack of interest from the part of the target; and (6) issues regarding to the timing of the delivery. Each genre implies a distinctive articulation of the former aspects. Thus, it is not surprising to note that some entities made a recurrent use of genres, depending on their area of activity and, above all, on their dimensions and status.

A case in which thinking of genres shows its relevance is that of collaborations with mass media. During the interview with the President of the *FAVB*, the interviewee brought into the conversation her concern with the difficulties inherent to the ways in which materials recorded for television broadcastings are edited. The interviewee exposed that she learned to negotiate some conditions before accepting any interview from television news reporters. Among such conditions, the interviewee underscored that she always asks for a minimal time of broadcasting of uncut recordings, so her interventions were not fragmented. The interviewee was well aware of the ways in which a message could be manipulated or modified by breaking it into small pieces that later could be used in order to support a point of view different to the original one.

Several implications can be drawn from this excerpt. First, there is a learning process by which members of the core of an entity develop a frame for haggling with the media. Second, there are no warrants that the agreements established prior to any collaboration with the media are going to be respected. Anyway, entities that are positioned as obliged references with regard to some issues are likely to be asked for their point of view in future situations. This expectation forces the media to act according to those basic agreements. TS entities have to take advantages of current events and thus opportunity remains as a crucial factor when collaborating with the media. Fourth, collaborating with mass media usually produces effects not only related to *diffusion*. Activities of *pressure*, *compliance* and *relation* are areas in which presence in the media might be crucial for some entities. Fifth, competing with other messages would be naively conceived if it

were thought of only as a contest that occurs in the target (e.g. the ways in which a selected segment of the population manages and makes sense of the differences among received messages). The contests among messages start since their production. This is crucial for understanding contests among messages, for most of TS entities develop their diffusion efforts under uneven conditions. Status of authority in specific areas; resources that can be destined to diffusion tasks; skills and knowledge on how to strategically manage *diffusion*; and experience regarding how to deal with mass media are some of the conditions in which the majority of TS entities are in clear disadvantage in front of other organizations. And yet, these conditions are the basis from which an entity can seek for a convenient definition of the terms to which collaboration with the media has to be adjusted. Behind any attempt of haggling with the media, there is a search for efficacy in the deliverance of the message, while the fear of being used or misinterpreted highlights what has to be avoided.

For being considered as in the middle of a contest, a message does not need to face a symmetrically oppose counter-message. The contest takes place in a context of overproduction. Moreover, this overproduction is raised and circulates through a matrix conformed by practices regarded to communication, their material traces, and their links with wider tendencies. Messages are produced and delivered along with trends with distinctive directions. And it is in the middle of this trends that many *diffusion* activities area easily eroded, assimilated and depreciated. The chances of impact for a given *diffusion* effort are thus directly proportional to its degree of alignment with a trend. And trends, in turn, are the ongoing result of the subsuming of several attempts. *Diffusion* activities, in as much as they arise in such trends, constitute a particular form of proselytism, an implicit promotion for certain perspective that, simultaneously, is produced by the perspective it attempts to promote.

5f. The production of understanding as a civic value

As with other forms of activity, *understanding* can be addressed in terms of the configuration of practices by which it is achieved or according to the effects of such configurations of practices. As for its effects, our account of *understanding* includes only those that can be conceived as products because of their delimitability, which is directly proportional to their distinguishability. Products of

understanding, conceived as delimited, circumscribed effects, have a recursive property that easily turns them into elements that configure further *understanding* activities until they get to function as common places or get, suddenly or progressively, discontinued. A possible and, according to the aims of this study, relevant distinction among products of *understanding* can be depicted in terms of their distant or close relationship with the functionality or distinctive character of *understanding* activities. This relation is marked by the intrinsic or extrinsic relation between products and activities, according to the logic or direction that makes a series of *understanding* activities recognizable as such. On one hand, there are products that can be properly addressed as outcomes of *understanding* activities because of their close relation to the intentionality ascribable to such activities. Outcomes of *understanding* include accounts, explanations, arguments, evidence, scenarios and measures to take around the issues at stake in a given undertaking. On the other hand, there are products of *understanding* whose relation with the series of activities by means of which they have been generated has an extrinsic character. These products can be addressed as traces of *understanding*, echoes or remainings of activities whose resonance is conditioned by the general functioning of the organizational arrangements of a given TS entity. Traces of *understanding* include (1) all sorts of documents (reports, minutes, bulletins, newsletters, etcetera) in which pieces of outcomes of *understanding* are fixated; (2) statements and enunciations that, being standardized at some degree, are frequently brought into conversations, event by individuals that did not take part in their production; and (3) references made to the activities and encounters that produced those statements and enunciations. Traces constitute the support, whether in the form of object – a document – or in the form of action – a moment of a conversation –, of outcomes.

With regard to the practices by which *understanding* is achieved, their joint deployment sustains the functioning of *understanding*. Such functioning occurs in a way in which comprehension is reached and explanations are elaborated through the establishment of causal relationships and, specially, through the considerations of other significant agents' points of view, interest and moves.

According to our purposes, an account of the functioning of *understanding* would necessarily require a careful consideration of (1) how and why the need for *understanding* is raised and configured, (2) which kind of tasks, procedures and

resources are used throughout different processes and (3) the detailed links between the specific outcomes and traces that the functioning of *understanding* produces and the tasks, procedures and resources by which the functioning is sustained. Before addressing these aspects, it is necessary to make a few observations about the role that agents' own conceptions of the process of *understanding* play in its functioning.

When considering *understanding* in terms of its functioning, it has to be noted that agents' activities are deployed around an objectification of the process. Such objectification is conformed by explicit sets of statements on the procedures and conditions *understanding* requires. These sets of statements offer a version on how *understanding* must be achieved. This sort of representation – objectified, declarative knowledge – of *understanding* serves it purpose because it let concerned agents be ware of the kind of activities they are mutually expected to perform and the kind of – recognizable – situation in which they get involved at the moment they start developing an *understanding* activity.

Nevertheless, agents' own objectifications of *understanding* cannot be taken into account as if they were unproblematic descriptions. Considering their practical relevance, one cannot but note these objectifications are a functionally inseparable element of the phenomenon they claim to represent. Therefore, agents' objectifications of their own activities of *understanding* require to be considered in terms of the role they play in such activities.

In consonance with this direction of this inquiry, an important thing to note is that TS entities often put *understanding* at the core of participation, treating it as one of the requisites or defining attributes of any undertaking that claims to be participatory. The process itself is usually referred to as 'analysis', 'reflection', 'debate' or 'discussion'. Linking *understanding* and participation by means of those terms has three important implications: (1) it underlines the collective character of the process; (2) it carries the assumption that there are diverse points of view that deserve to be taken into account, and (3) it sustains the inextricable way with which knowledge and political positions are treated, with a lack o distinction between reaching agreements and elaborating a satisfactory account of the issue at stake.

Uses of the way in which *understanding* is objectified are important, especially because of the dual conception of *understanding* activities, which are referred to both as a mean and as an end themselves. As a mean, *understanding* has to be conceived as flexible in terms of the specific activities through which it is achieved. Bounded to the intention according to which *understanding* efforts are raised, *understanding* activities as a mean are expected to respond to a logic of efficacy and efficiency. In other words, specific activities are eligible, optional, and their selection is subordinated to the question the answer of which they should help to obtain. As an end themselves, *understanding* activities – or, more precisely, their representation in terms of procedures – are thought of and brought about as forms of proceeding that assure the participatory quality of a given undertaking. From this side of the duality in the objectification of *understanding* activities, participatory claims are neither optional nor subordinated to a selection based on criteria of efficacy and efficiency. Hence, activities of *understanding* should bring horizontality, openness, and other qualities – all associated to the idea of democracy – to the *understanding* process and also to the specific undertaking to which the *understanding* process is subordinated.

The duality of *understanding*, as it is objectified by concerned agents, is a potential source of disagreement, the management of which can take a considerable amount of efforts when different manners of dealing with situations that require *understanding* are faced each other. As a part of representations of *understanding*, this mean–end duality gets to be embodied in different forms according to situations and agents' positions. In the next excerpt, a technician from the *CBS* exposes his concerns with the deadlines with which their process of participatory planning had to be conducted:

> Con sus dificultades, de que las conversa... de que... igual no ha habido... en el marco, igual no ha habido tiempo de reflexión. Ha habido tiempo de análisis pero no de reflexión. De discusión. Es decir, “yo creo que aquella necesidad... yo creo que aquella necesidad...”[130] 17:54 (124:124)

[130] With its difficulties, the conversa... the... it seems that it has been a lack of... in our framework, maybe it has been a lack of reflection. There has been time for analyzing, but no for reflection. For discussion. What is to say “I think that need... I think that need...”

There is a sense of tension between the need for achieving certain goals according to certain deadlines, and the willing for creating spaces in which issues at stake can be collectively addressed so that different voices can be listened and understood. Moreover, it seems that there are not definitive ways of solving this tension, one that is easily grasped in local representations of *understanding*.

These objectifications are crossed by co-existing ideas on how to treat a given kind of question, how to make sense of available information, and how to productively deal with different points of view. Besides, they constitute the basis for arguments that can be selectively used to authorize or de-authorize certain proposals, declarations or comments that arise in the course of an understanding effort. Hence, concerns embodied by involved agents can take advantage of tensions raised by this duality and use them strategically.

Yet, there is still another implication of the mean-end duality common in objectifications of *understanding*. The duality assures that the outcomes of *understanding* are able to be considered as horizontal, open and inclusive on one side, and as solid, accurate, trustable and meaningful on the other. Both sets of attributes, those that are related to democratic claims and those that are related to the need for efficacy and efficiency according to requisites that are intrinsic to the understanding effort[131], are crucial when *understanding* is put into circulation through the channels that form the market of civic activities.

As for the emergence of the need for understanding, there is an outstanding, unavoidable task that consists of configuring what might be called 'mobilizing questions.' This is a necessary first step that has to be achieved in all cases. *Understanding* requires placing the issues it deals with as legitimate and useful areas of inquiry. Issues acquire or reassure their legitimacy as a matter of public concern and their pertinence for the core of a given TS entity at a given moment. Simultaneously, the issue is put under the table as a matter that is still to be elucidated, whether because, collectively speaking, there are not complete accounts of it, because there are two or more competing accounts, or because serious questions have been raised about a previous account. In all cases, the issue is proposed as one that requires further development.

[131] Requirements associated to efficacy and efficiency do not need to be subordinated to the nature of the understanding process; in fact, they can gain certain autonomy. This case will be properly addressed in the following chapter.

Mobilizing questions are triggered by situations in which some kinds of needs are exposed and assumed by the core of an entity. Such needs can be put in terms of: (1) creating coherent and plausible accounts of events and relevant issues, (2) reaching agreements on such accounts, (3) generating insights for action, or (4) dealing with issues of self-comprehension. These needs require a collective elaboration and are based upon complaints, uneases, curiosity or intuitions that members of the core of an entity bring into conversations. As this bringing occurs, relevant events and conditions – which might have been underscored through another conversations, announcements, readings, and etcetera – find a bridge to get into the frame of issues that an entity addresses.

The inclusion of an issue and its further elaboration as a mobilizing question does not follow a straight, deliberated path. Since the potential issues that an entity can address are far more numerous than those the entity can effectively manage, there has to be a process through which some of those potential issues are picked while other are neglected. Such selection process – one that does not have to be evident for involved agents – starts any time several issues that are able to be turned into mobilizing questions are brought into conversations by members of the core of an entity. In front of this situation, the core of the entity has to revisit its priorities so that some of the potential mobilizing questions can be finally configured as such, in a movement that can be considered as the entrance to the activity of *understanding*. As for its consequences, the process conveys future constraints because it implies the practical concretion of the priorities in which it is raised. It narrows down the purposes that *understanding* can serve and it creates a sense of trajectory, the inertial effects of which decreases the chances for new configurations of mobilizing questions to be made. At a more localized level, the way in which a mobilizing question is configured narrows down the universe of possible answers and adequate ways of proceeding.

As for the specific approaches through which *understanding* is achieved once that mobilizing questions have been configured, they can be disentangled by analytically considering the guidelines, methods, representational aids, technological devices, temporal frames and expert advice that take a part in the functioning of *understanding*. Here, objectifications that concerned agents elaborate of their own understanding processes become crucial; their mean-end duality, which is associated to participatory claims and the need for efficacy and

efficiency, has a key role in the development that follows from the configuration of the mobilizing question. Objectifications of *understanding* are actualized – but not necessarily modified – every time statements are made about the next steps to take in order to deal with the mobilizing question or every time arguments are offered to support those statements.

Let us consider two moments of a specific event: a meeting for assessing the *Pla d'Equipaments*[132] elaborated and presented by the local government in Barcelona. In the meeting, held at the *FAVB* headquarters, members of the board and representatives from federated neighborhood associations were trying to figure out the implications of the proposal that personnel from the local government had presented to them in a previous meeting. What follows is an excerpt from the observation of the meting:

> ...el vocal de discapacitados de la FAVB propuso que se hiciera un ejercicio y se marcara en los documentos que tenían los equipamientos según su titularidad municipal o autonómica. El sentido del ejercicio, según el señor, es que permitía ver las trampas que hacía el ayuntamiento, porque cuando le cedía la titularidad de un equipamiento a la Generalitat, el ayuntamiento consideraba ese equipamiento como ya cubierto, independientemente de la Generalitat lo hubiese empezado a construir o no[133]. 9:29 (72:72)

later, at the end of the meeting, after an extremely discouraging intervention in which a newcomer, representative of a neighborhood association, expressed his pessimistic view on what an accurate study of facilities required by each neighborhood could add, the President of the FAVB closed the meeting as follows:

> Después de dos o tres intento por intervenir, [el presidente] tomó por fin la palabra y [...] defendió la importancia no sólo de un buen estudio de necesidades en cada barrio, sino de la coordinación de estos estudios para hacer un frente común. “No es un lecho de

[132] Facilities Plan.

[133] ...the person responsible for people with disabilities proposed an exercise that consisted on marking facilities on available documents according to their municipal or autonomic assignation. According to this person, the sense of the exercise consists in that it allows to see how the local government was cheating, because after having transferred to the Generalitat the assignation of a facility, the local government considered that the facility was attained, no matter if the Generalitat had started to build the facility or not.

> rosas pero la eficacia es más alta", concluyó [el presidente][134].
> 9:41(98:98)

Both excerpts are relevant because they show how agents bring to the discussion 'pieces' of objectification of *understanding*. Also, they show how this 'pieces' fit to the development of attempts to deal with the mobilizing question as it has been configured in the first place. As for the proposal of the person that is responsible for matters related to people with disabilities, the analytical procedure – which consists of checking out facilities included in available documents, the assignation of which had been transferred from the municipal government to the autonomic government – serves as a fine example of what we have called 'evidence production'. Such procedure was not likely to be followed and applied by many of the assistants to the meeting, and yet it produced the desired effect since it stood as a proof of the 'cheating' attempts of the municipal government. The second excerpt includes statements made from a wider perspective; in this sense, they can be conceived of as performing a framing function, one that deals with the whole process of understanding and the specific undertaking to which it is attached. Hence, it is not surprising to note that these framing statements were made by the President, the visible head of the entity. Moreover, besides of serving as a closure and thus preventing further discouraging interventions that would risk the current frame for *understanding*, the intervention of the President implies an instantiation of the duality in objectifications of *understanding*. Concerned agents from each neighborhood association are expected to give voice to local needs in terms of facilities, but they are also expected to do so in an orderly, systematic and coordinated manner.

Another aspect that plays an outstanding role in understanding efforts is that of aids using to facilitate *understanding* activities. There are different kinds of aids that can have a part in understanding efforts. Visual aids (diagrams and charts, projected on screen or distributed through handouts) are used in a way that allows to share key pieces of information with concerned agents. Professional advice, a civic activity in its own terms, has also a key role as an aid of *understanding*, in as much as it can offer answers to specific questions or specialized arguments that

[134] After two or three attempts to intervene, [the President] finally managed to make his intervention and [...] defended the importance of a good study of needs in each neighborhood and also of the coordination of these studies so that a common front could be made. "It's not a bed of roses, but its efficacy is higher", concluded [the President].

later can be used to sustain the positions held. Of course, as said before, professional advice implies the risk of modifying current positions in unexpected directions. A third kind of aid that is relevant is that of information and communication technologies. The role of ICT's as devices that enable a fast exchange of certain kinds of information, functions as a mediating instance that, simultaneously, enables and constraints spaces of interaction. AS for their enabling side, ICT's – mainly the e-mail and other Internet-based tools – allow concerned agents to keep in touch with one another while fostering the flows of impressions, news, warnings, and information related to – current or potential – common concerns. As for their constraining side, ICT's imply a necessary homogenization of codes and, to a lesser extent, of practices related to communication. The amount of information in flow gets to be inversely proportional to the analysis, interpretation and elaboration of such information.

Aids of *understanding* are not a distinctive feature of TS entities. Their presence is wide across all spaces of sectorial activity, even in those that are under-sectorial. But this lack of distinctiveness does not make of aids a less important element in an attempt of dealing with the ways in which *understanding* is achieved. In fact, the wide presence of ICT's in practically all sectors of activity allows us to identify some criteria and ways of proceeding that are used as cues to establish the value of *understanding*. For instance, the degree at which ICT's are used, their presence in organizational activity, seems to be considered as a measure of the level of professionalization that a given TS entity has reached. Such criteria and ways of proceeding are not intrinsic to the Third Sector, and yet they shape some aspects of its functioning because, according to their properties, they simultaneously enable and constraints certain possibilities. Besides, along with their representations, ICT's convey practical schemes that narrow down such possibilities to agents' intuitions on how they should be used.

What is important in all cases is that aids of *understanding* are well rooted in the conversion of complaints, uneases, curiosity, or intuitions that members of the core of an entity bring into conversations. Those raw materials are made explicit, filtered and labeled so that they can conform well-delimited statements, supported by arguments and evidence, collectively or institutionally sustained, and minimally coherent with those conceptions and forms of talk that characterize the organizational life of a given TS entity. Aids of *understanding* exert their shaping

capacity along with time frames, which are far more complex that deadlines, because they include anticipations about the time that should be devoted to each activity and about the ideal localization of each activity in a time line.

A final note on the making of *understanding* is related to specialization, an important effect *understanding* activities can have on the core of an entity. The following excerpts make reference to an undertaking referred to by a member of the neighborhood association from *El Clot-Camp de l'Arpa*:

> ...en los tres últimos años, cuatro últimos años, elaboramos un… lo que se llama un plan de… de… equipamientos, o sea, nos reunimos las entidades, y entonces dijimos… estudiamos las ratios, eh… más o menos de países europeos, por ejemplo de cuántos… eh… por cuántos habitantes nos correspondía un… un ambulatorio, ¿eh?[135] 23:16 (104:104)

> [...] qué ratio de… de… esto, para hacer una guardería, una escuela bressol, ¿no? Estudiamos a fondo, ¿eh?, entonces, cuando los tuvimos concreto, lo elaboramos, lo elaboramos, con los mismos técnicos del ayuntamiento[136] 23:17 (108:108)

Specialization here appears as a collective attribute that results from a deep involvement in a task that require professional knowledge. In the process, a long-term one, professional advice (calculating how many kinder garden facilities were required) is also a learning opportunity. Collectively speaking, members of the core of an entity incorporate procedures and logics that otherwise would remain out of their reach. Nevertheless, as an entity develops capabilities for *understanding* it makes harder for its grassroots to effectively collaborate in the process. This is not to say that individuals located in the grassroots cannot get involved in such undertakings. They might be able to get involved, but in the process, they are likely to incorporate the schemes, logics and practices upon which the distinction between the core and the grassroots is based.

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135 ...during the last three years, last four years, we elaborated a... what is known as a facilities... plan, which is to say that we entities gathered and then we said.... we studied the ratios... hum... more or less... from european countries, for instance, of how many.... inhabitants per outpatient clinic were required, right?

136 [...] what ratio of.... of this... to get a kindergarten facility, right? We studied it deeply, right? Then, when we had it well specified, we elaborated it, we elaborated it with technicians from the municipal government.

5g. *Impugning* and legitimacy

A crucial aspect of *impugning* consists of its legitimating function on decisions made in arenas in which potentially concerned agents do not have access. This legitimating function, which has a procedural character, allows decision makers to present their procedures as open and transparent. In other words, while *impugning*, in general terms, serves decision makers to argue in favor of the democratic nature of their procedures, the inefficacy of specific procedures of *impugning* allows concerned agents to justify forms of pressure that do not follow institutional channels.

The following excerpt comes from an interview with the current and the former Presidents of the *ABHGU*. During that moment of the conversation, the former President explained how assemblies were conducted in his entity:

> Y luego después, claro, los resultados también se publican. Si alguien lo quiere impugnar, está en su derecho. Tenemos el libro de actas, que luego se añade...
>
> X: ¿Y DÓNDE SE PUBLICA?
>
> M: En las unidades y en el tablón de anuncios[137]. 14:22 (221:225)

Here, arrangements for *impugning* are settled at a small scale, one in which individuals might pursue an amendment in documents that are intended to keep record of meetings, including interventions and decisions made or ratified in them. What is worth to mention is that the former President presents the right of *impugning* as a prerogative that adds a democratic quality to their procedures. Specific outcomes of *impugning* are not as important as the provision of the conditions it requires to be pursued.

As for the stewards of *impugning* – which in large scale matters include administrative personnel and legal bodies –, their legitimating role is based on their concern for the conduction of *impugning* according to specified procedures. In this sense, the stewards' focus is to be found in the procedure for its own sake. They are, institutionally speaking, accountable for its correct application and thus have to assure that everything goes according to the rules.

[137] And then, of course, results are also published. If somebody wants to impugn them, he is in his right to do it. We have the book of minutes, that later is added...
X: And where is it published?
M: In the units and in the message board.

5h. The effectiveness of requests

Several aspects need to be taken into account when formulating a request in order to assure that it is going to be effective:

(1) Considering that many *requests* are posed in a vague manner, it is necessary to describe the need at stake in a precise manner. It is not the same to ask the authorities of a district for more citizen participation on a given project, than to ask them for a meeting in which technicians can explain the project to assistants and answer their questions. In a similar manner, the kind of responses that demanding more security in a neighborhood is likely to get are different from those that consist of asking for more presence of the police during the night in certain problematic areas. In other words, *requests* that are vague and rely on the demand of statements of good intentions are likely to get precisely what they ask for: statements of good intentions. For an example of this it can be useful to describe a situation. During a meeting of the Catalan delegation of *FEDER*, a guest presented a book about the Rett syndrome[138]. After presenting the book, the guest asked the assistants to help her to spread the word about the book and about the syndrome. As can be anticipated, most of the assistant responded affirmatively to such request, whether by pronouncing the word 'yes' or by nodding. Nevertheless, since the request was particularly vague, effective action followed by that collective declaration of good intentions – how could someone dare to say 'no'? - was not likely to happen.

(2) There has to be a calculation of the probable outcomes, an important part of which consists of advancing the proportion between what is going to be requested and what can be finally granted. Based on this calculation, the request might be deliberately increased, quantitatively speaking, so that the probability of receiving the desired amount can be also increased.

(3) Another important aspect in the formulating of a request is that of its justification. Here, we might find intrinsic and extrinsic forms of making the case for the request. Intrinsic forms might include appeals to right and duties with regard to issues to which the request is regarded and the presentation of evidence on the need. Extrinsic forms might include the number of collectives and

[138] 13:19 (28:28)

individuals that ascribe the request and, indirectly or in a subtle manner, the status of some of them.

(4) Above all those forms of making the case for the request, the rationale should rest upon a sense of what is right to think. It is not that concerned agents use that sense in a deliberate manner. Instead, this sense is what makes the request recognizable for them as one that has to be stated as valid and pertinent; such recognition appears in the concrete formulations through which the request is delivered. In other words, by being linked to a certain form of talk, this sense of what is right to think leads agents to write down the request in a language that can be recognizable by the potential providers of what is requested, in a reading that is informed by the same schemes through which the writing was done.

5i. Positions and roles in the production and delivery of critics

For a better comprehension of the process by which a *critic* meets its audiences, we can think of different positions and roles throughout the process. First of all, we can find concerned agents, a general position that includes all individuals and groups potentially or actually related with the issue at stake, whether because they are likely to be affected by activities that imply a change in the state of the issue or because they are able to take advantage of it.

From that pool of concerned agents, three further, narrower positions have to emerge. As *critics* are statements that follow from a first move, an action or inaction, that is being questioned, the context for criticizing implies that there are individuals, groups or institutions that make that first move. Those agents carry out the role of 'undertakers' or 'decision makers', always with regard to matters that can be treated as public issues, and thus, are susceptible to criticism.

In order for *critics* to actually arise, at least some sectors among the concerned agents have to assume the position of 'fault finders', that is, individual, groups or institutions that perform the task of pointing out fissures or uncovering disguises. 'Fault finders' require to collectively develop some conditions such as experience, ideological commitments, access to information and knowledge, so that they can be sensitive enough to register events that can be criticized. The acquaintance with some of those events might raise in the 'Fault finders' the need for uttering their disagreements by means of a rational formulation that, according to the domain to which the formulation belongs, appeals to principles. Moreover, the

universality of such principles has to be taken for granted in an intrinsic manner. This does not mean that *critics* cannot be made in a deliberately utilitarian way or, if you prefer, without conviction. Nevertheless, while such possibility cannot be rejected *a priori*, a high degree of consistency among the contents and forms of criticizing that the TS entities included in this study carry out suggest that utilitarian or instrumental critics are an exception. According to this, certain positions in the aforementioned broader debates are embodied by the 'fault finders' so that they can act through them.

When *critics* arise, undertakers or decision makers whose statements or activities are subjected to criticism are depicted as 'fault makers'. 'Fault makers' is thus a role that 'Fault finders' assign when targeting their *critics*. By implicitly designing undertakers or decision makers as 'fault makers', 'fault finders' exert an attempt of de-authorizing them at least with regard to the issue at stake. Hence, 'fault makers' are depicted as presumably unreliable or incompetent, depending on the intended or unintended character of the indicated fault. The move that those intrinsically self-proclaimed as 'fault finders' make can be understood as something more than the attempt of changing the situation with regard to the issue at stake. It also can be seen as an attempt of gaining a more advantaged position in the domain to which the issue belongs and in the arena in which decisions regarding that issue and other alike are made. Of course, when *critics* are effective, responses arise, and such responses might seek to invert the assignation of the roles of 'fault finder' and 'fault maker', thus creating the same de-authorizing and re-positioning effects. While the role of 'fault maker' seems to be closely associated with those positions that have full access to decision arenas or are in conditions of carrying out undertakings that have public impact, its interchangeability with the role of 'fault finder' reveals that the possibility of elaborating effective *critics* implies a *de facto* capacity for pursuing undertakings that, according to their own terms – the kind of activities to which TS entities are devoted – have public impact too.

But the account of the roles that *critics* and responses configure is not complete without considering a third party, one that is also drawn from the pool of concerned agents with regard to the issue at stake. Such third party, the composition of which might be diverse, plays the role of an 'audience' in front of the specific discussions that effective *critics* open. Any potential or actual

audience is thought of as having the capacity for acting upon the issue at stake in any conceivable way. This occurs as a result of a tacit assessment based on stereotyped representations. According to that anticipated capacity, audiences are treated by those that actively take part in a discussion as a particular kind of jury, one that is expected to determine the accuracy and rightfulness of the facing stances, both of which claim to be representative of the interests of the jury itself.

Audiences for *critics* about an issue vary in their dimensions, specificity and involvement with the process of elaborating and distributing the *critics*. On one side, there are large scale audiences, depicted over the idea of the average citizen, and without direct involvement in the elaboration of the *critics*. On the other side, there are well delimited audiences, composed by individuals that share some condition such as being inhabitants of a given area of the city or being professionals in certain discipline, whose involvement in the process of criticizing can be of certain importance.

5j. Critics and diffusion

With regard to the transformation of *critics* through *diffusion*, the role of the media seems to be crucial. The following press note points out some comments made by the FAVB with regard to the process of development of the Municipal Action Plan. It appeared in EL PAÍS (Catalonia edition, 02/10/2007):

> La FAVB pide más tiempo para debatir el plan municipal
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> La Federación de Asociaciones de Vecinos de Barcelona (FAVB) cree que el proceso de participación abierto por el Ayuntamiento de Barcelona para la elaboración del Plan de Actuación Municipal (PAM) puede ser una "cortina de humo" para enmascarar las críticas de sectores de la ciudad a proyectos urbanísticos. Entre otras cuestiones, la FAVB considera que un proceso de participación de verdad tiene que ser más largo del que se ha iniciado ahora -cuya duración aproximada será de unos dos meses- y estima que debía prolongarse hasta febrero del año próximo.
>
> Los ciudadanos de Barcelona tienen la posibilidad de presentar sus propuestas y aportaciones a este plan a través de un cuestionario electrónico que se podrá completar y enviar desde la misma web del PAM. La FAVB considera que el proceso

> participativo, abierto a toda la ciudadanía, puede tener efectos perversos. Y también critica que se dedique un millón de euros a todo el proceso participativo[139].

The contents of the press note are of great interest because the critics made by the FAVB are focused on the participatory claims of the Municipal Action Plan (PAM) as an attempt to (1) underline that the planning process lacks of an authentic participatory design, and (2) uncover the intrusion of non legitimate interest in the organization of the process.

Here, the media operate a reduction process that excludes the arguments and evidences on which the critical statements are founded. The reduction, which can be explained by the characteristics of the format under which the information is selected, organized, and displayed, can exert a trivializing effect that renders the statements obvious, arbitrary or futile. Nevertheless, the presence in the media of critics made by the FAVB can be considered as an indicator of its capacity for exerting pressure. This means that the FAVB is able – and expected – to mobilize both its knowledge on participatory procedures and its status as an advocate of citizens' interests in order to identify flaws, threatens, and veiled interests. Moreover, as long as the FAVB keeps on performing its critical function, the capacity for exerting pressure through *critics* is likely to be sustained over time, not only as a tactic but also as an identity trait, well rooted in the sense of mission or *raison d'etre* of the organization.

5k. Proposals, acquisition of skills and changes in the sense of a mission

An important effect of the development and delivery of *proposals* is that it creates the conditions for a reflection on the capabilities of the TS entity, and for their further enhancement and development. This effect can appear along with the development of the proposal, when members of the core of organization face

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139 The FAVB asks for more time to debate the municipal plan
The Barcelona Federation of Neighborhood Associations (FAVB) considers that the participatory process through which the City Government seeks to develop the *Municipal Action Plan* (PAM) can serve as a "smokescreen" for hiding critics from some sectors of the city to urban projects. Among other questions, the FAVB thinks that an authentic participative process has to be longer than the one that has been recently initiated.
Citizens from Barcelona are able to make their own proposals and contributions to this plan through an electronic questionnaire that can be answered and sent through the Web of the PAM. The FAVB considers that the participative process, open to all of the citizens, can have perverse effects. The FAVB also criticizes the budgetary assignation of one million Euros to the whole participative process.

some difficulties and seek for expert's advice. When this happens, the core of the entity enters into an extremely interesting moment that, borrowing from Vygotsky's work, could be loosely described as some sort of *proximal development zone.* (Vygotsky, 1962). In front of a given aim, the core of the entity realizes that some kind of tasks should be performed, and, at the same time, recognize the lack of certain skills or knowledge required in order to perform such tasks. The key point here is that when the core of the entity 'knows' what it does not 'know' but still needs to 'know', the conditions for the acquisition of such knowledge – particularly that immediate sense of necessity – are settled.

Although this movement toward the acquisition of certain skills and knowledge does not occur in every case, it is still of great importance because it shifts the sense of mission of the TS entities, and their relationships with organizations of other sector. In the process of developing *proposals* of certain complexity, the core is taking over the functions traditionally granted to other sectors, particularly the public administration. The implications of this movement include a progressive mastery of the forms of talk that are usual in the administration, and the restructuring of the way in which the role of authorities is conceived. According to this restructuring, which is fostered through the activity of some TS entities, the administration keeps its prerogatives with regard to decision making arenas, management of resources, and the development of those undertakings that are thematically ascribed to its scope, but its role changes toward a more executive functioning.

As can be advanced, this redefinition of positions and relations is not likely to remain unchallenged. Nevertheless, it settles down the basis for the negotiation of joint undertakings that integrate elements from different *proposals*. The preservation of a section of *la Torre del Fang,* an historical building of Barcelona, the demolition of which was included in the original plan for the construction of the high-speed railway, is an example of the outcomes that negotiations based on alternative *proposals* can reach.