NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND MAYNOOTH

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN DUBLIN

POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY AND STATE COOPTION

Alessandro Zagato*

2/1/2012

PhD Dissertation

Supervisor: Professor Mary P. Corcoran

* ISSP Doctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology, National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, National University of Ireland Maynooth.

Contents

SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

Between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, under the aegis of “Community Development” (CD), the Dublin inner city subaltern community struggles raised implicit and explicit political questions which differed substantially from those previously raised by the ‘official’ republican and socialist left. These questions concerned the lives of miscounted people, their place in the city and the resources available to them. They developed in unprecedented forms of political organization, which, for not being concerned with entering the domain of representative state power, kept themselves at a subjective distance from it. However, this independence had a short life. From the 1980s CD projects began to be rearticulated and ‘depoliticised’ under a bureaucratic framework of funding streams, management, expertise and service delivery. The prevailing emphasis on state defined concerns, concepts and modes of organization, as well as the decline of the original intellectual independence from the state apparatus, has progressively led to the present, paradoxical situation in which the taking away of state funds- officially justified by the financial crisis, and part of wider austerity measures imposed by the Irish state - is experienced by CD groups as their death knell.

Through concepts of ‘post-party politics’, as formulated by contemporary sociological and political theory, I evaluate CD’s original political approach. After analysing CD’s history as a ‘political sequence’, I give an in-depth overview of present institutional tendencies, drawing from oral contributions by activists, state agents and policy makers, participatory methods and ethnographic observation . As a provisional conclusion, I point to possible future scenarios and provide some recommendations for an eventual re-construction of CD’s independency, which, in my view, can only be achieved by returning to the ephemeral events and the spontaneity of life shaping Dublin’s inner city popular neighbourhoods.

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about popular protests that erupted in the inner city of Dublin during the second half of the 1960s and that subsequently evolved in independent grassroots organisations under the aegis of Community Development (CD). More concretely, I examine the way in which from around 1966 these struggles raised implicit and explicit political questions, which differed substantially from those previously raised by existing political formations including the republican and socialist left. These questions concerned the lives of ordinary – to put it with Ranciere (1999:32) - "uncounted" people and developed in unprecedented forms of political organisation. Not being particularly concerned with entering the domain of representative state power these organisations emerged at a subjective distance from it.

Central to my argument is the idea that, contrary to what most literature gives to understand, and despite its name, what is called "CD" in Dublin did not develop as the continuation of an existing project or tendency among social and political movements. I also argue that - although it is usually analysed from the point of view of a state type of logic, as if it was a state process, and despite its name - CD did not develop from an intrinsic evolution of state apparatuses, or from a bureaucratic type of logic (a scheme), as the present situation would suggest. Instead, it developed in the context of an historical rupture with previous modes of political thought and organisation; a rupture that opened an unprecedented space of political creativity and innovation.

These original experiences and their distance from the state and state-oriented forms of political organisation[1] have been challenged through the years. Especially from the 1980s there has been a tendency among CD projects to be rearticulated under a bureaucratic framework of funding streams, management, expertise and service delivery. The prevailing emphasis on state oriented concerns, concepts and modes of organization, as well as the

[1] I.e. organisations whose aim is to seize state-power through different means.

declining of the original “intellectual” independence from the state apparatus, has progressively led to the present, paradoxical situation in which the taking away of state funds - officially justified by the financial crisis, and part of wider austerity measures imposed by the Irish state - is experienced by CD groups as their death knell.

My purpose here is not that of presenting a comprehensive *historical* account of these processes. Whenever I could, I tried to rely on the (surprisingly little) historical research done by others. Rather, my intention is to reflect on the *political significance and consequences* of these original experiences, which I interpret as resonating with ‘macro-processes’ taking place at global scale. Although these ‘inventions’ in the field of CD politics and organisation have been intermittent and precarious, having experienced processes of depoliticisation, they have nevertheless left an indelible mark in political thought and praxis. Furthermore their depoliticisation highlights ambiguities and ‘weaknesses’ whose analysis is fundamental for the eventual development of new and more consistent experiments in this field.

1.1 New forms of politics and Marxism’s epochal crisis

Map of the inner city of Dublin. The norh and south side are divided by the river Liffey.

In Dublin, so called “community” activism is rooted in a phase of ruptures and unprecedented innovations in politics at global scale, which is usually referred to as “1968” – corresponding to the year of their maximum expansion worldwide. In reality this ‘1968 sequence’ lasted from the mid-sixties to the end of the seventies. Its course being shaped by disparate themes such as decolonization and national liberation struggles, students’ uprisings, anti-capitalist revolt, counterculture, new political energies and initiatives in the Socialist world - which produced events like the Cultural Revolution and the Prague Spring - and so on. It was in Connery’s (2009:184) words “the foregrounding of a new time, a time toward futurity”; a time in which new emancipatory movements were coming into being, often in antithesis to the ‘orthodox’ left and its traditional modes of social and political organisation.

As we know, these dispersed, heterogeneous and experimental struggles did not coagulate in forms of thought and organisation capable to literally ‘revolutionise societies’ – although they introduced many fundamental changes at various levels. Ideologically, they failed in producing a unitary and coherent agenda for transformation - to the extent that (after the failure of state-Marxism/socialism) the problem of the re-founding of a large scale emancipatory agenda (meaning a “universal” plan for the emancipation of humanity) is nowadays still open. The lack of such a unifying agenda reflected in the still “unconsolidated ideological nature of early 21st century politics” (Coombs 2011:138). Whereas the existence of the traditional left was based on - and legitimised by – its supposed *historical* role (the fact that it viewed itself as the agent of a progressive historical process), after the 1960s and 1970s political movements and events “no longer have a floor nor a horizon that gives historical validity to their battle” (Ranciere 2012). Which is an issue they constantly find themselves dealing with.

My study develops from a point of view that is internal to that epochal fracture in the field of political thought and organisation. This perspective implies a radical rethinking of categories on which politics has traditionally relied; and this, I will illustrate, is something that social sciences are not always keen to do.

It should be noticed that Marxism constitutes the epicentre of this fracture. As Alessandro Russo (1998) observes "one can trace back to the 1960s and 1970s a growing uncertainty, not only about actual political value, but also about the cultural substance of historico-social categories such as class, class struggle, modes of production, the state, equality, political parties, and so forth" (Russo 1998:180). Indeed with the advent of the sequence that we usually indicate with "1968" an entire network of common referents for politics lost its consistency at various levels. According to Russo (ibid. p 180) although this contested body of knowledge is intrinsic to Marxism's conceptual apparatus, it is not limited to it. It has affected all those fields in which Marxism constituted an "essential factor of cohesion" (ibid. p 180).

One of these fields corresponds to Social Sciences. Michel Foucault was the first to diagnose the danger that this disciplinary body could 'collapse'. Indeed in *Les mots et les choses*, "The Order of Things" (2004) - first published in 1966 -, after describing the central role human sciences played in modern *episteme*, he concluded that their crisis could lead to an eventual collapse of this unitary network of knowledge – of which 'Man' constitutes the centre, i.e. what needs to be conceived and known. In this space, which is essentially a space of conscious as well as unconscious representation, human sciences found their 'precarious' homeland. In this perspective, Foucault (2004:422) poetically warned that man could be "erased like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea".

Marxism has been a central “factor of cohesion” for social sciences - not just because it integrated them as they were still unstable end evolving disciplines. Paradoxically, Marxism’s structural contribution to the consolidation of social sciences was also related to the harsh reactions that it sparked amongst scholars. In other words, the process of constitution of (for example) sociology as a unitary discipline, found in the polemics against Marxism an essential propulsive and cohesive factor (Russo:2008). Russo elaborates this idea offering examples from Weber and Durkheim. These two modern founders of sociology developed a consistent part of their thought in opposition to Marxism. For example, one of Weber’s starting points is the refutation of the materialist conception of history – as he develops it in his “Protestant Ethics” (Russo:2008). In his view, who played the main role in historical development were the material vicissitudes of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, *not class struggle*. On the other hand, the point at stake in Durkheim’s “Division of social labour” (Russo:2008) was that the modern forms of labour division should be regulated by ‘organic solidarity’, not by ‘revolution’. These ‘reactive’ (in relation to Marxism) positions by founders of modern sociology are symptomatic of Marxism’s (active and passive) centrality in the body of knowledge of that discipline.

Beyond social sciences Marxism has played a central role in the entire modern *episteme* - of which, again, it was not just a component amongst others. Indeed, although it “played a sourly critical and even threateningly apocalyptic role” (Russo 1998:180), it also constituted “the ideological orientation of that network of knowledge” (ibid. p180). Marx, in other words, is the author of ideas that shaped the destinies of modernity. His vision of politics was intertwined with science and history, to the extent that Marxism professed to represent “all of modern historico-social rationality” (Russo 1998). Indeed it became a highly elaborated discipline (‘scientific Marxism’) that was capable to dispute at all levels of knowledge and

thought – and that at the same time was addressing the masses as the only subject capable to break the bourgeois state machine.

At least from 1848[2], state systems developed also as a reaction to Marxism and to the danger that its embodiment in poor people's organisations and struggles could bring. Examples of institutional forms of the state that have been influenced by Marxism in their development are state-party systems. Without the constitution of workers parties and their legalisation in the last decades of the 19th Century – a concession that was evidently aimed to their containment and normalisation – the spread of parliamentarianism would not have happened as it did and mass political parties would not have evolved as the nucleus of sovereignty (Russo 2008).

The advent of new forms of politics and the crisis of Marxism's conceptual apparatus have had long lasting consequences at various levels. I do not just refer to the collapse of state-Marxism and of the main Communist Parties worldwide after 1989, but also to the end of the 'geopolitical' balance of which Marxism constituted a sort of cornerstone. The disruption of this balance corresponded to the triumph of liberal democracy, as well as to the beginning of its permanent destabilisation. On the other hand, as I mentioned above, the new forms of emancipatory politics that emerged from the 1960s did not achieve to fully replace the old ones - especially in terms of a universal referent, that previously was to be fund in history (as history of class struggle). This failure has relegated emancipatory/egalitarian politics into a sort of limbo, where a new sequence is still to be borne and where "the cramped, besieged experimentalism of a few groups" (Badiou 2008:42) is seeking ways to achieve this. As Antonio Gramsci (1972:276) highlights "the crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born. In the interregnum a great number of morbid symptoms appear".

[2] 1848 was the year of the European Revolutions known in some countries as the Spring of Nations or Springtime of the Peoples. This revolutionary wave began in France in February and spread to many European countries and parts of Latin America.

1.2 Post-party politics

Although the "1968 sequence" did not manage to produce a coherent and 'universal' 'agenda' for egalitarian change, that does not mean that it failed to present common themes and tendencies that have been identifiable in most of its expressions in different contexts. One of these themes – a fundamental one in the analysis of CD and nevertheless central to the crisis of Marxist politics – is the rejection of the 'party' as a form of political organisation. This was a huge rupture in a historical phase where the party model constituted the cornerstone of politics - both in the revolutionary field (revolutionary Marxist parties and national liberation parties) and in the governmental field (parliamentarian multi-party systems like liberal democracies and single-party systems such as Socialist States). The ability to re-thinking politics outside the party frame was a core achievement of the 1968 sequence.

In this perspective I describe CD's original approach as experiments in 'post-party politics', or 'politics without party' - as this idea has been developed by contemporary sociological and political theory - among others by Badiou (2005), Wang (2006), Ranciere (2006), Neocosmos (2009) and Russo (1998). Post-party politics "means that politics does not spring from or originate in the party. It does not stem from that synthesis of theory and practice that represented, for Lenin, the Party" (Badiou 1998:113). Politics without party springs from real situations, from what ordinary people can think, say and do in those situations. Therefore in this perspective "there are political sequences, political processes, but these are not totalised by a party that would be simultaneously the representation of certain social forces and the source of politics itself" (Badiou ibid. p113). As Alessandro Russo (1998:181) puts it, the problem that the fading of the historical function of the parties and the advent of post-party politics posed "is how to reflect on each political situation as singular and endowed with its own proper mode of political thinking, not simply as belonging to what we could call the

modern political episteme, or to the space of modern political and historical knowledge". According to Judith Balso (2010:26), post-party "politics proceeds of its own", meaning that it finds its own referents in itself, in the singular contexts in which it develops. "Its thought – says Balso - most be intrinsic to itself, (…) it is not a matter of objective analysis, but is only possible from a perspective of a new political space that has been instituted at a distance from the state" (ibid. p26).

Since the 1960s all the most marking political experiences have developed outside and sometimes even explicitly against the party representative model, which up to that stage had monopolised modern politics. This model started to be criticised because of its bureaucratising and depoliticising tendencies. Many activists came to the conclusion that, as John Holloway (2005:174) puts it, "control of the state tends to become control by the state"- with tremendous depoliticising consequences as witnessed in parliamentarian democracies and real existing socialism. In socialist context, the Chinese Cultural Revolution (CR) can be considered as representative of such a shift towards post-party politics. Especially during CR's first phase (1966-1968), workers and students organised in a multitude of independent formations outside the ossified Communist Party, which in China – same as in other socialist states - was the only admitted source and locus of politics. So "the crucial content of those political disputes was the basic condition of politics itself, of its organisational conditions" (Russo 2009). CR broke with the idea that political organisation should be acting as a separate body, within the state and 'on behalf of the people' (or 'the nation', the 'working class', and so on), suggesting that it should instead blend with people's lives and be part of *their own* struggles for emancipation.

The explosion of creative energies which shaped the horizon of post-party politics "was entangled with the epochal closure of a network of political culture" (Russo 2006:273): a

culture for which the party (independently from its ideological orientation) was the fundamental political space. As I will illustrate, from the late 1960s in Dublin this shift made independent political organising and therefore CD possible.

Relevant to this post-party disposition in Ireland was a process of transformation that affected the republican movement and which lead to the 1969 split between 'Provisional' and 'Official' IRA. Indeed, after the unsuccessful Border Campaign (1956 – 1962) many Republican activists had come to the conclusion that their elitist approach was out-dated – it did not reflect the spirit of the time. They understood that in the name of taking established truths to the people, they had have often cut themselves off from the new facts and creative thinking of the time. As Holloway (2010:63) writes "any form of organisation that focuses on changing society on behalf of the workers (the poor, the people, whoever) will tend, whatever its declared intentions, to weave acts of rebellion back into the social synthesis of capitalism. The state is the most obvious example of such organisation". Thus Republicans' emphasis shifted from vanguardism and military/clandestine struggle to more genuine and open political activity. This translated into open support for popular protests, especially those related to housing, which were spontaneously taking place in many urban areas. I will refer to the Dublin Housing Action Committee DHAC (see Chapter 3) as a key example of this post-party configuration in Dublin. Although it involved people from republican, socialist, feminist, catholic (and so on) backgrounds, DHAC's political subjectivity is irreducible to the sum of these components. Its brief but intense experience contributed to the opening of a political space in which CD was subsequently able to consolidate.

1.3 Primacy of politics over organisation/institution

As I previously argued, from the second half of the 1960s the expansion of post-party/CD organisations in urban Ireland was mainly the *outcome* of growing mobilisations claiming

social control of housing, services and local institutions. This draws the attention on one idea which (being tightly related to that of 'post-party politics') is central to this thesis: namely, the idea that moments of political intensity are not 'artificially' created by formal organisations or institutions. On the contrary, as Piven and Cloward (1979:xxi) highlight, it is "the sheer excess of political energy among the masses, which itself breathes life" into the idea that "organisations can be developed and sustained".

So the Idea that I will put forward here is that political organisations/institutions are the controversial outcome, the consequence of subjective emancipatory processes, not the opposite. They constitute the attempt to preserve and give consistency (a stable form) to subjective political energies, which are perceived as being 'spontaneous', and therefore precarious and evanescent. But it is just the existence of these energies that makes an organisation "political".

The case of CD is revealing. What I define (Chapter 5) as CD forms of alternative institutionality trigger from political processes, or situations of conflict, and not from an agreement with the state or a 'social contract'. However, as long as those subjective processes and energies have weakened almost to the point of exhaustion, the organisational forms that they themselves had generated and sustained also started to undergo a process of decline, which is on-going, and of which is difficult to foresee an end. I will argue that the necessity to always balance organisation with political subjectivity is something that those who are concerned with CD's fate should keep in mind.

As I illustrate in the theoretical section (chapter 2), politics in this thesis is defined as a form of subjectivity that operates outside institutional legitimate areas. It consists in the opening of new possibilities that are overlooked, or considered to be impossible from the point of view of existing structures. CD politics consists in addressing issues which are excluded from the

agenda of both the state and formal, state-oriented, representative political organisations (no matter if internal or external to the parliament), and advocates people's power to control their own lives.

This does not mean that such politics is unorganised. It rather means, according to Badiou, (2005:122) "one organised through the intellectual discipline of political processes, and not according to a form correlated with that of the State" – for this latter form is depoliticising. So talking about CD in Dublin is not like referring to a model of organisation that can be applied or imposed to a specific situation – as literature gives to understand. Its main feature, in the words of Aine, a Dublin based activist, is that it develops "organically", out of people's inventions and practices in-situation.

As Kelleher & Whelan (1992:26) describe this approach "it all starts with a need for action in a particular locality or issue. This can be expressed in general or particular terms, i.e. 'something has to be done' or 'something has to be done about'; once the need for action is articulated, the direction of what happens subsequently is influenced by the vision motivating individuals involved". CD's original re-inventing of particular forms of collective action, for being performed in informal contexts of social relations, is 'light' by nature. It is fluid, temporary and intermittent. It contrasts with the formalistic rigidity and rituality of formal organisations.

*

In the light of this broad political meaning that I ascribe to CD as well as of its location in a specific historical phase I will analyse its depoliticisation, which, as I said, goes until the present. Indeed CD's initial independence from the state had a short life, although it was intermittently reactivated for short periods of time along the following decades.

In 2004, at the time of writing their seminal work on CD in Ireland (the most detailed work that has been written on this subject), Powell and Geoghegan (2004) posit that the sector was faced with a choice between two approaches, the first being "rejectionist" and based on alternative models of development seeking to reclaim "civil society" for "democracy", and the second being based on a cooperation in the "New Economy" and therefore in a partnership with state and capital. For the time being, with the rise of so-called financial crisis and the hostile attitude the state is showing towards CD organizations, the range of 'choices' seems to be changed substantially. On one hand the state and capital are not showing any interest anymore in continuing the partnership relation with the 'community sector'– at least not in the terms in which it had been established. On the other hand, although a rejectionist, uncompromisingly independent stance has become mandatory, 'civil society' and 'democracy' are evidently too politically vague and saturated concepts to become guiding principles for political thought and action. Indeed at the moment 'civil society' and 'democracy' are used almost interchangeably to point to a neo-liberal model, which is being imposed on a worldwide scale. On one hand 'democracy' is the key-word of this consensus and, as Alain Badiou (2005) argues, it has become a sort of "authoritarian opinion" (p. 78). To the extent that "it is forbidden not to be a democrat" (ibid. p78). On the other hand, as Collins (2002:93) argues, civil society should be seen as part of the State apparatus – even if not government or statutorily driven. It is therefore important to articulate political perspectives for CD's future, which go beyond the rhetoric of democracy and civil society. An inventive attitude is required from CD. One that is up to the challenges of the present. However, such a heuristic attitude should be also sustained by a return to CD's political 'tradition', and the original experimentations it involved.

1.4 Chapters' outline

In the next chapter (nr 2) I will discuss some philosophical questions around which the theoretical approach of this thesis rotates. Discussion will mainly address the categories of politics and the state. The ontological distinction between politics and the state, which is not always taken for granted in social sciences, constitutes a central theoretical knot in my analysis. Drawing on Badiou's theoretical apparatus I will illustrate how the state constitutes the ontological prerequisite of every historical-social situation. State power is constant. It consists in the unequal distribution of places and functions; in a way that groups individuals in relatively fixed and clearly identifiable categories. On the contrary, politics is not a permanent fixture of society. Being subjective, it has a sequential and intermittent nature, which constantly exposes it to its own exhaustion. It can only find some continuity "at a distance from the state" (Badiou 2008:650); otherwise it tends to depoliticise and to assume a form which is correlated with that of the state (state-politics). Based on these theoretical remarks I will advance the idea that today, a way to find a solution to CD's crisis is to reinvent its politics at a distance from the state.

In Chapter 3 I will reconstruct CD's political path from the 1960s to nowadays. In the first part, historical reconstruction develops from the point of view of the singular inventions that CD groups were capable of in Dublin. Here I will give concrete examples of the idea of post-party politics at a distance from the state – as I introduced it from a theoretical perspective in Chapter 2. Particular emphasis will be put in the political significance of these experiments and in the unprecedented possibilities they have opened. In the second part I will take into analysis the process of depoliticisation of CD, which achieved its peak during the Partnership Governance phase. I will illustrate how from that stage the movement has tended to give up its independence towards a more formal and institutional conception of CD as a 'sector' of the state.

Chapter 4 is devoted to the methodological approach that informed the present study. I will first give a brief account of what does “methodology” mean and its purpose in the field of social research. I will emphasise the fact that a critique of current methodological practices is necessary if one wants to critically address the question of the present and future possibilities of social sciences as a *free* form of enquiry. I will also discuss the fact that most of this research refers to a present in continuous and rapid evolution which compels the researcher to not just refer to what happened but also to what could eventually happen. The category of ‘possibility’ is central to the field of politics. It has been nevertheless omnipresent in the accounts of those who have been involved in this research, in the form of prescriptions, predictions or just simple hopes. Finally I will enter into details of the tools, mainly in depth interviews and ethnographic observation that I used to collect ‘empirical data’.

Chapter 5 will be the first of three chapters entirelybased on collected empirical data (although some data have also been used in the historical section) where current tendencies are analysed. Here I will deal with CD’s position vis à vis the state. Notions of bureaucratisation and statification will be central to the analysis of CD’s depoliticisation from different points of view. In the first part I critically discuss the problem of funding. In particular I criticise the consensus that exists among activists and scholars that funding is the main cause of bureaucratisation and therefore depoliticisation. Indeed, although there are certainly funding-related dangers that activists should be constantly aware of, there are nevertheless examples of groups that receive funding from the state and yet do not depoliticise. On the other hand one should notice that in (capitalist, neo-liberal) urban context a complete financial independence from state and capital is virtually impossible. I will advance the idea that CD groups should treat funding as a ‘secondary contradiction’ and attempt to pursue autonomy at a political level rather than finance-wise.

In the second part of Chapter 5 the case of Community Response, a CD group operating in the south inner city will be taken into analysis in order to evaluate the complex ways in which bureaucratisation affects CD projects in terms of professionalization, i.e. the imposition of expert, technical knowledge as the principle ruling a situation. Expert knowledge has the capacity to abstracts issues (heroin epidemic in the case of CR) from the socio-political context and conditions which alone give them meaning. So these issues acquire a life that is separated from that context and can be managed by the state and its technocrats. To be accessed by ordinary people and democratised (which is CD's mission), these issues need to be re-politicised and their technical quality shown to be, at best, only partly independent of socio-political content.

In Chapter 5's last section I will address a tendency that CD groups had since the beginning, which is that of creating community institutions. On one hand I will show how these alternative forms of institutionality have been at the same time experimental, innovative, strategic and rooted in the socio-historical texture of the neighbourhoods in which CD developed. On the other hand I will argue that, for being easily articulated to state procedures, this institutional tendency has constantly exposed CD organisations to the risk of bureaucratisation and professionalization.

The aim of Chapter 6 is to analyse the (still existing) potentialities of CD in terms of autonomy and independent politics. In the first section I will introduce the notion of 'organic' – as it emerged in my fieldwork. According to many community activists, 'organically' is the way in which CD should relate itself to a situation. 'Organic' means that CD is not a model, something that can be imposed to a situation by outsiders (or by the state) but something that develops intrinsically to it; it is the result of people's creativity and capacity to independently organise and take a lead in the solution of their problems.

In the second part of the chapter I explore the case of mutual support groups, as they have been developing with the support of Community Response in the south inner city of Dublin. I consider mutual support groups as an interesting experiment in CD, since it constitutes an attempt to counter bureaucratisation and to return to an 'organic' approach. A similar analysis is done in relation to public consultation meetings, or assemblies. Their potentialities are explored through the analysis of the case of 'Community First', which I consider to be a rare and interesting example of micro-processes of community re-politicisation from the bottom up. I conclude by arguing that an important way to push autonomy as far as possible is that of working in order to create an environment that is more favourable to it.

In chapter 7 I address a problem that in my view is at the root of the crisis affecting CD at present: the politicisation of young people and the lack of a new generation of activists devoted to the cause of CD. In the first part of this chapter I address the problem of the failure to emerge of a new generation of CD activists and leaders, despite the fact that young people have always been a central focus in CD. There are several answers to this question related to the professionalization of CD and to the powerful personalities of the old leadership. However, I think that at present a key factor is CD's ambivalent approach to youth, which is ideologically condensed in the idea 'anti-social behaviour'. This approach, I will argue, prevents the construction of a meaningful relation between activists and underprivileged young people and thus the reproduction of CD as a political subject. In the second part I will investigate the places in which CD concretely relates itself to young people, including youth projects and so called Community Policing Fora (CPF). I will show how in both cases the approach to youth is informed by an 'anti-social' behaviour ideology, which tends to criminalise young people and to articulate the question of their development in terms of 'management', (crime) prevention, diversion and control. The CPF case is of particular interest to this thesis because it constitutes a partnership version of previous forms of

community self-policing which were independent and constituted as a challenge to state-policing. In their practice the idea of anti-social behaviour was absent; it did not make sense.

CPF's and youth projects' policing/security approach involves formal collaboration with the police, which is problematic in my view. Indeed underprivileged neighbourhoods in Dublin are shaped by a particularly tense (not to say antagonistic) relation between youth and the Gardaí – with young people being targeted, harassed and racialised in their day to day life. In the third part of this chapter I will illustrate how this discrimination and targeting of underprivileged young people works. Among various ideas I will focus on the use of the notion of 'scum', which has racialising effects on working class (especially young) people, playing – together with 'anti-social behaviour' - a central role in dismissing them as meaningful actors. "Scum" is synonymous with 'racaille' (in French) which in 2005 was used by Sarkozy to tag young people living in underprivileged neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Paris. This was eventually followed by the Banlieue unrests of winter 2005. In section 7.4 episodes of juvenile insubordination such as those which in Dublin culminated with the 2006 Riot are interpreted as a response by youth to injustice and discrimination. To conclude I will critically address the ineffectiveness of CD to meaningfully deal with such events - and more in general with young people's rage and latent desires. I will suggest that in order to overcome its impasse (which is in large part 'generational') CD should return to its 'organic' approach and get meaningfully involved in ordinary people's struggles – like for example those informally carried out by underprivileged young people (youth riots).

To conclude, I will point to possible future scenarios and give some political recommendations for a possible re-politicisation of CD, which, in my view, can only be achieved by returning to the micro-events shaping life in Dublin's inner city popular neighbourhoods'.

2. STATE, POLITICS AND THE DEPOLITICISATION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter I will discuss some philosophical questions around which the theoretical approach of this thesis rotates. Some of the concepts that I introduce here are of a quite recent use in the field of social sciences. Others, despite being more familiar to scholars, are given a different meaning from the conventional one.

Fundamental to this work are the categories of politics and the state. Interestingly enough, their distinction is not always clear or taken for granted in the field of social sciences, which still find it difficult to really think politics outside the (broad) domain of the state. As I will illustrate, the concepts of politics and the state tend overlap in the main sociological traditions. This ambiguity should be dissolved when it comes to analyse a movement such as CD. Indeed, excluding the initial phase of its existence in Dublin and other intermittent sequences, CD has always maintained an ambivalent position in relation to politics and the state. In my view, this ambivalence, this lack of a clear separation between politics and the state in the praxis and thought of CD is a key aspect of the impasse which this movement is experiencing at present. Although this crisis is consensually articulated in economic terms, along this thesis I will illustrate how money just constitutes a secondary element to it. The main reason of CD's downfall is not just that it has been affected by austerity measures implemented by the state. Rather it has to do with its failure to reproduce itself as a political subject. This failure, I will argue, is due to the fact that CD politics have entered too much the field of the state - having lost that "distance" which, in the theoretical perspective outlined in this chapter is vital for politics.

As I will show in Chapter 3 from a more historical and empirical point of view, were precisely these historical exceptions[3], these moments of "intensification of an inexistence" (Badiou 2003:133), these moments of ordinary people's subjectivation (i.e. moments where

[3] Here I refer to for example the anti-drugs movement (Concerned Parents Against Drugs), or the street traders movement, which both developed in the 1980s. See Chapter 3.

course of action did not just follow historical contingencies or objective conditions dictated by the "state-of-the-situation") that allowed CD to become a key movement in Dublin's political landscape. When those exceptional energies were reabsorbed or neutralised, the organisations and the institutions which they contributed to produce simply faded away. Where they managed to survive, it has been because "they [had become] more useful to those who control the resources on which they depend than to the lower class groups which the organizations claim to represent" (Piven & Colward:xxi).

In the first part of this section (2.1) I will critically address the idea of 'community', which is intrinsic to the notion of CD, and which seems to be so fashionable in Ireland nowadays. I will argue that this consensus is due to the ambiguity of this concept, which tends to suit very different, frequently conflicting discourses. Theoretical investigation on the idea of 'community' reveals its ontological links with the State. I will suggest that the disentanglement of CD from the field of the state is a necessary condition for the solution of its crisis.

Reflection on the notion of community directly leads to the question of politics and the state, to which the main part (2.2) of this chapter is dedicated. Here I will address the ontological distinction between these two categories, which, as I said, is underestimated in Social Sciences and nevertheless constitutes a central theoretical knot in my analysis.

Drawing on Badiou's theory of the state, based on a set-theoretical approach, I will illustrate how the main feature of the state is to be constant. Indeed it constitutes the ontological prerequisite of every historical-social situation. State power is based on the fact that it operates as a principle of distribution of places and functions; in a way that groups human beings in relatively fixed and clearly identifiable categories. On the contrary, politics is not a permanent fixture of society. It has a sequential and intermittent nature, which constantly

exposes it to its own exhaustion. It can only find some continuity “at a distance from the state” (Badiou 2008:650); otherwise it tends to depoliticise and to assume a form which is correlated to that of the state (state-politics).

Finally, in order give a background to what I think is the singularity of CD in Dublin, in section 2.3 I will explore some of the political novelties which were introduced during the 1960s and 1970s on a worldwide scale. I will theoretically justify why I think that CD might be considered part of that historical rupture, where traditional political concepts and forms of organisation entered in an irreversible crisis, for they ended up restricting politics to the terrain of the state.

2.1 Deconstructing the notion of CD

Framing the notion of CD in Ireland is particularly complicated, not so much because of the complexity and fluidity of those realities which in common language go under the name of CD, but because in Ireland this notion designates (and tangles) a variety of subjects, which are frequently contrasting and irreducible to each other. However, although the concept of CD designates forms of organisation and historical processes which do not coincide, literature, including the academic one, and the great majority of activists keep referring to it as if it was something unitary (“the community *sector”*); as if every institution which goes under the aegis of Community Development shared some common roots or the same spirit. As I will illustrate along this thesis this is not really the case, because the intricate constellation which today is still referred to as ‘sector’, or ‘pillar’ of the Irish civil society, is crossed by “horizontal” and “vertical” lines or gaps which disrupt its supposed uniformity and harmony.

‘Horizontal’ gaps are historical. They separate realities to which in different epochs the designation Community Development was given. The deepest among these gaps is situated in the late 1960s dividing political organisations that emerged during and after those turbulent years, especially in urban context, from previous experiences. Although pre- and post-‘1968’ CD organisations are referred to with the same name, differences are so substantial and so self-evident, that to consider them as being coextensive, or even in some way politically related, is inaccurate.

For example, the oldest ‘tradition’ of CD in Ireland is represented by Muintir na Tire, a movement which saw community development as an end in itself: the development of a unified, self-determining and caring community in a parish or other self-contained locality. This traditional voluntary form of organization was predominantly rural, originating in the first half of the last century and strongly influenced by Catholic social teaching, exposing the virtues of neighbourliness, self-reliance and independence from the state (Collins 2002:96). Nevertheless, it used to work in an essentially conservative way, drawing its leadership from the clergy, teaching and medical professions (Lee 2003:49). It had little in common with ‘post-1968’ organizations which were inspired by the innovative ideas and organisational forms displayed by workers’, students’, civil rights and feminist movements active on a global scale. Therefore, I find it also inaccurate to speak about a “first” and a “second generation” of CD, as many authors (Geoghegan and Powell 2006, Collins 2002) do, because despite emphasizing a divergence between the two ‘generations’, the very notion of generation implicitly presupposes some sort of ‘natural’ continuity.

On the other hand, vertical gaps refer to differences among groups that operate in the same historical period. The present situation is paradigmatic in this regard. There are groups that are directly rooted in the pioneering experiences of 1960s and 1970s, groups which were born

afterwards but which assumed the spirit of that beginning and others that do not have anything to do with it. The spectrum includes sports clubs, youth projects, community policing fora, drug task forces, charities, movements campaigning for justice in urban regeneration, NGOs and so on.

The use of the same name to designate such different 'objects' is obviously puzzling, but since activists like to refer to themselves indistinctively as 'community developers' or 'community activists', seeming to be really attached to this nomination, it would be pointless to invent a new name for this 'second generation' - just for the sake of using it in my dissertation. Therefore, considering that 'Community Development' stands for a fuzzy assemblage of different types of experiences, it is worth to make clear that here I am focusing on what is normally referred to (inaccurately on my view) as 'second generation CD', with a particular emphasis on its urban, autonomous and political expression.

A central aim of the first part (Chapters 2 and 3) of this thesis is therefore to theoretically and historically 'define' this object, which in my view can not be taken for granted under the generic name of CD. I find this important not just for a matter of academic/historical accuracy, but also because central political issues are at stake here. On one hand I think it is important to emphasise the originality of these 'experiments' in poor people's self-organisation. Although this originality is hardly perceptible today (because it has been muddled by processes of normalisation, and because the current ideology strongly negates people's independent capacity to self-organise) it constitutes a historical fact. Its study can benefit a much needed re-foundation of CD. On the other hand, to be critical ('to discern' in Greek) is central to the activity of researching. And contrarily to what advocates of 'researcher's neutrality' argue, to be critical is to take a position and break with ambiguity (see section 2.5 and Chapter 4), and this is something I should do in relation to CD. Finally,

the very notion of community, as I am about to illustrate, is ontologically linked to the State. The disentanglement of CD from the field of the state is a necessary condition for the solution of its crisis.

2.1.1 The problematic concept of 'community' as source of misunderstanding regards the positioning of CD in relation to politics and the state

An aspect that generates at the same time ambiguity, misunderstanding and consensus around CD as a form of organisation is the very notion of 'community'. This word is quite fashionable nowadays. In recent years, according to Robson (2001:221), "it has acquired a profitable currency which, resulting from the frequency of its use, has effectively masked a discreet influence". 'Community' seems to have a special significance to people in Ireland (Tovey & Share 2000:335) – much more than 'society' for example. Recently, Andreas Hess (2007:25) noticed that a quick Google search under the keywords 'Ireland' and 'community' numbers around 45,000,000 results, while 'Ireland' and 'society' just 23,300,000. Although results produced by a web browser can not be considered as representative of a country's 'culture' or linguistic preferences, the numeric disproportion between the two results is striking.

In my view, in Ireland there is consensus around the idea of 'community' because it suits almost every type of discourse, 'from the left to the right'. It is profusely used by the state, by policy makers, by the excluded, by minorities, by conservative people who see it as the cornerstone of social order and stability, by romantics who consider 'community' to be the antidote to modernity's illnesses, by utopians who imagine emancipation as the constitution of a 'community of equals', and so on. Community is a word that given its apparent neutrality and the fact that everyone has its own idea of community can be applied to a broad variety of situations without hurting people's feelings. Therefore it is legitimate to suspect that a

reference to ‘community’ can also be suitable to all those populist discourses that to some extent want to keep themselves in this ‘safety zone’ of consensus. As Hess (2007:11) highlights – “hardly a day passes without a politician, social scientist, or public intellectual referring or appealing to some sense of community”.

Notions of community are definitely ambivalent. On one hand a sense of security, of ‘belongingness’ and solidarity are essential for the existence, or for the ‘development’ of a ‘community’. Communitarian rhetoric promotes the “return to an immediacy and unspoiled authenticity where there is no social distance between humans” (Hess 2007:17). However this is not always the case. For example, ‘security’ and ‘authenticity’ sometimes can only be achieved through the exclusion of others; “the ‘belongingness’ associated with solidarity may be constituted through the not-belonging of others; significance may actually signify the reproduction of unequal roles and relations (…), shared values amongst members of one group may result in the segregation of or even violence towards another (Shaw, 2007:28).

In this sense ‘community’ also entails a nihilistic facet: “it is as if authentic community - highlights Zizek (2009) - is possible only in conditions of permanent threat, in a continuous state of emergency” (pp. 23). This is because the construction of a communitarian type of ‘association’ involves also a certain degree of *separation*: community versus community. Moreover, a community cannot exist on its own, “one can always encounter, even in community based thinking, the vision of a larger entity, a public that either consists of other communities or a larger humanity” (Hess 2007:19). So each community is always in a need of something bigger than (or very different from) itself in order to make sense. This need makes the idea of a ‘cosmopolitan community’ absurd and the existence of each community paradoxical. Indeed, each community’s identity derives from an ‘act of faith’ to a precedent and external ‘truth’ (a sort of master, totem or a communal substance), which can not be

called into question. In this sense the notion of community (and its related practices) entails a primordial element, a sort of irrationality, which is difficult to rationalise. Of course this is not just a linguistic/conceptual problem. It has repercussions on the contexts to which the idea of community is articulated.

Philosopher Alain Badiou has put new light on this concept. As I will illustrate below, In his ontological perspective the state is a communitarian 'meta-structure' where communities are 'parts' or 'subsets' of the state; which he defines as the operation that prevents the break-up into pieces of the parts – i.e. the subsets of what is presented – interdicting disorder.

In the light of this meaning of community I will ask, to what kind of community does the notion of CD refer? Is the objective of CD that of building or reinforcing communities in the sense of subsets of the state?

2.2 Politics and the state: an ontological distinction

A theoretical assumption of this thesis is that the categories of politics and the state should be considered as separate. On the one hands the state is not capable of genuine politics. It just produces what we may call "state-politics" (Badiou 2009; Holloway 2010; Neocosmos 2007), a type of activity that subdues politics to the objectivity of the state-of-the-situation (Badiou 2007) and its management.

One should notice that in the sociological tradition, politics and the state are usually viewed as virtually equivalent. In the perspectives of two founders of modern sociology such as Marx and Weber for example – beyond the obvious differences between their theories – the investigation of social stability and change is mainly based on the fact that there is no principle of distinction between politics and the state (Russo 2008). In the Marxist categories of "history of class struggle" and "revolution" politics and the state are indistinguishable:

they almost completely overlap. Weber is even more drastic; according to him politics is nothing more than the conquer and distribution of state power (Russo 2008). However a main concern in my thesis (and in the theoretical approach that informs it) is how to describe emancipatory and egalitarian politics (and the change it produces) starting from the heterogeneity of politics and the state.

Indeed, despite these overlaps in the sociological tradition a basic difference should be stressed here. “Politics is intermittent, whereas the state, despite the incessant historical mutations of its particular forms [socialism, parliamentarianism, fascism, centralism, governance etc.], is a structural invariance” (Russo 2006:675). This point is fundamental. Politics, according to Alain Badiou (2005, 2007, 2008), has a sequential nature: it is not a permanent instance of society. In other words “there is no politics in general, only specific political sequences” (Lazarus quot. by Neocosmos 2009:287), which entail a starting and an ending point. On the contrary the state is constant; it is the ontological prerequisite of every historical-social situation.

For being constantly exposed to its own exhaustion, i.e. not entailing any guarantee of a mechanical continuity (as normally the state, as a structural invariance, does), politics always needs to be sustained by certain subjective engagement and creativity; otherwise it tends to turn into state-politics and depoliticise. Moreover, during the gaps separating each sequence, politics almost needs to be reinvented from scratch. This is because, in this perspective, each political sequence is something unique and unrepeatable - and after one ends, many of its ‘tools’ (such as forms of organization, analytical concepts, declarations and so on) become obsolete and ineffective.

In other words, on the one hand the ‘normality’ and ‘stability’ of any type of state depend to certain extent by the absence or tight control of politics. On the other hand political

dynamism can only find expression “at a distance from the state” (Badiou 2008:650) – as something that can not be reduced to objective conditions.

According to Badiou the state is a structural automatism functional to the preservation of a status. It is in its nature to prevent the development of ‘independent’ forms of organisation and subjectivity. This is because it conceives politics as “an exclusive sphere to which only authoritative sources have access, and in relation to which the public is very much on the Outside” (McAleavey 2012). For example parliamentarianism, through the electoral procedure, produces a class of ruling politicians who are provided by parties. This process transforms the “plural subjectivity of opinions on government into a functioning unity founded on consensus” (Neocosmos 2009: 289). The fundamental principle of parliamentarian politics is therefore *not* that ‘people independently think’ – i.e. that they dispose of the capacity to critically reflect and act upon the situation - but rather that they have opinions regarding the government (Lazarus quot. by Neocosmos 2009:288). Citizenship is thus relegated to a disempowering deadlock: “if ordinary citizens have no handle on state decision-making save the vote, it is hard to see what way forward there could be for an emancipatory politics” (Badiou 2008a:31). Indeed emancipatory politics is “independent” to the extent that it “is not an opinion or a consciousness [regards to what exist]; it is a thought which fixes new possibilities” (Badiou quot. by Neocosmos 2007:66)

However, attempts to produce independent forms of politics, no matter how meaningful and pacific they are, tend to meet state repression. As the case of the 15M movement in Spain is currently showing (spring 2011), people’s attempts to institute permanent assemblies in public squares – claiming independent decisional power upon the situation – are being repeatedly targeted by police repression. This is because 15M is a movement that responds to a fundamental idea of independent politics: “that of the power possessed by those to whom

no particular motive determines that they should exercise power, that of the manifestation of an ability which is that of any one" (Ranciere 2012). However, politics is just admitted by the state as state-politics; as an activity that does not involve people's thoughts and desires but just that they let themselves be represented within the domain of the state.

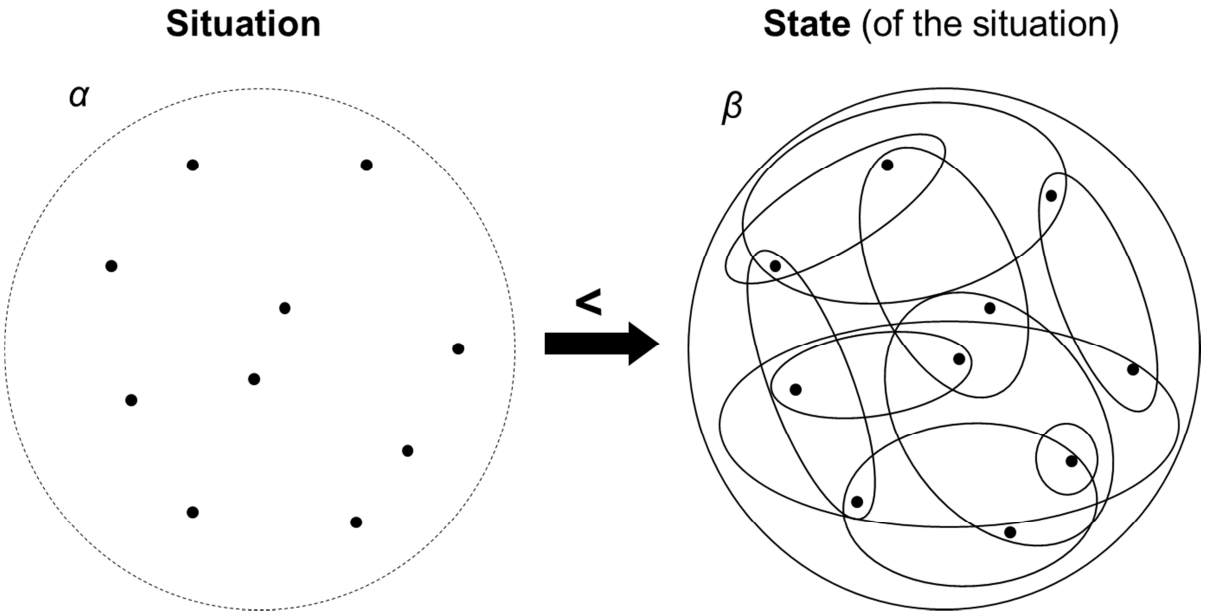
Above I introduced the idea that the state structures reality according to a communitarian type of system. Let us now see more in detail what this means.

2.2.1 The constitution of the state and the state's constitution of its objects

The state-in-itself (beyond the specific forms it has assumed historically), "is an objectivity without norm. It is the principle of sovereignty, or coercion, functioning separately, essential for the collective as such" (Badiou 2005:83). The idea of *separation* is of a central importance to understand the way in which the state works. The state is separated to the extent that it does not entail a direct relation with or a correspondence to the situation, i.e. with the infinite elements that compose it. Instead there is a principle of mediation between every social situation and its state, consisting in a mechanism which is essentially representative. In this perspective the state is nothing but the distributive principle that regulates social life according to "communitarian predicates or predicates of subsets" (Badiou 2005:83). Indeed it is typical of the State not to admit subjectivity, but to be oriented exclusively toward 'parts' or 'communities', towards the sub-grouping of individuals in infinite subsets of which it constitutes the principle of unification. Ranciere (2006) would describe this process as "distribution of the sensible", meaning the distribution of places and functions amongst the various elements that compose the situation. This separation gives to the state a structural effect superpower with regard to the situation, i.e. to what is simply presented. Badiou's (2007) theory of the state is the outcome of a philosophical elaboration

of Cantor's[4] set theory. Due to the mathematical complexity of this theory I will here introduce a simplified version of it, which might be visualised in Fig.1. After a technical introduction of this theory I will give a more illustrative explanation of Badiou's approach.

Fig 1.: the structured presentation α (Situation) and its metastructure β (the state of the situation).



According to Badiou, if every situation (set α) is presentation of itself, of the people that compose it and of the elements that belong to it – every situation is also given as State (β), that is, as the internal configuration of the parts or subsets – therefore as re-presentation. The state (β) does not recognize the single elements as independent; but it just includes them as belonging to multiple sub-groups (or sub-categories).

The authority of the State (β) over the simply presented situation (α) is based on the mathematical law that there are always more parts (subsets) than elements. This is to say that

[4] Georg Cantor 1845-1918 was a German mathematician, best known as the inventor of set theory, which has become a fundamental theory in mathematics.

the *representative* multiplicity of the state (β) is always of a higher power than the *presentative* multiplicity (α) of the situation.

So, to do an example, the elements of the Irish national set can be grouped in the same way according to the subsets of tax payers, registered voters, employed workers, teachers, unemployed, single mothers, students, HIV positive people and so on. Of course then, an individual can belong to several of these subsets: for example one can be an unemployed, Dublin 1 born, single mother. These are all predications that the State uses to categorise individuals – to hierarchically dispose them in sub-groups - to include them or to exclude them (as illegal migrants, or asylum seekers for example). However, these predications do not say anything about the substantial complexity of any individual (say any single mother) as a living, thinking person. Badiou argues that also in situations where someone is called into question as an individual by the state, whatever the circumstance, "this individual is not counted as 'him' or 'herself', he is considered as a subset. (…) Not as Antonie Domblase – the proper name of an infinite multiple [a pure becoming] – but as {Antonie Domblase}, an indifferent figure of unicity constituted by the forming-into-one" (Badiou, 2007).

Peter Hallward (2003:86) offers a useful visual illustration of how this Cantorean model works. Take a page of print: one can not say how many 'objects' there are on it. Unless he knows whether to count letters, words, sentences, lines, etc. The first necessary operation would be to specify the range of definitions (subsets) distinguishing letters, words, sentences and lines, before counting the elements that fall under each definition – say the number of words beginning with *a*, the number with *e*, the number with 3 letters and so on. An extensional approach would accept the validity of any sort of "combinatorial" approach to collection, no matter how arbitrary it is. In this case the page would be the operation of making one of an infinite amount of subsets. Likewise the State follows the logic of a

‘superpower’ which is infinitely superior to the situations as infinitely superior is the number of subsets over elements. The defining condition of the State is therefore to exert power pure and simple through this arbitrary grouping, not only over those individuals who fall under its jurisdiction (under its counting into parts), but even and especially over those outsiders who do not (for example illegal migrants).

As Hallward (2003) highlights, a set theoretic ontology of the state confirms as a fundamental law of being a central insight of the Marxist analysis of the state: the state business relates not to individuals per se (the elements) but rather to groups or classes of individuals (ibid. p96). So the Marxist assumption that “the state is always the state of the ruling class” means that it represents or arranges the existing elements of the situation in such a way as to reinforce the position of its dominant parts; independently from the qualitative attributes of these parts (ibid. p96).

The state does not present things, nor does it merely copy their presentation but instead, through an entirely new counting operation it re-presents them in a way that groups them in relatively fixed, clearly identifiable categories (Badiou 2007). These categories constitute the criteria according to which the state recognises individuals.

It could be argued that this mechanism of distribution works as a sort of multiculturalism – “one of the offshoots of human rights discourse today” (Neocosmos 2007:55), which was so smoothly taken over as an ideology and a form of organisation by western societies. Zizek (199:216) defines multiculturalism as a “racism with a distance” to the extent that it promotes ‘respect’ for “the Other’s identity, conceiving the other as a self-enclosed ‘authentic’ community towards which the multiculturalist [state, or intellectual] maintains a distance made possible by his/her privileged universal position” (ibid. p216). Moreover, through its celebration and reproduction of cultural/communitarian authenticities and differences,

multiculturalism has the capacity to articulate (and thus depoliticise) any social issue as a simple matter of identitarian and symbolic (cultural, linguistic etc.) confrontation and negotiation between subgroups or communities. This is precisely what happened in Northern Ireland where universal political issues raised by the civil rights movement (issues that could concern both the catholic and protestant 'communities') have been articulated in terms of identitarian/ethnic conflict- where politics is overshadowed in favour of technocratic management.

In Neocosmos' (2007:40) view, "the state systematically evacuates politics from state life in favour of technique (…) it systematically transforms a pre-existing emancipatory politics into a technical process to be run by professionals (planners, economists, lawyers, judges, administrators, etc.) under its ambit within bureaucratic structures and subjectivities". A research hypothesis put forward by some young scholars I have been discussing with recently is that 1960s Northern Irish political movements depoliticised for they did not manage to keep a political distance in relation to the state and so they ended up reproducing the (multiculturalist) categories imposed to them by the system.

What Badiou (2007) aims to illustrate through this set –theoretical approach is that the state does not deal with individuals as subjects who are capable to think, but only as members of specific communities or subgroups which are somehow included in its count of the parts. This means that the state is not organised on the basis of the principle of equality – according to which each individual should be counted as one. For example, in a public debate on the new migration bill recently organised in Dublin (27/10/2010) by a group of students, Luke (, a young Dublin based African activist, describing its relation with the Irish State argued that "instead of dealing with people, it deals with categories"; meaning that the state just accepts to dialogue with him and his colleagues under the condition that they speak as members or

leaders of a specific subgroup or community. For being a 'migrant', Luke is not supposed to be speaking as an independent citizen, but just as a member, or a spoke person of the Zimbabwean or African community in Dublin. Thus he is considered from the deterministic point of view of his supposed cultural/communitarian belonging, that is to say from an element that is *precedent and external* to him. It is just from that identitarian point of view that Luke's words are taken into consideration by the state.

A similar example has to do with the "Surprise Conference" which was recently organized by a group of independent NCAD[5] students and hold as a form of protest in the garden adjacent to the Department of Education in Dublin. Their demand to be admitted into the department in order to talk with the minister was declined by her arguing that she would just negotiate with officially elected representatives of the student body, i.e. the Student Union. This, again, is an example of how the state does not recognise 'independent subjectivities' as its interlocutors; it does not deal with people's thought, but it just deals with representatives of recognised categories or subgroups (students in this case). It is in this sense that unions (no matter how 'radical' they are) might be considered as being apparatuses of the state. They depoliticise workers' (students') politics by taking it away from their control and translating it in partial claims to be articulated and managed within the terrain of representation, i.e. of the state.

Genuine politics is the opposite. It exists only in the claims and actions of those who have no 'place', no justification. Thus according to Neocosmos (2009:284) "emancipatory politics is universal and not linked to any specific interest, it is 'for all' never 'for some'". It is in this sense that for Badiou emancipatory politics does not 'represent' anybody: "Politics begins when one decides not to represent victims (...) but to be faithful to those events during which

[5] The National College of Art and Design is located in Dublin. I was present at the event, that took place the 1/12/2011. Some might be found at the following link http://wsm.ie/c/students-occupy-department-education-surprise-conference

victims politically assert themselves (...) Politics in no way represents the proletariat, class or nation (...) it is not a question of whether something which exists may be represented. Rather it concerns that through which something comes to exist which nothing represents, and which purely and simply presents its own existence" (Badiou, quot. by Neocosmos 2007:64).

It is essential to repeat and clarify that by talking of the state and the (anti)politics it establishes, we include 'civil society' which, even in the apparently oppositional roles it might assumes, is part of what is counted. Discussions with grassroots activists (and what CD activist have to say about this matter is particularly significant) help us to understand how civil society organisations often end up playing a key role in depoliticising conflicts by jumping in with 'capacity building' and 'education' interventions that are designed not primarily to strengthen the oppressed in their own struggles but to bring them into order and to play according the rules and expectations of the dominant order by teaching them to be better 'stakeholders' (Butler & Ntseng 2008). A community activist (quot. by Butler & Ntseng 2008) from the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition argues: "having observed social formations and their politics, I have this question to ask: Why is it that every time the Poor come together, NGOs and Leftists jump in and take over? In their conventional praxis they provide capacity building. Whereas my observation is that capacity building demobilises people, it takes them away from their original agenda".

At the end of the day NGOs and civil society in general "are not only funded by government, but operate on the basis of the same subjectivity and technicism, and in fact precisely undertake state functions (Neocosmos 2009: 270). They defuse political anger and dole out as aid or benevolence what people ought to have by right. They alter the public psyche. They turn people into dependent victims and blunt the edges of political resistance...It's almost as

though the greater the devastation caused by neo-liberalism, the greater the outbreak of NGOs" (Roy quot. by Neocosmos 2009:273).

As a last example of this idea, think about how all over the world the ethnic/communitarian notion of 'immigrant' "has in fact served, in a consensual manner, first to conceal and then to drive out the [universal] word 'worker' from the space of political representations" (Badiou 2005:121). This brought to a further fragmentation in labour (which made it more manageable) and frequently to 'ethnic conflicts' between workers, such as those that in 2009 took place in Britain where workers strike in protest at the use of migrant (Italian in that case) labour. Protests caught by surprise up to 17 refineries and power plants all over the country. Many placards directed their fury at Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who at the Labour party conference in September 2007 had promised: "This is our vision: Britain leading the global economy . . . drawing on the talents of all to create *British jobs for British workers*". The saying 'to govern is to divide' certainly seemed pertinent as in this case.

Politics, when it exists, presents itself as a rupture with representative/ distributive procedures. It does not consist in the plurality of the opinions and (communitarian/cultural) points of view, but in the prescription of the possibility of a rupture with what there is, i.e. the hierarchical and communitarian distribution of places and functions. "The fiction of political representation, in pretending to advance the interests of others, must therefore be swept aside in order to make way for the reality of political processes, for it is only then that a singular political sequence can begin to take shape. Political unbinding is therefore the creative act whereby subjects, in renouncing any outside interest (…), break with routine and begin to empower themselves as collectives. (Badiou 2005:xxiii)"

In other words, ontologically, if the state-in-itself is nothing else than the distributive principle that regulates social life according to "communitarian predicates or predicates of

subsets", as I will illustrate below, unlike and against the state, egalitarian politics is what interrupts this distribution in terms of deterministic categories, hierarchy, social status and so on. Notions such as "'Immigrant', 'French', 'Arab' and 'Jew' cannot be political words lest there be disastrous consequences. For these words, and many others, necessarily relate politics to the State, and the State itself to its lowest and most essential of functions: the non-egalitarian inventory [décompte] of human beings" (Badiou 2005:94).

Now, does CD means to build or to reinforce communities in the sense of subsets of the state?

As I will illustrate in the historical section (Chapter 3) of this thesis, although most of literature analyses CD from the point of view of the state, as if it was part and parcel of state processes, this is just a partial truth. Today community development definitely refers to something nebulous, state-dependent and fairly depoliticised; something that is fragmented, specialised, professionalized and bureaucratised. However things have not always been like that, or at least not for everybody. For now, based on the theoretical perspective outlined in this chapter, we can advance the idea that the ambiguity in which CD is currently prisoner is nothing less than a lack of separation in its praxis and thought between politics and the state. This lack is depoliticising. However, it is not possible to resolve this ambiguity with a (Hegelian) dialectical synthesis, for the fact that politics and the state are not two faces of the same coin. The hypothesis that I will advance in this thesis is that to overcome this impasse a sort of recommencement is necessary.

2.2.2 A politics of emancipation/resistance at a distance from the state

As we have seen, according to a set-theoretical perspective, the state is basically the endless management of the differences of the subsets of what is presented in a situation – it is the

infinite ‘communitarian’ distribution of places and functions. If this counting of communitarian differences constitutes the objectivity of the state-of-the-situation, in what does a politics at a distance from the state consists? In the following pages I will argue that such a politics should be (1) egalitarian and therefore (2) it should not follow the agenda of the state.

(1) Politics at a distance from the state transcends communitarian and cultural differentiations; it transcends all those identitarian connotations that are pre-existent to each individual. As Badiou (2001:25) says, “the whole ethical predication based upon recognition of the other must be purely and simply abandoned. For the real question - and it is an extraordinarily difficult one — is much more that of recognising the Same”. Sameness, more than difference, is therefore a concept to which egalitarian politics should be oriented. Politics – to put it in Ranciere’s terms - , consists of a set of practices guided by the supposition that everyone is equal and by the attempt to verify this supposition (Ranciere 1992:58).

By addressing the category of ‘equality’ one should recognise that nowadays it is somewhat obscure, its positive values being nevertheless uncertain. The idea of equality carries with itself the discredit of a bureaucratic and disciplinary vision which has been imposed during the 20th century assuming two different –frequently opposed – facets. In the first version, deriving from the socialist tradition, equality has represented the obligation to be ‘the same as the others’, a kind of disciplinary standard to which every citizen had to adapt. In the second version, deriving from a liberal/ social-democratic tradition, ‘equality’ has represented the ‘starting line’ on which individuals had to be brought into alignment, in order to be able to ‘equally’ participate to the big existential ‘race’, which only ‘the best’ could win.

It is time however to subtract this notion from its bureaucratic, substantive and identitarian articulations, which condemned it historically. As a maxim for political action, equality should thus not be linked to any form of particularity or difference, but it should intervene in any circumstance in which difference is formulated as domination or discrimination. In this perspective 'difference' is not a political matter but the ordinary stuff of human life (Power & Toscano 2009:42), it is something internal to individual subjectivity itself, to its continuous, inevitable becoming other, to its being excessive to all forms of categorisation. As Badiou puts it with philosophical precision "there are as many differences, say, between a Chinese peasant and a young Norwegian professional as between myself and anybody at all, including myself" (Badiou 2001:25-26). As I said, categorisation - the unequal counting of people based on identitarian attributes - is a state procedure. In opposition to it, politics needs to propose the idea that 'sameness' is also possible — the sameness of a political project, a shared commitment to a political goal outside historical constraints such as tradition, or national, cultural, racial, ethnic, religious or corporate bonds. The fact that people do this or that, that they come from here or anywhere else, that they speak this or another language, whatever their 'culture', are elements that do not prevent them to participate together to an egalitarian political process.

(2) Speaking about egalitarian politics, I argued that it is just possible with a certain degree of autonomy. To be – as Badiou (2008:650) puts it - "at a distance from the state" means that a politics follows the rule of equality not being structured or polarized along the agenda and timelines fixed by the state. "Those dates, for example, when the state decides to call an election, or to intervene in some conflict, declare war on another state. Or when the state claims that an economic crisis makes this or that course of action impossible" (Badiou 2008:650). These are all examples of what Badiou calls "convocations by the state", i.e. where the state sets the agenda and controls the timing of political events. "Distance from the

state" means that a political procedure develops following its own references, independently from what the state deems to be important or not. "This distance protects political practices from being oriented, structured, and polarized by the state" (ibid. p650); 'the state' being understood in the broad sense that I introduced previously.

This 'distance' is a crucial point to be taken in consideration when researching political organizations such as CD. Indeed the degree to which they 'distance' themselves from the state is indicative of their level of politicisation. Deprived of their distance from the State – political organisations tend to be absorbed into state dynamics. As I will elaborate in chapters 5 and 6 a symptom of the lack of independence that CD is currently experiencing is the fact that after it has been affected by cuts it was just able to represent its own crisis in economic terms. However, in my view, the problem is not just to react to adverse state policies, but to produce powerful collective processes irreducible to any form of bureaucratic management. At least, this is how CD projects started to operate in the inner city of Dublin four decades ago.

Lack of distance from the state does not just concern CD. It is a problem affecting many collective experiences at present. There are many other examples of movements that show a lack of ability to maintain this distance and end up polarising "along the agenda and timelines fixed by the state" attributing (more or less consciously) a central symbolic value to it. Think for instance about the recent student protests in Ireland (2010), whose content could not get beyond a condemnation of the cuts, and whose main expression was a sit-in staged in front of the Department of Finance, which was violently removed by the police. Or think about the protests organised by the unions against the cuts and the 'right to work' campaign. Their weekly marching to the Dail had more or less similar outcomes to the students' mobilisations (although with a lower attendance).

But also think about big international protests against the G8 or other world elites' meetings, which from the 1990s have become theatre of demonstrations, riots, militarised cities, thrilled expectation of the event, ritualisation and so on. Central to these initiatives are the state and its power, which convoke people in their 'domain' imposing them to follow their agenda. To be clear, in each of these cases people's indignation is legitimate. The courage and commitment of students, workers and activists should be honoured. And the state is nevertheless something that politics necessarily needs to deal with. However, this does not mean that politics should be submitted to a state agenda that dictates timing and modality of political events.

At the end of the day the examples I just mentioned constitute attempts to hit state power at its 'heart' (the Dail, the Department of Finance the G8). However, this approach is bound to failure because as Umberto Eco argues, the State has no heart. Rather, the problem is to generate a collective 'hearts' and 'thoughts', which are subtracted from the "cold monster's" (Foucault 2005) anesthetising power.

This alignment with the state is a symptom of political weakness. Why instead of going to the Department of Finance – the economic heart of the state – students do not attempt to organise in a more decentred way inside their faculties, trying to generate more consistent and long lasting processes?

'Negation'[6] – activists argued in the seventies, a phase that was much more turbulent than the present – should always be submitted to the movement's positivity (Tiqqun 2003); meaning that to build one's own independent politics should always be of a bigger concern to activists than organising 'against' something (the state, capital etc.). Badiou (2008) developed this same idea. According to him there is a need to search for "a new formulation of the problem

[6] Overt antagonism, clash with state and capital.

of critique and negation. (…) It is necessary (…) to go beyond the concept of a negation taken solely in its destructive and properly negative aspect. Contrary to Hegel, for whom the negation of the negation produces a new affirmation, I think we most assert that today negativity, properly speaking does not create anything new (…) it does not give rise to a new creation". On the contrary, "the point where an instance of thought subtracts itself from the State, inscribing this subtraction into being, constitutes the real of a politics. And a political organisation has no other goal than to 'hold onto the gained step that is to provide a *body* for that thought" (pp. 652).

The reason why I consider CD (see Chapter 3) to be such an original experience is certainly for the subtractive[7] capacity that this movement has shown -especially in the initial phases of its existence. Its distance from the state allowed CD to generate political positivity irreducible to negation – i.e. irreducible to the clash with the state. CD's capacity to create forms of alternative institutionality (Chapter 5) is a significant expression of this instance.

2.3 The 1960s, the invention of a new politics and CD.

In the first part of this section I have analysed how the state, as a principle of sovereignty and coercion, simply constitutes the operation that prevents the break-up into pieces of the parts – i.e. the subsets of what is presented – interdicting disorder. I have also made clear that this principle is typical of the state in itself and therefore valid independently from the fact that it might be organised in a socialist or a parliamentarian way – also independently from the fact that it might be ruled by one or more parties. I have also anticipated how since old tools and concepts of emancipatory politics (Socialism, nationalism, NLS, social democracy) became ossified in their overlapping with the state, the formulation of new concepts for a politics at a distance from the state and the detection of new forms of political subjectivity (or just their

[7] Subtraction is "a negation, but it cannot be identified with the properly destructive part of negation (…) what subtraction does is bring about a point of autonomy.

possibility) are tasks that urgently need to be undertaken. The problem of the "reinvention" of politics regards CD closely. As I have anticipated, a first political recommendation is that community groups which are interested in their renovation look back to their 'roots' in order to get some inspiration – rediscovering the spirit that at the time allowed them to break with an old (statified) conception of politics. In this section I will explore some of the political novelties which were introduced during the 1960s and 1970s on a worldwide scale and I will theoretically justify why I think that CD might be considered part of that historical rupture.

A problem that I see as having been central to the events shaping the 1960s and 1970s on a world wide scale is that of the supposed emancipatory capacities of the state - which is tightly related to the problem of the seizure of power. Whereas before the 60s, 20th century's politics were permeated by the conviction that progress consisted in organising collectively with the aim to seize and control the state - this was the case, "irrespective of whether the victory is insurrectional or electoral: the mental schema is the same" (Badiou 2008a:182) - the biggest discovery or invention of the 60s consisted in the possibility of a collective, independent politics, which is not properly aimed to the conquer of the state and its power, and which is not just organised around state political categories (state-politics). As I emphasised previously 'the state' here is not "conceived of as reduced to the government and its repressive and administrative institutions (police, army, justice)" (Balso 2010:28). It is rather conceived as state-of-the-situation (in Badiou's sense), as something that "creates many different modes of organising people: parties, trade unions, associations, the media, votes, elections, public opinion" (pp. 28) and so on.

Central to this discovery was certainly the fact that the experience of socialist states had shown for some time that far from withering away, state power continued, despite assuming a different form. The Communist Parties, which had been conceived as machines of liberation

from oppression became themselves bureaucratic apparatuses for state stability. Indeed whilst calling themselves socialist, states and related parties "hugely corrupted political will and subjectivity. In other words it [the socialist party/state] was not at all a neutral political space, nor was it easily neutralized, nor was it simply a space that one could take over with impunity. On the contrary, it increasingly appeared as the site specifically of a state politics, determined by its own normative principles, rules and values which were quite heterogeneous to the hypothetical assumption that it would wither away" (Balso 2010:27).

Likewise, in many countries which had been liberated by popular movements from the occupation of colonial powers, the hope that the new state would provide more egalitarian life conditions for its people quickly revealed itself vain. In many post-colonial African countries, for example, analogous colonial practices were continued by the new state and this was justified by the need to overcome economic dependence. "The same coercive and exclusive politics against the working people were now justified in terms of building a nation. In very few cases were attempts made to free and encourage the creative possibilities inherent in the people. Not only did the state dominate development, it did so by subsuming popular-national interests to western ones and thus reproducing neo-colonial structures and practices" (Neocosmos 2007:39). This reflected to certain extent the experience of the Republic of Ireland, where part of the colonial 'machinery' was taken over by the new independent state.

So in socialist and post-colonial (and post-revolutionary) countries it became evident that the tendency of the state is to maintain inequalities in the name of national wealth, whatever the price to be paid for it. In this process the independent 'creativity' and organisational capacity of the people is suppressed in favour of bureaucratic logics. "The Stalinist party-state and the democratic state parties" argues Balso (2010:25) "are proof of the fact that party fuses with

state, and politics grows corrupt and criminal when it fuses with the state". It was such context that 1960s' movement rebelled on a worldwide scale.

Obviously, the concrete contexts in which movements developed were heterogeneous, and the spectrum of issues at stake very broad. However, it is possible to argue that at the end of the day the content of the struggles and central political issues were analogous everywhere. For example, in China, given the mounting bureaucratisation and elitism shaping the ruling party-state, a 'Cultural Revolution' (from 1966) sparked with a myriad of independent political groups developing outside a Communist Party-State which could no longer be considered as the 'vanguard' of emancipatory politics. Self-organised workers and students (Red Guards) produced very original political experimentations destabilising party centralism for some years.

In a similar fashion, the singularity of French May '1968 "was that it separated and distinguished workers and Communist Party, workers and trade unionism, and opened up the question of the [independent] political capacity of the workers" (Balso 2010:22). A capacity that was no longer possible to submit to the representation of official mass organisations (parties, unions), which finally played a defensive and reactionary role during the course of the events. This was evident in the way in which unions, in the name of the 'working class unity', made a huge effort in order to keep workers separated from students.

In a similar fashion, with their slogan 'the personal is political' feminist organisations from all around the world unmasked mechanisms of oppression towards women, which official politics and the 'patriarchal' state tended to hide or to consider to be out of their jurisdiction and part of the 'private' sphere.

In Northern Ireland civil right movements developed in the folds and outside the Republican movement, building alliances with the struggles of ordinary people and developing a though

critique of sectarianism and militaristic approaches. A similar process took place in the Irish Republic where, as I will illustrate in the next chapter, community organisations were created as a fresh arena for political activity, which did not reproduce the centralized management of the state, but offered unprecedented opportunities for spontaneous and independent action by poor people outside the frequently 'elitist' and representative field of republican and socialist party politics.

Although these processes taking place on a worldwide scale were frequently articulated according to conventional political categories (as for example class, party, proletariat, nation etc.), they evidently constituted a rupture with them. They constituted the 'demonstration' of a new political capacity irreducible to state-politics. This brought to an end an epoch of quiescent political culture, and opened the possibility for a brand new conception of politics - which was not yet formally elaborated in a new collective approach, but which is reflected in many experimentations that took place between the 1960s and nowadays and of which CD is (was?) a pertinent example. The 'incompleteness' of the rupture with the 'old' and the advent of the 'new' is in my view the principal cause of the present impasse.

Theoretically speaking, from about the 1960s a for long hegemonic conception of politics, according to which there is an 'historical objective agent' that carries the possibility for emancipation and that therefore just needs to be organised and synthesised by mass organisations has progressively declined. The 'working-class', the 'proletariat', the 'people' can no longer be considered as being 'subjects of history', and neither can be new surrogates of class such as "the multitude" (Hardt & Negri 2004). Those new movements can not be conceptualized as the result of conflict between 'classes' or specific social groups, or of the pressure of 'new productive forces' on the background of old 'relations of production'. They are not the outcome of 'historical' development – in a Marxist sense. "In fact there is no

subject of history, so much should be clear from the failure of the statist emancipatory experiments of the twentieth century. To think an emancipatory politics without thinking a historical subject is precisely what social theory must help us to achieve today" (Neocosmos 2009:266).

*

In this chapter I have theoretically disentangled the categories of politics and the state, whose separation is not always taken for granted in social sciences. I also illustrated how a distance from the state - expressed as a rupture with the main categories (above all the 'party') of 20th century politics - has been central to the most significant 1960s and 1970s political movements on a global scale. In the following section I will focus on CD organisations, illustrating the concrete conditions under which their existence became possible in Dublin, and giving an account of how this initiatives have evolved along the decades, until nowadays.

3. THE POLITICS OF CD. A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The argument that I will stress throughout this chapter is that between the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, under the generic aegis of "Community Development", the Dublin inner city subaltern struggles raised implicit and explicit political questions which differed substantially from those previously raised by the 'traditional' republican and socialist left. These questions concerned daily life issues confronted by ordinary people, and developed in unprecedented forms of political organisation, which, for not being concerned with entering the domain of state power, positioned themselves at a subjective distance from it. This distance from the state allowed them to continuously re-invent original forms of collective action in popular areas of Dublin. CD did not develop as the continuation of an existing project or trend, but developed in the context of an historical rupture with previous modes of political thought and organisation.

During the last decades, however, this independence has being challenged leading to the present crisis that, despite what is usually thought, goes beyond economic factors. As I will illustrate, the depoliticisation of Community Development – as that of many other organisations and political projects that emerged internationally between 1960s and 1970s - consisted in the adjustment to a form correlated to that of the state (statification). On one hand this can be explained by the fact that CD projects ended up being 'co-opted' into governmental schemes which required from them a reconfiguration under a bureaucratic structure of management, expertise and service delivery. The state, I will argue, being concerned about the threat that these independent organisations constituted to its own stability, has attempted to bureaucratically incorporate and normalise them. On the other hand, however, a more 'subjective' analysis reveals the failure of CD groups to develop a serious self-critical consciousness, especially on what concerns their relation to society and to power structures as well as their ideological positioning in a broader (international) political landscape.

Nevertheless the prevailing of an emphasis on state-related concerns, concepts, and modes of organization[8], as well as the declining of the original intellectual and political independence from the bureaucratic apparatus has progressively led to the present, paradoxical situation in which the taking away of state funds -officially justified by the financial crisis- is experienced by many CD groups as their death knell.

As I said, in this chapter I will attempt a reconstruction of the historical unfolding of CD. However, one should be aware that in the multiplicity of experiences that go under this name the relationship between spontaneity and formal organisation, intuition and realisation had never a linear and logical progression. This lack of linearity affects the way in which one might situates events and processes in a unitary and consistent historical framework. My work here will not consist in giving an account of every single experience in the realm of CD, but to try and situate key sequences in a broad historical frame.

I'll start (3.1) by illustrating how dissatisfaction with representative and centralist forms of organisation affected the republican movement leading to the famous split between Provisional and Official IRA in 1969. Many activists felt the need to re-conceive organisation as something organic to ordinary people's struggles, like those that in Dublin were taking place around the housing issue. I will then (3.2) discuss how, out of that shift the Dublin Housing Action Committee (DHAC) came up, an organisation that I describe as a quintessential post-party political formation, not interested in conquering state-power and aimed to link and organise people living in inadequate accommodation to squat vacant property, and to resist evictions. Along the line of the DHAC (which had a quite short life)

[8] The fact that we refer to community development as a "sector" is significant in this sense. One of the key features of the recent framework is the conversion of these large, unruly and challenging social movements into "sectors" (of the state) defined by policy, funding streams and institutional relationships. The 1970s and even the 1980s in Ireland saw a broader, sometimes chaotic but nevertheless fertile relationship between movements whose issues often ranged very widely. As we have become "sectoralised" we have lost track of what's happened to each other, and let the state define who and what we are – grumbling about it, but accepting the basic fact and trying to push our own organisational agenda – the small version – within their structures as best we can.

many other groups started mobilising around issues related to housing, education, health, informal labour and so on, opening the social/political space where CD started then to grow (3.3). Here I will analyse CD's approach – also through the information that I collected by interviewing activists who have been involved since the 1960s – as a form of politics that springs from real situations; from what ordinary people can think, say and do in these situations. In the last part of this chapter I will illustrate how as long as those creative political energies have weakened almost to the point of exhaustion, the organisational forms that they had generated and sustained entered into a crisis. Indeed from about the 1980s CD projects began to be rearticulated and 'depoliticised' under a bureaucratic framework of funding streams, technocratic management, expertise and service delivery (3.4). The phase known as partnership governance has been the peak of this process of independency loss. It took to the present situation where the destiny of CD is undecipherable.

3.1 Re-orientation of republican/socialist politics towards ordinary people's concerns

Community Development, as we normally intend this notion nowadays (i.e. self-activated local groups informed by a social justice and egalitarian ethos), emerged in the 1960s as a mode of independent political organisation inspired by the civil rights movement (Rolston 1980), and more generally by the new political atmosphere characterising the second half of that decade. This means that CD in Ireland – contrary to what most literature gives to understand, and despite its name - did not develop as the continuation of an existing project or trend, but developed in the context of an historical rupture with previous modes of political thought and organisation. Indeed during the decade of 1960, workers', students' and ordinary people's movements introduced powerful political transformations which affected societies on a worldwide scale. According to several authors (Badiou & Pozzana 2005; Wang 2006; Russo 2005), these events put into question the 20th Century's entire political framework,

particularly challenging its representative nature. As I have reharsed in Chapter 2, a core feature of 1960s' and 1970s' movements was that they emerged outside a 'traditional' party type of framework, opposing the bureaucratisation affecting centralised political organisations and advocating people's autonomous capacity to emancipate themselves. 'No one can emancipate people on their behalf' was a grounding assumption of social movements from the Chinese Cultural Revolution onwards.

CD developed in this break with a representative, centralised conception of politics. Indeed, like in many other parts of the world in this decade also in Ireland there was a new radical mood expressed through social agitation, which brought dramatic splits and unexpected twists in existing political movements[9]. Influenced by crucial events taking place in various parts of the globe, activists' perception was that very soon things would have changed profoundly and hopefully for the better. "There was a real sense", as republican activist Tony Heffernan (quot. by Hanley & Millar 2009:95) remembers, "that we were on the verge of a sort of very profound change all over the world. With the arrogance and confidence that only 18-years-olds can have, we were sure we were on the verge of revolution". The Republican movement for instance, after the period of deadlock that followed the unsuccessful Border Campaign (1956 – 1962), recovered some of its lost political vigour by drastically redefining its approach. Source of inspiration for this change were ideas and desires that in the 1960s were inspiring workers and students in Europe and China, national liberation movements in Africa and Vietnam, civil rights movements in the U.S., revolutionary movements in Cuba, and so on. More concretely, the IRA shifted its emphasis from military/clandestine struggle to a more 'genuine' political approach, aimed to develop its action as openly as possible.

[9] This effervescence was facilitated by the fact that, as Acheson et al. (2004:85) observe, the 1960s were characterised by a decrease in emigration, with the consequence that social issues and conflicts were more likely to be addressed by younger generations at home, rather than abroad.

The failure of the border campaign had illustrated to leaders such as Cathal Goulding, Seamus Costello and Roy Johnston the "inability of the IRA to achieve its aims solely through the force of arms" (Hanley & Millar 2009:28). They had come to feel that the movement's approach had been elitist, "its attitude towards the mass of people being that [in Goulding's own words] 'we didn't care what these bastards want, we knew what is good for them'. Contrary to that attitude, they had come to the conclusion that "the demand for revolution should come from the people, not from a number of people sitting in a back room." (ibid. p28).

In my view this shift was central because it inaugurated a phase of critique and disaffection with the representative and centralist approach that the organisation had adopted up to that stage. On the other hand, this change of perspective fully situated (a part of) the Republican movement in what I should call a '1968' type of disposition. For example by 1964, Roy Johnston, IRA director of education, was impressed by the example of Cuba where a broad based movement, urban as well as rural had 'upstaged' a narrow Moscow line Communist Party and carried through a popular revolution (article in united Irishman October 1964 - in Hanley & Millar 2009:38). In a similar fashion, Tony Gregory (1979) once said about his mentor (republican activist Seamus Costello) that during the 1960s he had come to realise that the challenge of emancipation "would not be won by a small though gallant band divorced from the vital social issues of the day (…). To make progress from military failure and disillusionment, it was necessary to involve the movement in the issues that affected the mass of the people, civil rights in the North and social equality in the entire country. To build that movement was their new task, their way forward". And this would happen not just by "preaching theory", argued Tony Gregory, but by organising "tenants associations, housing action committees, community pressure groups and so on (Gregory, 1979).

Also significant is the fact that during 1967 the United Irishman (Republican movement's journal) had begun to take a more upfront line on the Vietnam War, having previously called for negotiations (Hanley & Millar 2009:95). To the point that in a document titled "Ireland Today" Roy Johnston argued that agitation in Ireland had to be kept up and the republicans had to become the driving force for a national liberation front – the same title used by Vietnamese revolutionaries (ibid. p116).

Finally, in January 1969 the IRA outlined its policy in a major statement (ibid. p116) explaining that it was "no longer an elitist force divorced from the struggles of the people but a revolutionary army, whose role was to assist the people in what is THEIR liberation struggle". The word "their" was deliberately written in capital letters so to emphasize the fact that the organisation had stopped seeing 'the people' as an abstract category that political organisation had to represent and act for, but as subjects which had to be protagonist of *their own* emancipation. Republicans rejected to be a force to certain extent 'separated' from the rest of society, and started articulating their existence to concrete processes which were close and real to the people: struggle *for* (the working class, the people, the nation etc.) suddenly turned into struggle *with*.

Also typical of a '1968 disposition' is the idea that (industrial) labour is *not* the only possible place where political struggle can be organised. New political organisations can always emerge out of social conflicts and contradictions. And this especially occurs in 'hybrid' situations, when people are not kept in their own place. As Badiou says referring to his own experience of 1968 "we realized, without really understanding it, that if a new emancipatory politics was possible, it would turn social classifications upside down. It would not consist in organizing everyone in the places where they were, but in organizing lightning displacements, both material and mental" (Badiou 2010:60). In Ireland, as in many other

countries, struggles were not anymore concentrated in factories and other working places where traditional approaches wanted them to be restricted. “Work issues overlapped with issues that were key concerns of the community” (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:4).

3.2 The community acts: the Citizen's Grievance Bureau and the Dublin Housing Action Committee (DHAC)

The process of transformation experienced by the Republican Movement during the 1960s lead to a campaign of open support for (and integration to) ‘spontaneous’ dissent and daily struggles emerging in popular contexts. In Dublin, an important step in this direction was the creation of the Citizen’s Grievance Bureaux. The initiator of this project was Proinnsias De Rossa, then a young Republican activist and now Labour MEP who had gained some political experience in the inner city having previously campaigned for Sinn Fein. Inspired by the activities of Britain’s ‘Citizens’ Advice Bureaux’, he decided to create an Irish version of it in Dublin. “The November 1965 issue of the United Irishman carried the first advertisement for the Citizen’s Grievance Bureaux, which was going to hold “weekly ‘clinics’ for those with housing trouble” (Irish Times 1968:8). In a city where social services largely depended on the Catholic Church “the office was soon inundated with letters requesting assistance, overwhelmingly on the issue of housing” (Hanley & Millar 2009:130).

Amongst the various issues around which spontaneous conflict was rotating at the time, housing was certainly the most significant in urban areas and especially in the inner city of Dublin. What is generally remembered as the ‘1960's housing crisis’ was fired by widespread abuses, by rack-rent landlords and the failure of the government to fund a local authority housing construction programme. Indeed Dublin’s population had grown from 1961 to 1965 by a greater proportion than in any five years since at least 1900. Thousands of families were living in overcrowded housing, in near slum conditions, the north inner city resembling a sort

of “unknown world of crumbling tenements set against a jarring backdrop of opulent eighteenth century architecture” (Hanna 2010:1016). After dramatic incidents such as the collapse of two eighteen century tenements which killed 4 people in 1963, nearly 1200 Georgian houses were evacuated for demolition as an emergency measure across the north and west inner city. However, these measures were not just dictated by safety concerns. The displacement of poor people from the city centre was also part of a long term project aimed to regenerate and gentrify that area of Dublin. As we will see in Chapter 5 the Dublin City Council has not given up yet with this agenda. Although after 1982[10] considerable resources were put into the provision of better quality homes for social housing tenants in the city, politicians and ‘stakeholders’ still consider the removal of the poor from the city centre to be a necessary measure for a city that aims to be attractive for global capital. Paradoxically, the financial crisis has been the excuse to move some steps forward in this project.

Between the 1960s and 1970s, according to a CD activist operating in the north inner city (Lisa), residents started to recognise that key decisions that had a massive impact on them were taken elsewhere and that people who were affected by these decisions had been excluded from the decision-making process. The most dramatic of these decisions was that to remove them from the city centre[11] by demolishing the Georgian houses in which they were living. As Lisa, remembers: “at that time the Dublin Corporation decided that they would remove all the local council estates around this area. They needed more space for business in the city centre[12]. Indeed, the north inner city had remained architecturally intact until the late 1950s, when two policies were implemented by the Dublin Corporation[13]; namely the “road

[10] Gregory Deal, see below in this chapter.
[11] Part of Dublin Corporation’s strategy was the construction of 7 fifteen-storey high-rises in Ballymun on the northern edge of the city housing nearly 20.000 people. First tenants moved in in 1966. The development was separated from areas of non public housing by a 12 foot concrete wall.
[12] Plans were drawn up involving major motorway networks, office developments and car parks. There was little attempt to maintain the residential nature of the inner city (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:19)
[13] Old name for Dublin City Council (DCC).

widening policy"[14] (Hanna 2010), and, even more influential in the destruction of the fabric of the north inner city area, the "dangerous buildings policy" (see below).

These were the first issues around which local people were campaigning. "The local authority said that these decisions were decisions for the good of the city, but they were totally ignoring the lives of people who were living in this area. And they started to say: we need your land now, and we are going to move you out of this area" (Lisa). People's response was quick: "they basically said no, that that wasn't fair. And that was the beginning of the housing action movement and the community leaders like Tony Gregory etc… they all came around that issue. And it was very much the beginning in this area. People needed to mobilize so that they had some say in decisions which were made elsewhere" (Lisa)

Conflict around housing had quickly escalated in August 1965 when homeless families living in Griffith Barracks (an old army quarters located in the south inner city) while awaiting accommodation barricaded themselves into the place as a form of protest. A total of 18 families, 87 people in all, were housed in overcrowded and unsanitary barracks where men and women were segregated after 10 pm. There was barbed wire on the walls and soldiers on guard duty (Hanley & Millar 2009:43). Gardaí eventually moved in to remove the barricades and evict the homeless families who then marched across the city to Mountjoy Square where they set up homes in wooden shacks and tents on a derelict site. The encampment was adjacent to the United Irishman offices at Sinn Fein headquarters in 30 Gardiner Place, which eventually became the centre of much of the agitation (ibid. p43). After the IRA became embroiled in the struggle over evictions volunteers started distributing leaflets arguing that every town in Ireland should be the property of the people who live in it (Hanley & Millar 2009:42-43).

[14] Which developed from a report on Dublin traffic submitted by Karlheinz Schaechterle to the Dublin Corporation in 1965 (Hanna 2010, 1020) which entailed "widening many of the principal streets within the (…) area and the demolition of their buildings".

As a result of conflicts like the one that took place in Griffith Barracks, independent political committees were formed in many urban areas, gathering ordinary people together with republican and socialist activists. For example, this was the case of the Dublin Housing Action Committee (DHAC), which resulted from the work of the Citizens Advice Bureaux (republicans), the Irish Workers Party (and, even more actively, its new Connolly Youth Movement), the Irish Communist Organisation, and some local residents' groups. An important ally of DHAC was Fr. Michael Sweetman, a Jesuit priest and one of the few radicals emerging from the Catholic Church at the time (ibid. p88).

DHAC's heterogeneous composition is central here because it reflects the political dynamism that at the end of the 1960s characterised many movements on a worldwide scale. As an organisation it was (to some extent[15]) independent, it developed in a decentralised fashion, it did nor claim to be representative of a class (in an orthodox Marxist sense), it did not organise action according to official and predefined ideologies, it acted politically in relation to concrete (daily life) situations, and it was not concerned with entering the domain of state power -"we agitate solely for the implementation of our 5 points plan[16]" declared Mairin De Burca (Irish Times 1968:8). These features make the DHAC a post-party organisation in every respect. DHAC was the first independent organised group to take an active part in

[15] Of course, many key activists had a party-political background (indeed before the 1960s there was little activism outside party organisations). And of course, while organising independent committees such the DHAC these activists were still involved in party politics. However, my point here is not to illustrate a sudden radical shift in activists' lifestyles. My aim here is to show and analyse the emerging of a new tendency in the field of political organisation; a tendency which broke with the 20th century's left-wing 'orthodox' tradition and which has had crucial consequences on emancipatory politics. This historical shift is absolutely independent from individuals' life courses. Likewise, the fact that afterwards many activists got involved in parliamentary politics on a full time basis, achieving in some cases power positions (like for example Proinnsias De Rossa who is now a Labour MP), does not change the fact that that historical process/rupture had actually taken place. The fact that in many countries there are well known 1968ers who in the following decades joined conservative parties or became rich bankers is certainly not enough to dismiss the historical relevance of "1968".

[16] The DHAC called for: 1. The declaration of a housing emergency and the adoption of emergency measures to provide adequate temporary family accommodation, by making all vacant accommodation available as living accommodation. 2. The introduction of byelaws to prohibit the demolition and conversion to other uses of living accommodation. 3. The repair of dwelling by Dublin Corporation where landlords refuse to do so. 4. an immediate halt to the building of prestige office blocks and the redirection of the capital and labour involved to the construction of family accommodation. 5. House loans of 100% for low income citizens, at low interest rates (Irish Times 1968:8).

struggles related to the housing crisis. Its campaign consisted in picketing landlord's homes, demonstrating at Dublin City Council's meetings demanding to build houses not office blocks, and eventually in the occupation of vacant property (Hanley & Millar 2009:89).

In the first issue of "Squatter"[17], the DHAC's broadsheet, one can read: "we will report on the latest developments in Landlord racketeering, evictions, squatting etc., as well as publicising the numerous successful agitations we are waging on behalf of the homeless and rack-rented workers of Dublin. (…) The most politically advanced members of the DHAC have taken the ultimate step in the present housing agitation; they have squatted in some of the idle, surplus property owned by speculating Landlord parasites. (…) Actions speak louder than words and one homeless family squatting in some Rachman's idle property is worth a bellyful of promises from the so-called Socialists of Fianna Fail or Labour" (DHAC, 1969).

The campaign assumed a sort of 'universalistic' tone for it defined all families living in inadequate accommodation as homeless. As republican activist Sean Dunne saw it, "the main thing was to get the homeless involved, they did get involved and some joined the movement as well" (Hanley & Millar 2009). "Throughout 1968 and 1969, the DHAC was consistently in the press, for example, by helping families resist evictions resulting from Dangerous Buildings notices, hitting a member of Dublin Corporation in the face with a dead rat, and resisting office" (Hanna 2010:1031). In January 1968, in Inchicore, where the organisation had gained considerable notoriety, activists were aiding residents who had barricaded themselves inside their cottages rather than be relocated in Ballymun. When Gardaí attempted to break the barricades and evict the families, a riot erupted and 24 people including DHAC members (among which Sean Dunne, Proinsias De Rossa and Jim Monahan) were arrested (Hanley & Millar 2009). In an interview with the Irish Times

[17] The first issue of "Squatter" can be downloaded at http://cedarlounge.wordpress.com/2008/06/16/the-left-archive-squatter-broadsheet-of-the-dublin-housing-action-committee-june-1969/

(1969:8) De Rossa argued: “we don’t set out to be respectable public figures. We want to force attention on the problem and force action on it. Ours is only a short term solution. But I’d like to emphasize one thing. Our gripe is not with the officials or the councillors or Dublin Corporation. Our battle is against conditions, against the system”.

In 1969 DHAC activist Dennis Dennehy was imprisoned for repeatedly ignoring court orders to vacate the property he was occupying in Mountjoy Square. He went on hunger strike upon imprisonment, which led to a wave of violent protests across Dublin. During his incarceration there were nightly marches from the General Post Office to Mountjoy Prison, while on Saturday 20th of January, 1970, 400 people staged a sit down protest on O’Connell Street Bridge. Dublin ended up resembling Derry as chaotic protests filled the streets and violent conflicts with the Gardaí ensued (Hanley & Millar 2009). People’s Democracy, a civil rights movement en route from Belfast to the General Post Office held a meeting numbering 800 people outside n.20 Mountjoy Square to protest about the housing situation in both parts of the island. The fiftieth anniversary of the First Dail that fell in January 1969 was also exploited by Dennehy’s supporters. They recalled the past highlighting the gap existing between the revolutionary aspirations of the founders of the state and the political and social achievement of their successors. Likewise, a group of students supporting Dennehy carried banners proclaiming “Evictions: English landlords, 1868; Irish landlords, 1968–69’ and ‘50th anniversary of homeless families and enforced” (Hanley & Millar 2009).

Despite the declining of the DHAC from its peak of activity in 1967-1969, it had definitely opened a fundamental political space in Dublin; a qualitatively different one from that in which ‘pre 1968’ organizations used to operate. The DHAC constituted an experimental space where political ‘intellectuality’ and ordinary people tended to blend with each other. During the following two decades this space was repeatedly occupied and activated by non-

party forms of political organisation. Many of these organizations are generally grouped under the CD banner. Under this name they are still operating in the inner city of Dublin. Along the decades their 'untraditional' approach has attracted at the same time support and suspicion from the political left.

Indeed, since the beginning CD was influenced by articulations deriving from the emergent women's movement, whose themes strongly contributed to the rupture with a centralised and vertical mode of organisation. Organising methods "emphasised consensus and democratic decision making in groups, linking the personal to the political, and emphasising the importance of self-determination and control over one's life" (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:5). It also took advantage of this crisis of centralism and representation attracting a wide number of disillusioned activists and proposing a new reading of the problems affecting deprived areas in Dublin.

3.3 The formation of community action groups in the 1970s

In the early 1970s, two of the first community action groups, North Central Community Council (NCCC) and Fatima Development Group arose from tenant action groups in the two concerned areas. These affiliations of inner city tenants groups literarily "took up the legacy of the DHAC and campaigned on housing issues" (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:4). They also believed that people were not involved in critical decisions affecting them, that "the north inner city [in the case of NCCC] was not getting its share of grants, particularly amenity improvement grants and that grants coming into the area were controlled by outside agencies" (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:27) like for example the Catholic Youth Council which they also criticised for not having a bottom up structure and because it tended not to hire local people. Other groups followed in different parts of the city, such as Ballymun, Tallaght, Blanchardstown and the south inner city (Acheson et al 2004). These groups operated under a

range of different names and titles, such as 'action group', 'community coalition', 'community council', 'development association'. By directly mobilising affected people they confronted the consequences of national patterns of unemployment, educational disadvantage, lack of public services, uneven urban development and irresponsible planning" (Acheson et al 2004:89).

Projects were initiated by activists and ordinary people who saw CD as a fresh arena for political intervention, offering unprecedented opportunities for spontaneous and independent action outside the elitist and hierarchical field of republican or socialist party politics. It also constituted a move away from a passive waiting for policy solutions towards more direct action where local activism had an agenda of structural change (Motherway 2006:11). This approach operated distinctly outside the state system and its laws. It was barely tolerated by the authorities, and strongly under-resourced. Its politics did not consist in the affiliation to existent parties or ideologies[18], but in the uncompromised effort to articulate the day by day issues of people inhabiting the most deprived areas of the city. Movement leaders and spokes persons were normally born in those same neighbourhoods having known through their own lived experience the consequences of poverty and exclusion afflicting those areas. CD activists were people coming from the inner city and were brought up in conditions of acute poverty. Throughout their life they all tended to remain loyal to their working class roots. Some of them were people who had developed some previous political experience in trade unions or in left-wing or nationalist parties. However, having been disillusioned by that experience, they decided to quit and try with a different engagement which consisted in directly confronting real issues affecting disadvantaged people, without the mediation of a formal, representative body. As Damien, one of the 'pioneers' of CD in Dublin refers: "I was committed to the communist idea and committed to the party. And I wasn't getting anywhere,

[18] Although this did not excluded the fact that members could be affiliated to parties and have a strongly ideological view

and the idea of selling to people an ideology, when what they needed was jobs was contradictory. And the politicians of the left could get out and complain that there were no jobs but it didn't change anything so I got engaged with that way of working and I kind of dropped out of the Communist Party and I associated with this alliance around local issues".

Tony Gregory's[19] adherence to the DHAC first and then to CD was motivated by the same type of frustration with official politics. Since the age of 16 Gregory had been involved in left-republican party activism. From that experience he learned the basics of local campaigning. When he rejected the car bombing campaign being waged in Northern Ireland by the Provisional IRA and became disenchanted with the "ideologism" of the Official IRA in the early seventies, he decided to concentrate on local activism of a post-party nature such as CD. As his comrade Mick Rafferty (2010) remembers: "Tony got involved in community work, like many of us, coming from a republican or socialist background. In Tony's case it was of course from both of these traditions that he emerged. In ways he was disillusioned not with republicanism but the feuding and the bitterness that plagued the movement. This bitterness would see his one time republican mentor, Seamus Costello, murdered around the corner from where Tony lived. (…) Likewise with the socialist parties, they had lost their radical momentum for the sixties and seemed remote from the struggles that Tony now wanted to embrace".

Nevertheless, this frustration with official, centralised and representative politics was not limited to the pioneering activists; also during the following decades it continued pushing people towards CD. People who in their private lives were struggling against authoritarian education, against the hierarchical management of their working place or union, against a social and familial model which was grounded on patriarchal domination and so on were certainly attracted by a CD model. For example, Aine, a (today) well-known south inner city

[19] Probably the most famous CD activist in Dublin

CD activist, who was frustrated with the male domination and bureaucratisation affecting the union and the factory where she was working at the end of the 1970s, decided to move to the Simon Community (SC). SC was a CD type of organisation established in Ireland in 1969, based on the twin principles of non-judgemental support for the homeless and campaigning for an end to homelessness. As Aine told me during a meeting we had at the family resource centre in Saint Michael's estate, where she is currently involved, her frustration with the union reached its momentum after the boss of the factory where she was working decided to move the machines to the wall: "(…) and I told to the other women working there that we cannot accept this situation, we can't work in these conditions facing a wall, and we have to bring the union in here. They agreed to bring the union in and there was a man who came and asked: give me a psychological reason why that wall affects you in your work, because the boss has the right to have the machines wherever he wants. And I just thought that's the end of it, so I left and I moved to Simon's". (Aine)

In some cases people became CD activists after experiences that heavily shaped the course of their lives pushing them towards that type of involvement. For example, Monica got involved in anti-heroin campaigns and addiction support initiatives since the 1990s after the problem had knocked at her own door. "My son was an addict and that situation devastated the entire family. We knew nothing about addiction and we couldn't get information on the problem or help at all". After her son committed suicide out of desperation, she joined CD projects who, with few resources were struggling against the drugs epidemic.

As I mentioned above, the innovation introduced by CD consisted in the direct mobilisation of people around matters concerning their own lives. It consisted in the appropriation of emancipatory claims from party vanguards, from the state and from other related representative mechanisms, which, at the time, were perceived by many activists as being

politically exhausted – as Rita's contribution makes clear. This approach bypasses the old leftist distinction between 'reformist' and 'revolutionary' politics (Neocosmos, 2009), to the extent that while it does not give up the idea of a grassroots emancipatory process, it is not concerned with the achievement of state power, neither through Revolution, nor through elections. And when state power is not at stake – highlights John Holloway (2005:173) - "the whole conception of struggle shifts".

So, community workers were people like Damien, Tony, Mick and Aine who started to engage in this type of activity which I describe as 'political', but not in the conventional sense of the word[20]. As Damien highlights it was "political with the small 'p' (…) It was a political activity but it wasn't aimed at a political outcome [such as winning an election] (…) it was aimed at solving a particular problems now. My problem as a community worker is how we make real difference to people in their daily life". As Mark – another early-stage CD activist – puts it, the point was "to tackle the issues that prevented them living life to their full potential", that prevented people, in other words, to take control of their immediate conditions of existence. And this process could just start by addressing ordinary day to day issues, like "the conditions of peoples apartments, the collection of rubbish, (…) the window on flat 28 is broken: why isn't it repaired, why does it take 3 months, etc." (Mark).

Of course local committees were not in the position to clean the streets and fix houses. But being their voice a collective one, they were able to impose those basic demands to the local authority. However, the aim was not simply to demand delivery by the state and turn people into passive service receivers. Community based initiatives also involved practices of auto-didacticism, the production of pieces of action-research on people's living conditions and the set-up of political campaigns on the most disparate day to day issues - from housing to street

[20] See theoretical chapter.

selling, from rubbish collection to after school support. In this scenery every minor issue could potentially become political.

Although from a traditional leftist point of view this might sounds like an individualist – essentially apolitical - pursuing of mere individual needs, according to Felix Guattari (1984) (in a piece that by the way he wrote contemporaneously) emancipatory politics "should be something that redirects people's demands, their natural understanding of things, and does so out of the simplest situations; [it] creates troubles out of events that common sense would say were quite unimportant – out of the problem of the housewife and the kitchen cupboard (…). Only by slow steps – though there are sudden startling leaps – can one work back from such situations to the key signifiers of capitalist power. (…) The social subjectivity becomes open to desire and at the same time continues to introduce the peculiar, the unpredictable, the nonsensical, into the coherence of political discourse" (pp. 202).

Accordingly, while local committees were taking up day to day issues such as the ones described above, they were also setting the ground to discussing and addressing major political questions. A fundamental point, however, was the belief in the ability of ordinary, un-skilled and miscounted people to critically think and to consequently take action in order to change their own world.

3.4 State responses to people's independent organisations.

I argued that the first phase of CD in the inner city of Dublin was related to the experience of urban popular movements such as the DHAC, being shaped by a subjective rupture with traditional forms of political engagement, by an uncompromised independence from the state apparatus and by a strong emphasis posed on proximity to ordinary people and experimentation. "Stand up with the poor instead of stand up for the poor" is a slogan coined

by South African slum-activists, which nevertheless articulates very well the nature of CD's initial approach.

However - as for Alain Badiou – political sequences are precarious by nature. They tend to be exposed to mechanisms of repression, normalisation and reincorporation into the state-of-the-situation. As we have seen in Chapter 2, not only is there an ontological distinction between state and politics – in the sense that the first is "constant" and the second is "intermittent" (Russo 2006:675), and that the state in itself is incapable of politics – but whenever a political subjectivity comes into existence, its relation with the state is deeply problematic. The only type of 'politics' admitted by the state is what Badiou would define as "state-politics", a sort of political fiction which is devoid of any subjective dimension, just entailing a bureaucratic and ritual content, and which is basically aimed to the management of the situation. State-politics is a political 'fiction' to the extent that it always comes down - in Badiou's words - to ensuring "the continuation of what exists" (Neocosmos 2009a).

In the context of CD the invention/discovery of this independent political space, as Rolston (1980:149) puts it, was not merely theoretical, or limited to the field of activist conscience. On the contrary, there was the practical evidence that such politics constituted a source of instability and could not be really integrated into the capitalist state, both local and central. The nature of this threat – highlights Rolston – "was seen not just by researchers, nor just by political activists eager to explore it, but also by the state, concerned to manage the working class" (p. 149); and concerned, I would add, to normalise forms of organization that were potentially undermining it.

One should notice that the strategies that the Irish state put into place to control independent CD organisations differed substantially from the strategies it had adopted previously for other types of movements. For example during 1950s and 1960s, due to the general political

climate and the nature of the actions undertaken by the Republican movement, the state response was mainly police-oriented and based on the exercise of a military type of response. However, with the emerging of organisations of a new type in the course of the 60s, one can witness a qualitative change with respect to the state's attitude. With the 1970s governmental attempts to interfere and control those unprecedented people's self-organising experiences became more sophisticated and oriented to inclusion (statification) rather than just to confrontation/repression. As I will illustrate, instead of trying to literarily eradicate the movement – as it was the case when dealing with paramilitary organisations for example – the state was now trying to depoliticise it by taking it away from people's independent control and rearticulating it as 'service provision' within the terrain of state bureaucracy.

The 'co-option' of independent CD organizations into a community and voluntary *sector* – i.e. into a 'pillar' of the state - and subsequently the idea of 'partnership' are rooted in this inclusionary approach. The fact that, from the 1970s and especially in the 1980s "anti-poverty strategy became a core feature of social policy" (Powell & Geoghegan 2004:113) constitutes an evidence of this shift.

On the other hand CD did not just act as designated 'victim' of these processes. Some of its own features actually facilitated depoliticisation. To begin with, the very notion of "Community Development", which (as discussed in Chapter 2) generates consensus and misunderstanding, can be easily manipulated and co-opted by the state. Furthermore the fact that these independent political organisations presented an unprecedented capacity to engage with marginalised people and generate alternative forms of institutionality (see Chapter 5) in areas "where the state and its agents were making limited and narrow inroads, posed an excellent investment in state building" (Collins 2002:98). "Ironically" – Collins remarks – "it was precisely because of its oppositional tendencies that CD proved so attractive to the state".

In this perspective, it is not surprising that powerful players in the state apparatus became strongly supportive of notions of community and group action, for it was seen as a low cost, effective means of binding and reinforcing the social fabric, especially in areas that were out of their control.

It should be clear that this is an attempt to describe some general tendencies that can not be considered as representing every singular (co-option) experience within the vast CD assemblage. For instance, this is not to say that from the 1970s the state stopped using its repressive and military apparatuses (courts, police) to contain political movements. In the late 1970s for example, as street sellers vehemently opposed with mass demonstrations and civil disobedience their being banned from the north inner city of Dublin, the police did not hesitate to violently attack the crowd. And furthermore, when Tony Gregory and Christy Burke became spoke persons for those informal workers (mainly working class women), they themselves were jailed for two weeks. Tina, a community activist once noted that "one is not really a community development activist if she has not been arrested".

What I am trying to highlight here is that during that historical phase it has been possible to observe a tendency by many western states to adopt a less confrontational approach in relation to social agitation and to manifest unprecedented interest and support for issues related to poverty, marginality and disadvantage. This new 'awareness' (or 'rediscovery of poverty' as some like to describe it) can be interpreted in different ways. On one hand this could be seen as a sort of "democratic experimentalism" (Sabel 1996). In a geopolitical balance shaped by the Cold War, confrontation between the Soviet and the Capitalist blocks was not just carried out in military terms, but involved a sort of competition between two universalist models, each of which tried to affirm its superiority, also from the point of view of the implementation of egalitarian policies. "Beyond the enormous ambiguity this produced

and the encompassing glow of empty propaganda issued by both sides, the opposition brought an intrinsically civil element that ultimately concerned the question of which of the two systems was better equipped to bring about egalitarian conditions" (Russo & Pozzana 2005:209). This was one of the reasons why military conflict between the two fronts remained only potential and confined to a series of localized wars. This competition between opposing conceptions of state-egalitarianism didn't just interest the two opposed super-powers, but strongly influenced many other areas of the globe, including Europe. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberalism remained the only game in town, not needing any longer to demonstrate its superiority in relation to rival social systems. This, as we know, has led to an erosion of social rights and egalitarian policies in western countries.

On the other hand, as I mentioned above, from 1966 onwards the pressure operated by social and revolutionary movements became very strong, to the point of forcing many countries to confront issues related to redistribution of wealth, democratization of the education and equality in general. Many states took advantage of that situation to 'incorporate' dissent into their administrative machinery. In this process the seeds were planted for that reorganisation of society, which is known as neo-liberal governance - "a process in which authoritarian institutions such as the government, the army, police, medicine, employment/training and housing authorities have begun to recognise the limitations of centralised state activities and advocate greater individual involvement and community control of policy implementation, policing, crime prevention, health promotion, employment, creation of estate management of local authority housing" (Cullen 1989:98) – measures which at first sight can be interpreted as equivalent to a CD approach.

In Ireland this 'rediscovery of poverty' overlaps with the establishment of the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty (1973). This operation followed the pathway

opened by the first EU poverty programmes and was closely linked to them. In other countries this agenda had already been implemented for some time. For example the "War on Poverty" legislation was first introduced in the US by Lyndon B. Johnson. Ten years later in this same country the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act established a new approach to funding community development programs based on local needs rather than national directives. In the UK community development projects were introduced in 1969.

3.5 Poverty I and the co-optation of CD

'Poverty 1' (1974-80; officially called National Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty) can be considered as the starting point of a new governmental approach to deprivation in Ireland. This scheme funded over 20 projects in rural and urban areas, working with specific groups who were deemed to be powerless. Significantly, professional *community workers* (a concept which was introduced at that stage in Ireland) were *employed* for the first time and while some projects were contracted out, others were set up by dispatching workers to widespread localities to work with deprived communities (O'Cinneide & Walsh 1990:329). Cullen (1989:100) describes Poverty 1(P1) as a programme of community self-help initiatives which constituted "the first attempt by statutory authorities with the support of European funds to promote, resource and support the development of community organisations to tackle poverty". Poverty "was defined in structural terms" with attention being drawn on the fact that its elimination "would require redistribution of resources ad power in society" (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:7). P1 had 5 core objectives:

1. to develop new and innovative strategies and techniques for dealing with poverty
2. to provide greater participation of the poor
3. to contribute to the evolution of effective long term policies against poverty
4. to increase understanding and public awareness of poverty and its causes

5. to bring about practical intervention in areas of deprivation or among groups in need (Combat Poverty Agency, 1981:82).

The programme involved the appointment of seven community development officers, who were entitled to provide training, information and support for local CD initiatives. Four pilot projects were envisaged, for which EU funding was sought, including a welfare right project, a home assistance project, a community action research project and a social service council project. In 1975 funding was granted by the EU for three of the projects, excluding the social service council project. Project workers adopted the mantle of local activists, hoping to initiate a movement for structural change in association with disadvantaged communities. They pursued two main activities: first, the setting up of centres to resource and empower poverty groups; second, the initiation of economic schemes which would encourage the development and marketing of local resources (O' Cinneide & Walsh 1990).

According to Powell and Geoghegan (2004:82), the P1 National Committee was composed both of statutory and community representatives with the aim of overseeing the programme. It declared to adopt community development as its main model of action, which it defined as "an education process which enables people to become conscious of the social, political and economic process that affect their lives and to take action to improve the quality of their lives and that of the communities in which they live". The federating "of groups on common issues was also seen as central to the programme (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:7). Although this might sounds (and was certainly embraced) as an important achievement by CD, i.e. a sort of public recognition of its efforts and an attempt to provide it with a suitable institutional support, and although there are authors (Tovey & Share 2000:352) who insist in defending the 'oppositional' nature of the programme, I argue that it constituted a first effort by the Irish state to put its hand on processes that were hitherto out of its control. Amongst the strategies which were put into place stand out the sharing of common notions (community

development, poverty, participation empowerment etc.), the framing of a sort of hierarchically structured umbrella organization (i.e. a basic representative body), and the re-formulation of local activism as community *work.*

In my view, the fact that P1 was a top-down initiative needs to be emphasised. This is evident in the way it was conceived as an organisation. For example, the national Committee itself had no autonomy of its own. As news magazine "Strumpet" (in Powell & Geoghegan 2004:82) recorded, it "was always just an advisory sub-committee to the Department of Social Welfare. Its members sat in a voluntary capacity and had full time jobs elsewhere". The assumption that the programme had adopted CD as its model of action was therefore contradictory. Indeed P1 was shaped by a strong representative and managerial imprint, which is contrary to the original understanding of self-activated local activism. Very soon these sort of internal contradictions ended up fragmenting the group and the project itself.

Initially activists were attracted by the scheme because it seemed to put forward a CD type of philosophy. The provision of funding was nevertheless embraced as a sort of victory in terms of recognition. However, I have already mentioned the fact that sometimes, in the face of the threat of big popular agitations "elites may offer up concessions that would otherwise have seemed improbable" (Piven & Cloward 1979:xxi). This is why CD activists and their expectations "to work with people and not 'for' them" (Powell & Geoghegan 2004:83) were quickly to come into conflict with members of the committee who had totally different perceptions of the aims of P1. This caused a total breakdown in terms of communication amongst the parts involved.

Indeed as Kelleher and Whelan (1992) argue, this rupture was due to the fact that at the end of the day "in the 1970s, the concept of local people organising to bring about change was treated as an *illegitimate challenge* by the established power structures". Thus, the purpose to

turn this idea into governmental policy turned out to be an illusion and P1 entered in an irreversible crisis until it ceased to exist in 1980.

It is important to highlight that the implementation of CD federations (as initiated by P1) was central to the depoliticisation and statification of CD in Ireland. Until then, voluntary organizations tended to function independently from each other – with no umbrella structure representing them as a unitary body. As Acheson et al. (2004) highlight, federating offered a number of advantages, especially on what concerned their relation to the state: "access to government, the opportunity to make the case to government for improved resources, sharing of knowledge and information, a place where well-established organizations could help newer smaller organizations to find their place and grow". This, as Piven and Cloward (1979: xxii) highlight has a negative effect on independent organisations, "because in their search for resources to maintain their organisations [organisers are] driven inexorably to elites, and the tangible and symbolic support that elites [can] provide". In our case these were the basic conditions of the constitution of CD as a 'sector'.

Again, by saying this it is not my intention to argue that in the 70s, with the introduction of Poverty 1, CD projects were suddenly co-opted by the state. This was just the ('embryonic') beginning of a process which reached its peak in the partnership phase. Indeed with partnership governance and the Celtic Tiger CD organisations gradually achieved what Rolston (1980:149) would describe as a "community intervention industry". That is a new middle class of development professionals 'colonising' poor people's struggles for equality, turning them into bureaucratic forms of state provision.

3.6 The Gregory deal as part of the turn towards state politics

During the 1980s, these containment and inclusion strategies continued to be implemented by the state in order to respond to the rising socio-economic problems affecting Ireland, and the forms of radicalisation that these problems were generating.

On one hand, "the recession which saw escalating unemployment levels, declining expenditure in public service provision and the re-emergence of a major emigration problem among young people in particular, had narrowed the scope of state intervention in working class (…) communities and given it a more manifestly coercive character. Numerous social surveys / ethnographic studies of such communities in this period drew attention to the increasingly hostile relationships between these communities and the state and its agents (Collins 2002:93). In this context community development was seen by state officials as a possible mechanism of mediation between the state and disaffected populations.

On the other hand the economic and social problems of the 1980s gave rise to sequences of strong radicalization that the state had to manage in some way. These episodes had controversial outcomes as for instance, was the case for the 'concerned parents against drugs' (CPAD - next subsection) movement, and the (related) election of 'community candidate' Tony Gregory to Dail Eireann. Gregory, who suddenly found himself holding the balance of power in March 1982 "used this advantage to stream up to IR£200m in projects into the inner city, dramatically succeeding in redirecting resources where mainstream political representatives had failed" (Acheson et al 2004:89). This success was certainly of a powerful symbolic value for Dublin's working classes. Tony Gregory, a man who was born and raised in the deprived north inner city suddenly became a national figure. For the first time the people who elected him experienced collective victory. Thereafter, "a new awareness of political processes and how they worked was developed in the area" (Kelleher &Whelan 1992:29). As Lisa refers "Tony was elected and that was very much community politics and

community organization and he managed to get an agreement for new houses to be built in the area. It had a huge symbolic value for local people that sometime you can actually change things because I suppose many people before felt that there was no point in organizing".

However, if one evaluates this event beyond the conventional celebrations that go with it - and one does this according to the theoretical/methodological framework of this thesis - one can uncover some ambivalence. Indeed Gregory's achievement also had depoliticising effects to the extent that it linked CD to elections, i.e. to state-politics (the idea of a 'community candidate' was introduced at that stage), where thought and action are *delegated* to one or more representatives. Moreover Tony Gregory's victory restored faith in voting, a state-procedure for which Dublin's working classes used to have a sort of 'natural' rejection (that CD has not seriously explored yet), and which is not part of a CD philosophy. Finally, Gregory's success also gave a great symbolic value to a leadership (him and his comrades) that has not yet managed to 'reproduce' itself[21]: The lack of a new generation of activists is an issue (explored in Chapter 7) with which community groups are struggling at the moment.

Another critical point (this more familiar to a left-wing audience) is that Tony Gregory in order to be able to achieve the balance of power was forced to ally with and support right wing Fianna Fail government. The programme - originally called 'The Summerhill Agreement', later dubbed the 'Gregory Deal' by the press - finished when The Workers Party deputies, once the balance of power passed to them, voted the government out of office.

Beyond the ambivalences of the Gregory Deal I find it important to highlight the fact that it was not just the outcome of a successful electoral campaign. It was rather the peak of a cycle

[21] It just reproduced itself at an electoral level where Maureen O'Sullivan presents herself as the 'Gregory candidate'. However, her approach is very different from that of her predecessor, who did not just operate at a representative level but constantly campaigned for and with his people – having also spent some time in jail for the cause. On the contrary Maureen does not believe in protest preferring a representative approach to a direct-democratic one.

of poor people's struggles that Tony Gregory had always supported in a 'militant' way. In this sense, in my view, even more significant than the Gregory Deal, is the wave of popular agitations around the heroin crisis that preceded it. This mobilisation generated an inedited solidarity amongst people living in affected areas, contributing to certain extent to the electoral success of Tony Gregory who was personally involved in that campaign.

3.6 Reactivating CD: the Concerned Parents against Drugs (CPAD) in the 1980s

CPAD developed in the early 1980's out of Hardwicke street flats in Dublin north inner city and Teresa's Gardens in the south inner city. The movement was initiated by local women concerned with the threat of heroin to their children. Indeed, despite the intensity and the human implications of the heroin problem affecting the inner city of Dublin at the time the response by the state was quite weak. According to Punch (2005:764), for much of the 1980s, "policies to deal with the social and community effects of the heroin crisis were weakly developed or absent, the main focus being on social control and crime issues". There was a sort of unwillingness to officially recognise that there actually was a problem related to drugs. To the extent that Tony Gregory, who was active in the movement, argued that the goal of the police was to 'contain' the community, rather than preventing crime within the community (in "Meeting Room" a documentary on CPAD by Jim Davis, Brian Gray, 2010). They somehow tolerated open heroin dealing in deprived neighbourhoods, preventing it to spread to other areas of the city: "it was been ignored, and while it was been ignored you would have heroin drug dealers moving into inner city complexes exercising their trade" (John). The problem was well known by the authorities, indeed a report of the Special Government Task Force on Drug Abuse in 1983 made the link between drug abuse and "poverty and powerlessness" and recommended targeting investment in youth and community development facilities. However, no official government response followed, and

this inaction generated an angry critique on the ground (Punch 2005:765). This was not just a question of hiding the existence of a real problem: with this behaviour the state also denied the existence of people and communities who were naming that problem, and hence it can be seen as part of a broader reality in which these communities were rendered invisible by the state, considered not to be part of the citizenry.

Initially "many of those who worked in the communities that were most affected were alarmed and made strenuous but vain attempts to raise the issue with the public authorities'' (Cullen 1989:276). After these first unsuccessful attempts and because of the context of neglect and containment, intense levels of community-based action erupted and more concrete forms of intervention were developed by local activists, which converged in the CPAD campaign. The spectrum of strategies included collective street protests and mass gatherings of people who would march to a suspected dealer's house and tell him to get out of the area. They would forcefully evict suspected dealers, making a line of people to remove the furniture so that no single person could be charged with any offence. Smaller groups of people (often from other areas to limit the possibility of revenge attacks) would call to the houses of suspected dealers and tell them they would have to leave. Posters with the photographs and addresses of dealers would be posted around the area locally. The communities would mount permanent vigil at the entry to their estates, preventing any suspected dealer or addict from outside the area from entry. These pickets were manned day and night and became a permanent fixture of inner city street life (Flood 2010).

Although it developed in a 'CD style' - with people (mainly women) living in affected areas directly activating in order to resolve their problem without relying on the state, due to the threats of physical retaliation by drug dealers the movement soon came to be headed up by a mostly male leadership of whom the dealers would be more fearful (Flood 2010). After their

initial success in driving dealers out, the Irish state identified CPAD as a threat and considerable police resources were deployed to smash the organisation up including prosecutions in the non-jury Special Criminal Court of key activists (Flood 2010). According to Connolly (1997:67) "there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the Gardaí would have been prepared to tolerate the activities of the CPAD up to a point. (…) the point came when violence was exercised by the organisation in evicting the drug dealers. As soon as violence was used, media and politicians put big emphasis on armed defence and involvement of the IRA. However the fact is that the police were persecuting members of the movement using emergency powers of arrest and detention, "while you would have drug dealers dealing immune from prosecution, agitated communities even more" (John). Indeed the reality was that the work of the campaign was not that of a few paramilitaries 'sorting the problem out' – as mainstream media pictured them - but the mobilizations of hundreds of the people living in the affected areas (Flood 2010). Indeed a central output of this experience was the constitution of autonomous community self-policing systems "operating on terms not of the state but of the community" (Connolly 1997:67). Recently this 'model' was developed as Community Policing Forum, an institution which adopts a partnership approach to policing, and which due to its significance for this thesis and the present of CD will be analysed in depth in Chapter 7.

The CPAD campaign represents a moment of strong activation whose consequences and memory are still alive in Dublin. Certainly the struggles engaged by Concerned Parents Against Drugs in the 1980s and more recently by the Coalition of Communities Against Drugs and City Wide Drugs Crisis Campaign have played a progressive role in Ireland for issues related to drug use, HIV and hepatitis. In order to deal with these problems that have always been quite snubbed by the state (which for example for long time refused to provide neighbourhoods with needle exchange machines), community organisations had to generate

their own analyses and responses culminating in the creation of independent community institutions, which could provide an alternative to the state's indifferent and exclusionary approach. The reason why the government gave the order to the Garda to infiltrate the movement and smash it was not just due to its violence. It was because, once again, inner city residents had shown outstanding self-organising capacities. As John (activist, politician) argues "it was because the state recognized that that if this group of people can organize themselves like this over drugs, next week it would be jobs, the week after it would be rent, the week after it would be more local authority. And they tried for many years but they never broke it and they actually lifted the spirit and community representatives got themselves together, begun to organize and they started to identify issues that affected their areas".

3.7 Partnership and incorporation (bureaucratisation and professioanlisation)

Beyond these moments of exceptional politicisation around local issues, according to Broderick (cit. by Motherway 2006:11) in the 1980s reform was the dominant theme in CD. This is evident in the emphasis on structure and bureaucracy which characterised the adaptation of local organisations to a "community intervention industry" model. As I mentioned above, in the mid-1980s, Ireland was in a precarious economic and social position. The level of unemployment had grown since the late 1970s from 90,000 to 250,000 with disadvantaged urban areas experiencing high concentrations of unemployed people. In this situation shaped by "fiscal disarray and chronic levels of emigration, the government turned to the idea of 'partnership' governance" (Powell & Geoghegan 2004). This system eschews any clear definition, describing itself as being horizontal, flexible, inclusive, decentralised and articulated in more fluid divisions of power between public, private and community sector. In this supposedly intricate set of actors, processes, regulations and power-relations to which so much literature has been dedicated during the last decade, local non-governmental

organisations are supposed to play a central role. However, the idea of governance is infused with neoliberal ideology. The system to which it points to, more than horizontal and equal, is concerned with the construction of a sufficient consensus around the (neo-liberal and inegalitarian) policies to be implemented. As the Community Workers Coop argued in 1989 (Trucker 1989:42) referring to the situation of CD at the time, governance partnership "tends to mask the unequal relationship that prevails. Much could be accomplished by social partnership if local groups had a real say in policy and decision making. The reality however is more often one of confrontation and co-option. In the latter case many groups more or less accept the terms or dictates of the agency in order to obtain whatever support is available. (Trucker 1989:42)

It is important to emphasise the idea that I started to put forward above, i.e. that the partnership governance era was preceded by a period of worsening relationships between the state and disadvantaged communities, which led to a growth in independent radical politics. Consequently, local partnership was embraced by the state as "a sophisticated process of State building" (Collins 2002: 99), allowing it to extend its control into marginalised communities in a less confrontational way. This was perceived much more benignly than previous contentious periods of straightforward police repression. As a CD activist who participated to an open meeting on Community Development (at Exchange Dublin 04/11/2010) highlights: "you could use partnership as a term representing a new way of managing society that operated through mechanisms that were not very repressive but inclusive if you like. Mechanisms that tried to control situations by including them rather than by excluding them. Mechanisms oriented to systematically reproduce a depoliticised political situation". Considering the loss of autonomy experienced by CD in the last decades this strategy has definitely been successful. Partnership governance is a state concept. And

the adhering of CD to this type of model has implied a depoliticising process of assumption of a form correlated to that of the state.

According to some authors (Acheson et al 2004) social partnership established itself as a key theme of voluntary sector development in Ireland after the National Economic and Social Forum (1993) and matured as the fourth pillar of the national agreement in 1997. However, it would be wrong to portray partnership as something that suddenly came to existence in the 1990s. Incipient partnership governance was evident in a number of situations some time before, as individual voluntary organizations where drawn into the bureaucratic process (Acheson et al. 2004). I already mentioned the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty (Poverty1), dating 1974. In the 1980s, "taking a lead from the 1986 National Economic and Social Council report, *A Strategy for Development 1986–1990*, a series of state-facilitated 'national agreements' between 'social partners' — grassroots organizations, business representatives, trade unions and the state itself —ensued" (Powell & Geoghegan 2006:848). These corporatist agreements were supposed to address issues of poverty and social exclusion being the role of the 'community and voluntary sector' "to represent this marginalized constituency" (ibid. p848). So from that stage CD groups have been increasingly delegated by the Irish state to compensate for its role in welfare provision, from which (in a neoliberal fashion) it progressively retreated prioritising financial and market related concerns.

In order to concretely implement the idea of partnership governance the government established a variety of partnership companies which were aimed to support and include new and already existing CD groups. Think for example about the Community Development Programme (CDP). "Established in 1990, the CDP embraced community development as a purported means of tackling poverty and disadvantage. The CDP supports projects in

geographical areas affected by high unemployment, poverty and social exclusion, as well as supporting projects working with specific target groups (e.g. lone parents, Travellers, women, gay and lesbian). Initially, fifteen projects were funded. By 1999, there were eighty-three, and in 2005, they number in excess of 140" (ibid. p849).

Another example of a partnership company is the Combat Poverty Agency, which was established in 1986 with the role of supporting and promoting CD. Its creation was an important development towards the implementation of a partnership relation between CD groups and the state, as it provided for a statutory support role for CD. The CPA participated in the second and third EC Poverty Programme. Given the Agency's other statutory functions i.e. policy advise to the government, research and public education, their support for community development has been set in the context of arguing for a broad anti-poverty strategy within which community development is considered to be a central component. The idea of CD as a 'sector' or 'pillar' (of the state) is central in CPA's ideology. As a last example, think about the Community Workers Coop (CWC). When it was established in 1981, CWC was conceived as a large representative network in Ireland, recognized by the Irish state which has consequently provided core funding. Despite the fact that CWC was not conceived as a professional body, it conceived people involved at a local level, independently from the fact that they were paid or not, as 'workers'. This, in my view, was an important step in the consolidation of the idea of community work as a profession.

For in the 1980s the situation was affected by high rates of unemployment, the delivery of *training schemes and work programmes* became central to the evolving social partnership. According to O'Cinneide (1990:330) "the growth of community employment projects [was] dramatic; by 1987, it was reckoned that 300 community groups were active in local employment and training initiatives, drawn mainly from local authority housing estates

throughout the country". These initiatives were seen by the state as a means to alleviate and contain the increasing tensions felt at household and neighbourhood level due to the growing inequalities which characterised the post-industrial, neo-liberal historical turn (Kelleher & Whelan 1992).

CD employment initiatives were seen as suitable to be used by the state in such conditions, because they differed substantially from 'traditional' state-sponsored labour market programmes, which are purely concerned with job creation. In a CD perspective "employment and training work [are seen] as a means of tackling a wider pattern of community disadvantage. Unemployment is seen as raising social, educational and political issues, which call for a more general community development strategy with the participation of the unemployed" (O'Cinneide 1990:330). However, the enclosure of these alternative approaches into a partnership frame placed community groups in a new relationship with the state. This "resulted in their increased dependence on the state" (Kelleher and Whelan 1992: 9), which finally tended to depoliticise them and to neutralise their political 'effectiveness'.

Indeed the becoming 'official' of CD in terms of recognition and support by the state played a central role in its "mainstreaming" (Meade, 2005). As a result of this shift, processes of state-building overcame emancipatory concerns. This allowed the state to "effectively extend its legitimacy in situations where legitimacy was strained" (Collins, 2002:91). Through the provision of funding, the introduction of a structure of local development initiatives and with efforts in implementing a coordination of community based provision, the central government created the illusion of a vibrant civil society that was accommodated within a supportive policy framework. However, this process has made it extremely difficult to distinguish between an 'autonomous' community organization and a state dependent 'anti-poverty

agency, with the result that volunteers have been frequently drawn into bureaucratic structures which were often very different to what they claimed to be.

After being included into partnership governance structures where the state plays a key role, CD activities became heavily scrutinised and to some extent manipulated by the state. As I will concretely illustrate in Chapter 5 *professionalization* is central to this process. The shift towards a business model in 'community sector management' has placed considerable emphasis on this idea. For instance the importance of performance indicators has been stressed. As a result community groups have been forced to engage in time consuming, complex consultative exercises, like demonstrating the efficient use of resources, commitment to achieving targets and the use of outcome measures in order to prove value for money (Geoghegan & Powell 2006:857). In the UK this is known as contract culture. Rolston (1980:161) calls it "cybernetic model", a system which requires efficient feedback mechanisms on those projects where government money is given. It is in the context of these feedback institutions - argues Rolston - that the idea of 'community leader' (i.e. of a formal hierarchy internal to CD) became important, because it is to them that autonomy and funds are given and it is also them who sit on the committees which distribute the funds and provide feedback to the government. These are the kind of processes that lead to what Rolston (1980:163) defines as a "community industry", a system that is antithetic to CD's original approach. "The ability to read, assimilate and remain up to speed with the immense volume of material generated by programs of state intervention works against the principles of participation and bottom-up decision-making in which community activism has been grounded, as does the ability to write funding proposals, take part in committee meetings, manage high-speed work relationships and so on" (ibid. p163).

One could argue that in processes of bureaucratisation such as those experienced by CD, the state shifted its attitude from acceptance and support (through funding and formal recognition) to strict ruling and control. "The state – argues Meade - has mutated from generous benefactor to stern assessor and with its reconstruction of the terms of project funding has reminded community organisations of their own vulnerability' (2005: 361). In the 1980s, for example, a grant of IR£8 million from the European Commission was refused by the government "as the commission required that the grant be administered, not by the central government, but by a local intermediary institution" (Kelleher &Whelan 1992:11).

Here it is important to highlight that even though the state has created institutions that financially support CD groups, this does not mean that each funded institution respects the original 'parameters' of CD. In order to receive funding one has to respect state-defined parameters, which are frequently contrary to CD's philosophy. On the other hand this ambiguity generates a situation in which the state becomes the authority who has the power to define (through funding provision) who 'officially' is a CD organisation and who not– with the result of creating a sort of hierarchy that atomise groups and puts them in competition with each other. Of course this process is not really smooth but encounters constant frictions at the ground level. The growing bureaucratic/financial dependency on the state experienced by CD during the 1980s is well articulated in a position paper drawn up by the central group of the Community Workers Cooperative (CWC), which describes the on-going process as opposed to the grounding principles of CD: "the process of professionalisation is about gaining status (…) it is a search for power, money and control over the practice of community work" (O'Donovan & Valery, 1992:56). Previously Dobson (1988:2) had noted that "social work has become an increasingly exclusive activity to be practiced only by qualified professionals. Community work is seen as a method of social work to be undertaken by professionals". Not only professionalisation and funding schemes

had the effect to produce competition between individuals and groups, but they ended up distracting them from their original aspirations, including self-determination and egalitarian change.

As Seamus (Partnership worker) says: “the community sector has gone through a serious sort of fragmentation, part due to its own complacency if you like. Because we have gone through a period of big wealth and a lot of community organisations took their eyes off the ball in terms of what their reason to be was. We also had what I call the professionalisation of the community sector and you would have much more middle class people coming into the sector who would not necessarily have an empathy with the people with who they were actually working, nor understanding where the community sector emerged from, possibly loosing direction, been complacent and too comfortable”.

The problems of bureaucratisation and professionalization will be extensively investigated in Chapters 5 and 6. What is important to highlight here is that these processes - that are generally indicated in terms of co-option by the state - have also a subjective facet of acceptance and participation by CD itself. In other words CD was not just victim of the inclusive action of the state. To certain extent it actively contributed to this shift. Indeed according to Seanie “the government adopted this partnership model and they put it to us and they asked: do you want to participate to it? And the dilemma we were then faced with was that for years we were in conflict with the state. And we didn’t make much progress. We had some money here, some money there, but not in substantial amount. And conflict didn’t work, so let’s try with this, let’s see where we go, let’s give it a shot and we got involved in it”. The subjective involvement of CD in its reform is a fundamental aspect to be taken into consideration when discussing ideas and strategies to get this movement out of its present crisis. As we will see in Chapter 5 it is not enough to condemn state austerity measures and

claim that cuts should be withdrawn. Indeed it is not a state designed scheme that is going to ‘save’ CD from its collapse. A reactivation of CD’s political energies can just be the result of people’s subjective involvement at a distance from the state.

4 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I discuss the methodological approach that informed the present study. I will first (4.1) provide some 'biographical' details giving an account of my personal experience of Dublin and its inner city, since I have been living there for more than three years for reasons that are not directly related to my research, but to more concrete day to day necessities. This situation has provided me a particularly insightful point of view on the studied context, which I will present here. In section 4.2 I discuss the role that ethnography plays in researching marginalised populations and the issues it raises, especially in relation to the interplay between structural determinations (the state of the situation) and subjective forms of resistance and conflict.

This will lead me to address the problem of so-called method's "performativity", i.e. the fact that different approaches tend to literarily create different realities that they pretend then to "objectively" analyse. I will argue that "ontological politics" (Law 2004:162) is something that researchers should be aware of, and that they should always make their position and values explicit. In my perspective research neutrality is just an ideological construction. Therefore reflection is needed on cultural and political meanings within the field of social science and on the way researchers situate their specific work in that context.

After having discussed the epistemological basis of my methodological choices, in section 4.6 I lay out exactly what concrete instruments (mainly in depth interviews and ethnographic observation) I used to collect 'empirical data', with whom and over what period of time.

To conclude I will discuss possibility as a methodological category. Indeed most of this research refers to a present in continuous and rapid evolution which compels the researcher to not just refer to what concretely 'happened' but also to what could eventually happen. 'Possibility' is central to the field of politics. It has been nevertheless omnipresent in the

accounts of those who have been involved in this research, in the form of prescriptions, predictions or just simple hopes.

4.1 Research, objectification and my subjective experience of Dublin inner city

This research is based on a fieldwork conducted for more than one year between 2010 and 2011. However, having been living in a key researched area for around three years at the moment of writing (July 2011), one could say that collection of data started well before at informal level. I find it important to open my methodological remarks with this consideration, because many of the ideas that I developed in this thesis derive from my personal experience and subjective interpretation of studied places, people and processes. This might sound like obvious. However, the fact that I have been sharing a house in a particularly poor area of the inner city of Dublin was not just a choice dictated by research related intentions. In my case it was also due to economic constraints. Indeed, whoever lives in Dublin knows that rents are exaggerated, to say the least. On the other hand, with just a PhD scholarship one student can not afford to live in an independent apartment, or to rent a decent room in a middle class area. So, in order to be able to save some money and get an equally confortable room, one has to be content with less 'trendy' locations such as for example Mountjoy Square, Summer Hill, Drumcondra, the North Circular Road and so on which are the places where Dublin's working classes traditionally live. These populations include now many migrant workers (like me) and their families who have come to Dublin during the last 15 years.

At personal level, the fact that I have felt home in this neighbourhood, not just for choice but for necessity, has allowed me to develop an understanding and a sense of solidarity with my neighbours which I wouldn't have experienced otherwise, or at least not in such an intimate way. This approach also helped me to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers which are obstacle to someone like me who was born elsewhere and just came to Ireland.

Usually, social sciences do not require researchers to work on and investigate themselves as part of the project. Indeed there is a belief that scholars "can construct consistent knowledge on the situation as long as, and precisely thanks to, their being outside, at a prudent distance which supposedly guarantees a certain objectivity" (Situaciones 2003). However, critique has highlighted that this objectivity is authentic and efficacious "to the extent that it is nothing but the other side of the violent objectualization of the situation [that researchers] work upon" (Situaciones 2003). Indeed what happens in traditional research is that it obtains a highly 'descriptive' knowledge regarding its object; "but this descriptive operation is in no way subsequent to the formation of the object, because the form of the object itself is already the result of objectualization" (Situaciones 2003).

In many occasions the construction of my object has followed a very different process. Experiences that I 'accidentally' had in my daily life – i.e. outside 'formal' research settings – heavily influenced my understanding of CD and the places where it developed; as if it was my object of study revealing itself in unexpected ways and moments, and at higher level of intimacy. To the extent that I can say that my flatmates, the adjacent Chinese family, drug addicts, pushers and groups of adolescents regularly hanging out in the square's park, the local social centre, my non-Irish appearance, the initially incomprehensible accent of the grocery's employee, the old men spending their time at the local pub decorated with a mural representing Bobby Sands and other IRA volunteers who died on hunger strike, are all elements that, despite not having been formally investigated, are part and parcel of this research.

4.2 Ethnographic observation and its role in researching underprivileged populations

Although this research does not belong to the established genre of the ethnographic monograph, ethnography played an essential role in it. Ethnographic approaches to social research have been adopted by numerous disciplines including sociology. They are usually characterised by features such as a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena working primarily with unstructured data, i.e. data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of closed sets of analytic categories (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994:248). To be investigated are generally a small number of 'cases', occasionally just one in detail. Analysis of data usually involves explicit interpretation of the meaning and functions of human action, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations, with quantification playing a subordinate role (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994:248).

Ethnographic observation is nevertheless an indispensable tool for researching underprivileged populations and their organisation. First of all, according to Loic Wacquant (2008:9) - a leading scholar in the field of 'sociology of deprivation and marginalisation' who set out the parameters of conducting research in marginalised communities – "ethnography is useful to pierce the screen of discourses whirling around these territories of urban perdition which lock enquiry within the biased perimeter of the pre constructed object, and secondly to capture the lived relations and meanings that are constitutive of the every-day reality of the marginal city dweller".

I nevertheless found the ethnographic approach very appropriate to grasp the complexity of a movement such as CD, which developed 'organically' (as I will define this concept in Chapter 6) in underprivileged areas of Dublin. In order to be successful in researching such a 'rooted' phenomenon, one has to become 'organic' as well. So I tried to develop what John Law defines "knowing as embodiment" and "emotionality" (Law 2004), i.e. a way of

researching through the “hungers, tastes, discomforts, or pains of our bodies [and] opening ourselves to worlds of sensibilities, passions, intuitions, fears and betrayals” (Law 2004).

At the end of the day what we call ‘participant observation’ should be a mode of being in the world typical of researchers in general, since they can not study the social world without being part of it. And I think that to some extent I achieved this belongingness, of course, without leaving aside my foreign point of view that allowed me to produce some interpretations, which I hope the reader will find original.

As I started to illustrate in Chapter 2 (theoretical section), this ‘embedded’ and subjective investigation of the inner city of Dublin and its community organisations has always been articulated to the analysis of more objective “macrostructural determinations” (Wacquant 2008:10) - determinations that I have contextualised through the concept of “state-of-the-situation” (Badiou: 2007), a broad understanding of ‘State’ that goes beyond immediately recognisable bureaucratic structures and apparatuses. Indeed, although in contexts (for example) of extreme deprivation some of these structures might be absent or week, the state “still govern the practices and representations of [these populations] because they are inscribed in the material distribution of resources and social possibles as well as lodged inside bodies in the form of categories of perception appreciation and action” (ibid. p10).

On the other hand one should notice that emphasis on this subjective-objective articulation is nevertheless fundamental when it comes to break “with falsely self evident notions, and with errors inscribed in substantialist thinking in terms of places” (ibid p.10), which scholar frequently apply to apparently self-enclosed contexts such as, for example, underprivileged neighbourhoods. Here lies the importance of a rigorous analysis of the relations between state structures of distribution of places and functions, and subjective struggles for the construction

of spaces of independency "in which the state plays a doubly decisive role as the ground of confrontation and as the interested protagonist" (ibid. p10)

4.3 Personal beliefs/ideology and the politics of research

In relation to the idea of "knowing as embodiment" and to the fact that my research has been conducted in contexts of deprivation and resistance I should also emphasise that my approach to research and the ideas produced in this dissertation did not develop from a 'neutral' perspective. This has had important consequences on the research process and outcomes. For example my interest in the themes of equality, social justice and emancipation goes beyond the walls of the Academia. Such concerns brought me, just after my arrival to Dublin in July 2008, to immediately look for realities matching my political and social aspirations. Accidentally, the premises of Seomra Spraoi 'autonomous social centre' are adjacent to the house where I live and this allowed me to participate to its activities on a regular basis[22]. Although this encounter was independent from my research purposes, the fact that I found myself hanging out in a place like Seomra Spraoi had important consequences on my project, especially in terms of meeting activists committed to the centre, many of whom very informed on my research topic and available to suggest useful contacts for interviews or interesting events which I could eventually participate to.

Although there are still many sociologists who insist on the idea of 'neutrality of research', which they consider to be functional to the production of 'objective' and 'scientific' outcomes, one should recognise that neutrality in this field is just an ideological construction. The approaches that define themselves as ideologically 'neutral' and 'objective' are

[22] Seomra Spraoi is an autonomous social centre in Dublin city centre. It is run by a non-hierarchical, anti capitalist collective on a not-for-profit basis. It hosts workshops, gigs, political meetings, language lessons, film screenings, a vegan cafe and so on. The centre seeks to be a hub of positive resistance in a city and society where public spaces have been eaten away by consumerism, property speculation and the culture of the car. http://seomraspraoi.org/

frequently those that entail the most dogmatic logics and intentions. As Carlos Frade (2009:29) highlights "social sciences are heavily politicised, and more often than not by the worst kind of politics, that which pretends or believes itself to be an apolitical activity but *de facto* serves a very specific politics".

Of course this applies to the entire disciplinary spectrum. The series of hypotheses that sciences generally implement constitute prescriptions regarding the construction and definition of reality. Indeed "however impersonal and 'formulaic' the work of the natural scientist, it stands in no 'natural' relationship with the phenomena and events it describes (…)" (Frade 2009). In just the same way "the human sciences draw on common sets of conventional devices to construct and convey their characteristic portrayals of social sciences, actors and cultural meanings" (Atkinson & Hamersley 1994:254). That different methods produce different representations has been a common argument since Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar's 'Laboratory Life' (1979). For example, in Annemarie Mol's (quot. by Law 2004) "The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice" (to which Law 2004 dedicates an entire chapter), the study of atherosclerosis constitutes a not necessarily coherent "object". Mol's ethnographic study shows that there are different versions of the same disease, depending on where and how it is investigated. As Law (2004:143) puts it: "Method is not (…) a more or less successful set of procedures for reporting on a given reality. Rather it is performative. It helps to produce realities. It does not do so freely and at whim. There is a hinterland of realities, of manifest absences and Othernesses, resonances and patterns of one kind or another, already being enacted, and it cannot ignore these". What is not always explicit in this process, however, are the underlying politics: "the ethical meaning of each of these decisions, in what way they involve a certain life-form, a certain way of perceiving the world for instance, experiencing the time of existence as the unwinding of a "genetic program", or joy as a matter of serotonin" (Anonymous).

If we take seriously the fact that realities are 'enacted' that they are not fixed and 'natural', then the way in which we actually choose to perform them has important political and ethical consequences. In this perspective every study is *inherently* political because of what it makes present and absent, visible and invisible. As Law highlights "the implication is that there are various possible reasons, including the political, for enacting one kind of reality rather than another, and that these grounds can in some measure be debated". This is what he defines as "ontological politics" (Law 2004:162). In his view researchers should self-consciously reflect on those politics as part of how they create their objects of study.

Also, we should not forget that the environment in which research develops is highly bureaucratized and framed by specific political concerns - which strongly influence research outputs. Indeed "*academic* research is subjected to a whole set of alienating mechanisms that separate researchers from the very *meaning* of their activity: they must accommodate their work to determined rules, topics and conclusions. Funding, supervision, language requirements, bureaucratic red tape, empty conferences and protocols constitute the conditions in which the practice of *official* research unfolds" (Situaciones 2003). For a matter of 'transparency', these processes should always be object of self-reflection and critique by scholars.

Researchers, according to Law (2004), should always make explicit their position and values. This involves a reflection on cultural and political meaning within the field of social science and on the way researchers situate their specific work in that context. For Law it is fundamental that we develop systematic "awareness about who is demanding which results and who is to use them", in order to bring "to light the actual politics one is pursuing and thus the gods or clients, if any, one is serving, and at encouraging a consciously chosen politics" (Law 2004). Although PhD research is less affected by these systemic influences, it is out of

doubt that in any research project philosophical, ethical and methodological strands intertwine – also in those which present themselves as a value-free exercise.

Thus, in order to unmask these tendencies, and be clear regarding one's aims, it is important that researchers explicitly acknowledge the relation subsisting between their lives, desires, ambitions (also political) and research activity. In this idea, according to preeminent points of view in sociology, there is nothing wrong. For example Charles Wright Mills (in Frade 2009) asserts that admirable academics "do not split their work from their lives"; and that vocation should not be separated from one's achievements in work. "Only when pursued as a cause which transcends oneself may the actual vocational practices induce a certain unity between vocation and person which is the condition of all true vocations". Of course this balance is not always easily achievable; "how do we force - asks Weber (in Frade 2009) - burning passion and a cool judgment together in the same soul?". However, without vocation and the passion it involves, social sciences would consist in a petrified technical activity, devoid of any 'higher' ambition. "Vocation – argues Frade (2009) - is therefore a choice which lifts the human being out of his animal condition, that condition of exclusive concern with oneself and indifference to all causes, and, by so doing, raises life above its mechanical or routine everyday course, transforming it into a consciously guided venture". Thus, it is not only a choice of a career, but, as Mills (in Frade 2009) states, "a choice of how to live as well as a choice of a career".

4.4 Qualitative, quantitative research and the concept of "method assemblage"

Principles and methods that I discuss in this section are inscribed in the field of so called qualitative research, i.e. a type of enquiry that tends to be based on non-numeric data, as opposed to its quantitative counterpart. Currently, any methodological consideration in Social

Sciences is based on this distinction, which I consider as being fundamental - but which has been also object of critique.

For instance, also on the basis of what I have said so far it is clear that a research methodology spreads beyond the limits that we normally imagine for it, including for example “questionnaires, interview design protocols, statistical or qualitative data analysis” or even “laboratory benches, reagents and experimental animals” (Law 2004: 40). Indeed, being situated in a specific historic-social context, research also encompasses a variety of elements from which it is hard to distinguish the quantitative from the qualitative side, like “tacit knowledge, computer software, language skills, management capacities, transport and communication systems, salary scales, flows of finance, the priority of funding bodies and overtly political and economic agendas” (ibid. p41). Virtually, argues Law in a slightly historical-materialist tone, “the hinterland of method (…) ramifies out for ever” (ibid p40) – same as the hinterland of our research ‘object’, I would argue.

So, in this network of processes tools ad actors, the distinction between ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative’ has no objective conditions. Rather, it is related to the aforementioned performativity, i.e. the fact that our interactions with the world create specific realities by focusing on some parts and ignoring others - meaning that ‘qualitative research’ stays for ‘emphasis on qualitative aspects of research’.

By analysing reality we craft boundaries and working relations. Thus “method does not provide clarity about or simply describe something that is out there, but (…) in a sense it creates the objects or phenomena that it seeks to describe” (Le Grange 2007:423). As part of this process, some elements, (including methods and tools that guide people in discerning reality), disappear and become naturalized or taken for granted as background assumptions.

Given the multiplicity of “fluidities, leakages and entanglements that make up the hinterland of research” (law 2004), methods in social sciences should not be conceived as self-enclosed structural units but rather as “assemblages” as this idea has been elaborated by John Law (2004). “Method assemblage”, is a term that builds from the Deleuzean idea of assemblage as a collage of eventually incompatible parts, which is by definition active and in flux. Thus Law (2004) defines “method assemblage” not just as a collection of different methods, but as a composition of *episteme* and technologies which can put together a variety of often incompatible components, having the capacity to acknowledge unfolding processes and practices, rather than just rigid structures” (ibid. p41).

Concepts of “method assemblage” are useful when we recognise that the realities in which we operate (and therefore our objects) are fragmented, multiple in their nature. It helps researchers to “imagine methods when they no longer seek the definite, the repeatable, the more or less stable. When [they] no longer assume that this is what [they] are after” (Law 2004). So, how can we deal with this multiplicity and contingency?

There is no standard answer to this question, because ‘method assemblage’ is not a ‘model’. The notion of method assemblage just raises awareness on the fact that when method is made or enacted, it necessarily constructs boundaries between “presence”, “absence”, and “otherness” (Law 2004). In my view it is up to researchers to be aware of this epistemological process and find creative solutions in order to capture what is generally excluded by official methods. Nevertheless, by extending the field of visibility researchers should also make “space for ambivalence and ambiguity” (ibid. 90) without attempting to distort reality into apparent clarity.

Law provides us with a list of examples of alternative ways of knowing, which I find useful to reflect on frequently forgotten sides of reality. He identifies “knowing as embodiment”,

"knowing as emotionality and apprehension", "knowing through deliberate imprecision", and "knowing as situated enquiry". As I said before, knowing as embodiment corresponds to knowing through our senses. Knowing as emotionality consists in opening ourselves to sensibilities, passions, intuitions and fears. Knowing through deliberate imprecision is about reconsidering our conception of accuracy, and about finding ways of knowing the indistinct and fluid without trying to hold them tightly. Finally, knowing as situated enquiry is about rethinking how far knowledge is able to travel and whether it still makes sense in other locations. As I said, these are not 'models' but just general orientations on how to broaden our awareness as researchers.

4.5 Research 'objects' as dispositifs

In general, I believe that successful research should inspire new thoughts and open new horizons of *possibility* (see below section 4.7) for future research. Openness to possibility is a central feature of academic knowledge itself, which is never entirely closed but constantly evolving. As Kappelar (quote by Le Grange 2007:429) puts it "I do not really wish to conclude and sum up, rounding off the arguments so as to dump it in a nutshell for the reader. A lot more could be said about any of the topics I have touched upon … I have meant to ask questions, to break out of the frame … The point is not a set of answers, but making possible a different practice …"

For instance the case studies that I analyse in this dissertation are certainly illustrative but not representative of every experience in the field of CD in Dublin. Representativeness of a case is impossible to argue when dealing with such a movement. Indeed as I have illustrated in previous chapters there is not a 'totality' of CD. Nor is representativeness possible in politics, which by nature are singular and organic to specific contexts. No doubt there are resonances between different contexts. As I argued in Chapter 2 from a theoretical point of view, every

political sequence is itself an assemblage of “infinite multiplicities” (Pozzana & Russo 2010), of scenes, places, voices, actors, critical points and so on.

As the notion of assemblage illustrates, the production of a work exploring a CD/post-party approach to organisation, which has assumed different forms at different stages - being intermittently political - ends up arousing explanatory and descriptive needs, which go beyond sociology’s traditional conceptual frames. The reason is related to the fact that organisations are first of all “dispositifs”, as Deleuze (2007) describes this concept.

Like ‘assemblage’, ‘dispositif’ describes objects that are “not fixed in shape, do not belong to a large pre-given list but are constructed at least in part as they are entangled together” (Law 2004: 42). According to Deleuze’s (1991:159) very visual description, a dispositf “is a tangle, a multilinear ensamble. It is composed of lines, each having a different nature. And the lines in the apparatus do not outline or surround systems which are each homogeneous in their own right, object subject language and so on, but follow directions, trace balances which are always off balance, now drawing together and then distancing themselves from one another. Each line is broken and subject to changes in direction, bifurcating and forked, and subject to drifting. Visible objects, affirmations which can be formulated, forces exercised and subjects in position are like vectors and tensors. (…) three major aspects (…) are power, knowledge and subjectivity [which] are by no means contours given once and for all, but series of variables which supplant one another” (Deleuze 1991:159-160). There are, for example, ‘lines of stratification or sedimentation” but also “lines of actualization or creativity”, lines of “fissure and fracture” and so on. Untangling the lines of a dispositif means in each case, “preparing a map a cartography a survey of unexplored lands (…) this is what Foucault calls fieldwork”. Thus researchers have “to be positioned on the lines themselves; and these lines do not merely compose an apparatus but pass through it and carry it north to south, east to west or diagonally” (ibid. p160).

4.6 In-depth interviews

With the objective to design a metaphorical 'map' of the CD *dispositif* in Dublin, I tried to 'untangle' some of the lines that made it a singular and unrepeatable social/political reality. Fieldwork principally relied on ethnographic observation and in-depth interviews.

The semi-structured in-depth interview represents one of the privileged instruments for scholars who use a qualitative approach, since it allows a big freedom of exposition to the interviewed (Poirier et al., 1995:15). The interviewer just provides inputs in order to stimulate the interviewed to talk about her own experience, living her free to follow the flux of her thoughts and to present facts and ideas that she considers to be relevant in relation to the studied context. This way, is the interviewed person who provides elements and introduces themes that at second stage will become relevant to the objectives of the investigation. The semi-directive procedure also allows the interviewer to ask questions aimed to clarify some aspects of the narration or verify pieces of information, which emerged in other interviews or during observation sessions. It also facilitates the introduction of still unconsidered variables. The construction of a list of key questions (which will necessarily evolve during the course of the fieldwork) avoids forgetting important details and the narration drifting to non-relevant fields.

More concretely I have conducted 26 semi directive in depth interviews with people (15 men, 11 women - a condition of the research was that participants remain anonymous, so they can not be named here see annex 1) who since the 1960s were involved in post-party CD organisations in Dublin. I also did 30 sessions of ethnographic observation over a period of 2 years between 2009 and 2011, and, as I said above, I lived for 3 years in a key area.

Interviewees were all people to different extent related to the CD scene in Dublin from the 1960s onwards. Interviews lasted from about one to two hours each, having taken place in different settings such as offices, public spaces, cafes, community centres and so on. Almost all interviews were recorded. Just a few of them were not recorded, due to recording machine failure, short notice, or unsuitable (noisy) venue/context. In these exceptional cases abundant notes were taken.

The first interview was suggested by my supervisor and conducted in a phase in which the structure of my research project was still being defined. So this first formal encounter with a senior community activist helped me to develop a clearer understanding of the overall topic. By providing me with contacts for further interviews my interlocutor contributed to the starting of a "snowball effect" type of process (i.e. a process of expansion that builds upon itself) on which the construction of my sample has been based. This process was facilitated by the fact that Dublin's CD scene is not huge and people involved tend to know each other; so it was quite easy to get in touch with key contributors.

As I mentioned, the fact that I am an activist also allowed me to get in contact with CD people through pathways that are internal to social movements. Indeed many CD people are in touch with different types of activists and participate to events that are not necessarily related to CD (many were also involved in the recent "Occupy" movement). With a few CD activists – after meeting them several times formally and informally - I also developed a good relation that lasted beyond the interview and that will possibly survive after my PhD is completed. After the completion of this thesis I will contact interviewees who are still interested in sharing and discussing my findings. Eventually their feedbacks will constitute an important contribution to the writing of two articles out of this work.

On what concerns collected data, each recorded interview has been archived and then fully transcribed. In order to transform over 100 hours of research sessions into a coherent argument, during and after transcription I highlighted and commented key parts of the text from which central ideas were extracted and elaborated. I also identified arguments resonating in different interviews and I grouped them in various thematic areas. I created documents where these sections of different interviews are grouped in clusters, which provided me with a sort of basic structure for the construction of the 'empirical' chapters (5,6 and 7).

The methodological perspective that I considered as being appropriate to in-depth interviews and the general aims of this work is "ethno-sociological", as it has been introduced by Daniel Bertaux (2003). Indeed, the ethno-sociological approach does not contemplate a hypothetical/ deductive reasoning. Therefore it is not based on the construction of formal hypotheses from existing models, with the aim of verifying them. It is instead aimed to the study of historical and social realities about which, *a priori*, the researcher may not be sufficiently informed (Bertaux, 2003:39). This way the actual research question may be re-visited as the research process develops, uncovering underlying needs and dynamics. The main objective of the ethno-sociological inquiry is to understand how the 'chosen' object of study works and how it changes over time. Based on the information collected in interviews one attempts to map social configurations, mechanisms, processes and logics of action. An original advantage offered by the ethno-sociological procedure is the possibility of taking into account the diachronic dimension of the researched context, which obviously lacks in direct observation. This allows considering the dynamics of action and the configurations of observed social relations from a historical/ procedural point of view (Bertaux, 2003:33), i.e from the point of view of continuities and changes. Finally it is also worth highlighting that, for not being a statistical method, the ethno-sociologic approach excludes the notion of a

statistically representative sample. This is substituted by the idea of "progressive construction of the sample" (Bertaux, 2003:44). Indeed, since there is no specific number of interviews to determine the scientific nature of a work, Daniel Bertaux (2003:49) suggests a saturation approach. The attainment of saturation means that new interviews fail to provide additional information but merely reiterate previously noted patterns.

Beyond interviews and ethnographic observation I also contributed to the organisation of two "public" sessions using a format in which CD activists and people interested in the topic (CD) could, with some facilitation, engage in a self-reflexive process. This initiatives were not formally linked to my project since they were developed by a group of activists (including myself) concerned with issues that are similar to those explored in this thesis. The aim of these two sessions was to collectively produce critical analysis on CD. Indeed we developed the idea that, perhaps due to bureaucratisation, CD activists were no longer familiar with self-reflection and self-critique - which in my view are key elements to the solution of the impasse that the movement it is experiencing at present. Exchange and production of knowledge taking place in these sessions has been useful for research purposes as well as for grassroots activism. In particular I noticed that the presence of people who were neither academics nor CD activists has been a means to turn the sessions into a sort of public event in which the ambiguous and counterproductive boundary between activism (but even academia) and the "outside world" could become blurred. When that is the case, activists and academics are to some extent forced to speak a different language, which in my view is essential for constructively exchange ideas with people who do not necessarily belong to those circles.

To conclude, I also conducted some archival research in the Irish Times' (the main national newspaper) digital archive and in the Irish Left Online Document Archive (an online archive

of materials relating to the Irish left with documents, leaflets, pamphlets, posters and newspapers from the latter half of the 20th century placed online in PDF format)[23]

4.7 Possibility as a methodological category

A big part of this research refers to ephemeral political sequences and a present in continuous and rapid evolution, which compels the researcher to not just refer to what actually happened (to fixed patterns) but also to what could eventually happen. 'Possibility' as a category is nevertheless central to politics; and it has been omnipresent in the accounts by those who have been involved in this research, in the form of prescriptions, predictions or just simple hopes.

Although 'possibility' is a dimension that is central to political situations, it is usually dismissed by social research. As Neocosmos argues (2009a) "social science today is unable to rise beyond a description or analysis of what exists and seems incapable of thinking what could be. This is why it is in crisis". Moreover, the difficulty to think in terms of possibility in the field of social science "has evacuated politics from its domain of thought" (ibid. p5).

Through a methodological approach that geographers would define as non-representational I tried to counter this tendency in my thesis. During fieldwork I developed a commitment to being open to new possibilities, "a kind of witnessing through which we are exposed to the potential for being-otherwise" (Dewsbury, in Popke 2008: 2) or, in Badiou's (2007) words a fidelity to the event as that through which new spaces of thinking and moving may come into being (McCormack in Popke 2008:2).

To let 'possibility' emerge in interviews means to emphasise the subjective side of people's enunciations and not just interpreting them in the light of a certain social/cultural context.

[23] http://cedarlounge.wordpress.com/archive-index/

Indeed the challenge posed by a political situation is “how to evaluate a decisive subjective discontinuity. For the same reason that thought is never fully absorbed into knowledge, nor is subjectivity completely derivable from a culture, political situations are marked by a peculiar excess of subjectivity with regards to the surrounding political culture" (Russo 2006:679).

Social researchers dealing with (past or present) political movements should seriously take this point into account. Otherwise the danger is to interpret people’s enunciations from a state’s (objective) point of view, from which it is impossible to identify any form of subjectivity. In the absence of the ability to think politics independently from a state perspective “we necessarily revert to thinking through the prism of the state which is, to use a computer analogy, the ‘default position’ of any un-theorised politics” (Neocosmos 2009:266). This can negatively affect the way in which politics is studied and theorised in the academia. If scholars continue to understand it as state-politics, as determined by objective conditions, they will just speculate around what ensures the continuation of what exists. And what exists today corresponds to what Badiou (2010:99) terms “capitalo-parliamentarianism”, the rule to which every state has to adhere, with “its bastardised notion of ‘democracy’”, and its “rabid communitarianisms” (Neocosmos, 2009:2).

The themes that qualitative social sciences tend to privilege correspond to people’s ‘aims’, ‘life stories’, ‘expectations’, ‘perceptions’ or ‘behaviours’. Thus researched populations are usually questioned about what they remember of their past, about the way they imagine their future or how they react in front of a network of relationships, causes and effects that are supposed to be given. In this picture to be eluded is the ‘present’ of social reality; i.e. the way in which it is influenced by the words, desires and thoughts of those who experience it directly.

Moreover, since political situations are characterised by eventfulness and high levels of subjective involvement, no scientific/objective approach to the situation is suitable to address them. Politics does not follow any historical, objective or mechanical rule. It is not, to put it with Neocosmos (2009:293) "a precise investigation of what exists, in terms of determinations, causes and laws, which may then permit an answer to the question of what may come". Whenever it comes to existence, politics "proceeds on its own" (Balso 2010:16), meaning that its conditions are subjective, intrinsic to itself. These conditions are nothing else than the actions and declarations of those who are involved in the political procedure. It is only by addressing those elements that research can grasp the subjectivity of a specific political procedure. Through a nonrepresentational subjective approach CD in Dublin can be analysed as a singularity, as something that exceeded the determinism of objective socio-economic conditions - and the present conjuncture apprehended by its possibles.

*

So by conducting interviews and ethnographic observation I did not just pursued the reflection of the real (of objective conditions) but I also explored the field of possibility by, as Situaciones (2003) put it "looking into [ideas and] practices for the emerging traces of a new sociability". This does not mean to deny or underestimate more 'objective' aspects of my object of study, but to subordinate them to their subjective counterpart. Indeed, if we are implementing a 'non-representational' approach, following Lazarus (cit. by Neocosmos 2009a: 13), investigation of what exists should be subordinated to the investigation of what could be, not the opposite way around. Indeed according to this author investigation differs according to whether it relates to the category of the 'possible' or to that of the 'extant'. We are confronted with two different modes of thought: the first is analytical and descriptive, it asks questions regarding what exists; irrespective of the eventual complexity of its research

protocols and discoveries, it proposes the scientific character of sites (lieux). The second is prescriptive and has as its principal point of entry the question of the possible (ibid.: 8). In research possibles stem from subjective elements such as prescriptive declarations, desires and acts by people who inhabit the studied situation.

'Possibles' are important because they can open completely new paths for research in social sciences. They help to avoid what Wu Ming (2011) calls a "toxic narration": a narration that does not do its job, that "deletes its conjunctive dimension", that hides the hypotheses and tries to narrow the chances to narrate otherwise, to think other possible stories, other poetic truths for the set of facts it refers to.

5 CD'S RELATION WITH THE STATE. THE PROBLEM OF BUREAUCRATISATION

Previously I highlighted that while community based activism has been practiced in Ireland for many years, it is only in recent times that it has become 'official' in terms of recognition and support as Community Development, or the Community Sector. Along with this shift, processes of state-building (what in the theoretical chapter, following Wang, I have defined as "statification") overcame political thought and action, leading to depoliticisation and allowing the state to "effectively extend its legitimacy in situations where legitimacy was strained" (Meade, 2005) – these "situations" corresponding to deprived urban and rural areas and the autonomous organisations that had developed in those areas as a response to deprivation.

I consider bureaucratisation as being one of the main symptoms of depoliticisation in CD. Theoretically speaking, bureaucratisation is a complex and multifaceted process which cannot be reduced to a single explanation or cause. Indeed it can be described as the 'becoming state' (or entering the field of the state - in a broad sense) of a form of organisation - or a social activity in general. Moreover, bureaucratisation of political organisations, which is what interests here, takes place in the context of political sequences which are singular as well as situated in specific contexts. Therefore it is impossible to give it a sociological frame that might be valid for every particular case. What is 'universal' in bureaucratisation is its outcome; i.e. the 'becoming state' and the depoliticisation of politics. The aim of this chapter is to give an account and to critically problematize the bureaucratisation of CD from different points of view.

In the first section (5.1) I critically address the problem of funding. In particular I criticise the consensus that exists among activists and scholars that funding is the main cause of bureaucratisation. In my view the fact that funded projects tend to bureaucratise is in itself insufficient to demonstrate that this process is a direct consequence of funding. On the

contrary, I argue that this is just a superficial argument that could possibly work during the Celtic Tiger, but it is now losing its credibility. Indeed, on one hand there are examples of groups who receive funding from the state and yet do not depoliticise; on the other hand one should notice that in (capitalist, neo-liberal) urban context, economic dependency from state/market is unavoidable.

In section 5.2 the case of Community Response, a project operating in the south inner city, is subject to analysis in order to evaluate the way in which bureaucratisation affects CD projects in terms of professionalization. Through the imposition of expert, technical knowledge issues are abstracted from their socio-political context which alone gives them meaning. To be accessed by ordinary people and democratised (which is CD's mission), they need to be re-politicised and their technical quality shown to be, at best, only partly independent of socio-political content (Neocosmos 2007:50).

Finally in section 5.3 I critically discuss what I define as CD's 'institutional tendency'. On one hand I will show how CD institutions are innovative, strategic and rooted in the socio-historical texture in which CD developed. In a context of permanent threat of displacement, CD institutions acquired a double social/political value. Not only around them local people's involvement and politicisation has been organized, but they have assume the symbolic value of 'strongholds' to manifest an irremovable (institutional) presence. On the other hand I argue that, for being easily articulated to state procedures, this institutionalising tendency has constantly exposed CD organisations to the risk of bureaucratisation and professionalization. After providing a number of empirical examples, I conclude by reflecting about CD institutions as forms of organisation that go beyond the public/private dualism.

5.1 The funding issue. Do CD projects tend to bureaucratise because they are funded?

In 2004, analysing the outcomes of their research, Powell & Geoghegan commented that "what is striking about this data is that community development in Ireland is almost completely dependent on the state for funds" (p 128), and that CD was almost entirely composed by paid workers. In light of recent circumstances this statement sounds like an alarm bell. Indeed over the last two years there has been a sustained attack on community organizations in Ireland, which has taken advantage of CD's dependency upon (and overlap with) the state. As I illustrate in Chapter 8, cutbacks have been particularly severe and endemic, mainly hitting those projects that are viewed as more challenging and confrontational. Currently, a shared feeling among activists is that the state wants to definitely get rid of the sector. Certainly the best way to achieve this is to cut funding and leverage the hyper-bureaucratised relation it entails with CD projects. As I noted in the introductory remarks, this situation is paradoxical because although CD did not develop as an intrinsic evolution of state apparatuses and functions, nor from a supposed 'bureaucratic rationality' (a state scheme), cutbacks are seen by many groups as a possible dead knell for CD. In my view, this analysis is more emotionally driven than rational.

In any case the imposition of cut-backs by the government had at least the result to take the question of funding back to the mainstream, exposing the numerous ambiguities that shape it. The aim of this section is to challenge a consensual view that sees funding as the main cause of CD's bureaucratisation and 'existential crisis'. This critique will give me the opportunity to re-frame the question of funding in a more rational way.

During my encounters with Dublin based community activists the problem of the cuts and the question of funding emerged constantly. According to what they refer, bureaucratisation is

particularly hard to deal with because of the funding schemes in which CD groups are tangled. Emphasis on so-called “performance indicators” (Powell & Geoghegan 2006:857) forces projects to time consuming, complex consultative exercises, like writing funding proposals, take part in committee meetings, demonstrating the efficient use of resources, commitment to achieving targets and the use of outcome measures in order to prove value for money (ibid:857).

When CD activists analyse this situation they give the impression to believe that it was money itself that corrupted CD organisations and eroded their autonomy: “projects - they argue - can only operate in a certain way, they are restricted because they are funded. And organisations that were not state funded and that became funded changed their way of working; it changes the atmosphere and the objectives; it affects the energy with which the organization was created” (Lisa,activist). Or, as Claire (activist) bitterly observes: “I suppose during the Celtic Tiger, when there was money around, in some ways it almost nearly destroyed us”.

I think these quotes, and especially the last one, are revealing of the ambiguities that at present shape the question of economic sustainability of their projects. Indeed, on one hand there is a sense that funding constitutes the cause of CD’s decline; on the other hand this perception strongly clashes with the idea that cutbacks constitute a possible dead knell for CD. This ambiguity mirrors in the fact that many CD projects are simultaneously fighting against the cutbacks and seeing some benefits in the fact that they are not anymore involved in funding schemes since they can now devote more time to independent political initiatives. As Lisa highlights “now the other side of cutbacks is that a couple of those senior community activists have lost their job, and in some sense this frees them up and they are now involved on a full time basis in whatever group or committee they want to be because they do not have that responsibility of running a project”. In other cases, “there are also activists that” - in

order to resolve this problem - “want now to create something that is not funded by the state because it restricts them in what they want to do” (Lisa).

To be sure not having to deal with the state in terms of funding (after decades where this was the leitmotiv) might be ‘refreshing’ for many activists. But this raises many controversial questions such as: are we sure that the problem is just money itself, and that bureaucratisation will vanish after funding schemes are taken off? (Then why should CD be so concerned with the cutbacks?) Is autonomy just a question of *economic* self-sufficiency; or is there something else that CD has lost with partnership and that now it has to fight for? And even more crucial to the scope of this section: is full autonomy possible in (capitalist, neo-liberal) urban context?

5.1.1 The example of Chiapas

At present it is difficult to point to concrete examples of organisations experiencing ‘full autonomy’, or full independency from state/capital. Societies are so globalised and processes tend to be so interconnected that autonomy sounds pretty much like utopia. Indeed an example that is frequently brought up – one of the few that are suitable to this type of analysis – is quite exotic and corresponds to the Zapatistas of Chiapas[24]. To be sure the Zapatista experience has strongly resonated in many parts of the world, including western metropolises. And for those who were inspired by them and wanted to ‘reproduce’ their experience the problem has been that of thinking their autonomy in contexts, such as, for example, western

[24] The Zapatista movement was able to achieve an unprecedented level of autonomy from the state, keeping it at such a subjective distance that they were able to neutralise its repressive violence recurring to political more than military strategies. Interestingly enough the Zapatistas claim not to be interested in the seizure of state power; their aim is the transformation of power the way it is. And in fact they manage to keep themselves – as Badiou (crisis of the negative 654) would put it – “in a state of semi-dissidence and conflictual alliance with the state” that allows them to keep it at a distance.

cities, where living conditions and forms of struggles are completely different. As John Holloway (2005) argues "we who live in the cities (…) do not live within the sort of communal support structures that exist in Chiapas. We do not have land on which to grow the basic foodstuffs necessary for survival, and we are not, on the whole, accustomed to the levels of complete poverty that is the daily experience of the Zapatistas of Chiapas" (ibid. p170). Of course in cities it is "possible to occupy land for these purposes (as some of the piquetero groups in Argentina are beginning to do), but for most urban groups this is not an option" (ibid. p173). To make it short, in cities it is actually impossible to reach the same level of autonomy that the Zapatistas communities have achieved in Chiapas. Indeed cities constitute the core of capitalist oppression and exploitation. Although resistance is constantly produced in cities, their environment does not allow a complete independency (especially a 'material' one) from state & capital.

This simple fact sets the question of funding under a completely different light; in my view debates around CD should take it more seriously.

As Holloway (2005) highlights, "urban autonomous groups survive either on the basis of state subsidies (sometimes forced by the groups themselves as in the case of the *piqueteros* who use the roadblocks to force the government to give money to the unemployed) or on the basis of some mixture of occasional or regular paid employment and state subsidies. Thus, many urban groups are composed of a mixture of people in regular employment, of people who are by choice or by necessity in irregular or occasional employment and of those who (again by choice or necessity) are unemployed, often dependent on state subsidies or some sort of market activity for their survival" (p174). Thus if a Dublin based community group is composed by just 'volunteers' it is fair to think that they have some source of income (i.e. some form of economic dependency) outside the organisation. In this case, the fact that the organisation does not depend on any form of direct support by the state/market in terms of

funding does not make it 'objectively' independent from these forces. But also think about activists who were made unemployed by recent cutbacks and yet chose to continue their activity while receiving unemployment benefits; this does not make them and their organisation less materially dependent on the state than they were before.

5.1.2 Funding is not an ethical issue

Whenever academics and activists discuss whether it is acceptable or not that CD projects be funded by the state, their arguments go back to the question of the 'nature' of CD, as if this was a sort of ethical question and as if money was in itself decisive in the evaluation of a project. For example, Powell and Geoghegan (2004: 123) argue that the issue of funding "raises the question of whether community development should be seen primarily as a response by indigenous communities to their social exclusion or as a strategy by the state to utilise the inherent concept of self-help within community development to get marginalised communities to take responsibility for the poverty and other forms of exclusion they may be experiencing". In my view, to frame the problem as Powell and Geoghegan do is misleading. Indeed their point of view to certain extent neglects the analysis of the 'objective' conditions (state, capital, the city) in which people and organisations are situated. And therefore it tends not to recognise the fact that economic dependency is to great extent inescapable in cities – independently from one organisation's 'nature' and political orientations.

As I emphasised since the beginning of this work, CD in Dublin is a collectively organised response to poverty and oppression, which generated unprecedented political outcomes. These experimental projects were 'at a distance' and 'excessive' to any form of state rationality. Politics – as I define this notion in the theoretical framework of this thesis – is

something that anyone can do, even the poorest person in the world, and it does not necessitate of funds in order to exist. Nevertheless, it is not the presence of state funds what compromises the politics of a project, because even without funds this project would be exposed to other forms of economic dependency. Holloway's answer to the question if it is possible for a movement to be *completely* autonomous is negative; especially in the context of cities which are the quintessential locus of capitalist expansion and exploitation.

So if we think the situation in these terms it is unsurprising that a group might decides to take advantage of resources that the state makes available. Especially if this group is, as in the context of CD, particularly poor in terms of resources. This simple fact does not necessarily equate with the renunciation of one's politics and search for autonomy. So, in my view Terry Robson (2001) is not accurate when he concludes that "such interventions [funding schemes] transform the 'community'- based organisation from one moved by local, neighbourhood considerations and accountable to local people, to one influenced by the interests of the state and accountable to its stringent financial controls". Indeed autonomy does not just correspond to economic self-sufficiency. Even in a situation of economic 'dependency' such as that in which almost everyone is constrained in advanced capitalist societies groups can still try and "push autonomy as far as possible" (Holloway 2005:173).

This is not to negate that funding agencies actually frame funding delivery with schemes that at the end of the day are aimed to change the way CD should work, and depoliticise it. As Mary highlights "community activism has become dependent on funding and that is not how community activism should be; people involved in the area should not need funding". The problem is that together with funding, many other things have changed: "funding has s*haped more that it should have* what people are doing; and people are caught in their day to day

struggle to keep their project going". Funding is not wrong in itself; "if it changes the ethos of what you do, if it transforms it in something else, than it is wrong". (Lisa)

At the end of the day it is important for urban CD groups to be aware that this coexistence of economic dependency and the will to develop autonomously forces them into contradictory situations (such as for example funding schemes) "in which it is much better to recognise those contradictions rather than to gloss over them" (Holloway 2005:173). In my view this awareness is fundamental in order not to be exposed to state manipulation and therefore depoliticisation. However this awareness should be the result of a self-reflective activity that has frequently lacked in the history of CD. Due to this lack, there never was (for example) an anti-co-option alliance that attempted to produce collective critique and resistance to the pitfalls of systemic funding. On the contrary many groups uncritically accepted funding-related processes of 'reform', while many others were actually born out of this bureaucratic frame.

In the context of capitalism, dependency on forces that are difficult to control exposes community groups to problems and limitations that should be recognised. "The significance of these limitations obviously depends on the collective strength of the groups: in the case of the piqueteros, for example, the payment of the state subsidies was imposed by road blocks and administered by the groups themselves" (ibid. p174). This is the example of a group that despite receiving funding from the state does not bureaucratise; which demonstrates that the problem is not money in itself. 'Bureaucratisation' points to much broader processes. Money might be accepted, but it should not constitute an obstacle to the realising of peoples' dreams and objectives.

5.1.2 Finessing and community work

Unfortunately, due to this lack of collective self–reflexivity, those who try to resist this bureaucratic logic, do it as individuals or single groups, and in a way that does not openly challenge the system - and therefore with limited or ambiguous outcomes, which certainly can not be described as political, or emancipatory. For example, what seems to be a popular strategy among CD groups is not to report in funding applications or assessments certain activities that funding providers would not consider to be 'suitable'. As a CD activist refers: "As a development worker, they don't have all the details of the work I do. And I do a lot of drama and it would be influenced by the work of Augusto Boal: theatre of the oppressed, theatre of change, theatre of education etc… So this project here is done with the people I work with, most of them drug users, so this work was very hidden, and I had to find the way to do it because I knew that the state would not fund this particular project. It would not see the use of theatre and drama as particularly relevant. Maybe they would bring in someone to do a drama workshop once or twice, but they would not see drama working with people in the community to look at problems related to their health".

Another similar tactic is to finessing in funding applications by telling state-agents what they want to hear and then, once funding has been delivered, to do a slightly different work from that which was initially agreed. As an activist puts it "my proposal to the state for funding says one thing and this thing is what the state wants to hear; and if I get that funding it gives me the space to do the work I think should be done and that the state does not agree with" (Sam).

A third tactic is to look for other funding sources. I find this quite controversial because on one hand alternative providers are frequently multinational companies, whose intentions have

no affinity with those of CD organisations. On the other hand, in a phase that is marked by cuts in public expenditure, the state indirectly promotes a dangerous shift towards the market – and in doing so it opens new possibilities for profit and exploitation in poor areas of the city. As I will illustrate in Chapter 8 this social-economic approach to CD has been increasingly emphasised after the recent cuts, with social entrepreneurs developing strategies to make community groups more marketable.

5.2 Bureaucratisation as the triumph of "expert knowledge". The case of Community Response (CR).

In order to evaluate the compound ways in which bureaucratisation affects CD organisations, more than money itself, it is worth to address the issue of professionalization, i.e. the imposition of the rule of expert, technical knowledge to the practice of CD. The case of Community Response, a group operating in the south inner city is taken here into analysis – for I consider it to be particularly illustrative of this phenomenon.

Community Response is a community project that develops ways of tracking problem drug use and its effects in Dublin's South Inner City. Their aim is to work with local residents to determine their own solutions to drug related issues. Having started as a response by people who use drug services, Community Response (CR) operates out of the history of local activism in the south inner city where – same as in the north - the heroin problem became epidemic, with the state having been reluctant to intervene in a meaningful, consistent and egalitarian way; showing instead an inclination to marginalise and criminalise those realities (see Chapter 2, where I refer to the drug crisis and CPAD).

From the late 1970s many community drug teams emerged in the north and south inner city in order to deal with this problem on a voluntary basis. In doing so, they occupied a political space that was left empty by 'traditional' organisations (the republican and socialist left) which always tended to ignore or underestimate issues related to health and 'the body'. Due to this lack of concern by both the state and 'official' politics, and having to deal with state laws and institutions which were particularly conservative and exclusionary in Ireland[25], the approach of CD to heroin issues has been quite experimental and confrontational since the beginning of the heroin epidemic.

During the partnership era the unstructured network of independent local drug teams that had emerged in the 1980s underwent a process of structural reform – as I describe it in Chapter 2. As a result 13 drug task forces were set up around Dublin gathering statutory agents, voluntary agents and community representatives. Following a partnership approach, drug task forces (DTF) act as hybrid institutions that mediate between the state, local organisations and eventually private entities. They also act as agencies to which local groups can submit their applications for funding. Although each DTF carries out the same type of functions, they differ from each other, depending by the specific type of approach that individual state agents and community delegates impose on them.

For example, the south inner city drug task force (to which CR is associated) developed into a corporate type of entity, being controlled by a restricted group of people who act as a sort of executive board. Having been there for quite a long time, this core group got into a powerful position, directly controlling people who 'come and go' and having the last say on key issues, including funding. In other areas, like the North Inner City, task force administration is

[25] For example the state was refusing to set up needle exchanges, where people could exchange used needles for clean ones. Or think that prisoners in a very advanced phase of HIV/AIDS related illness were handcuffed to hospital beds and monitored by prison guards. (O'Broin 2010)

described by activists as more democratic, being organised according to principles that are closer to those of CD than to state/corporate management.

5.2.1 Knowledge/expertise as power-over

As I said, this case is particularly useful for the aims of this chapter, because 'health and the body' the field in which CR operates constitutes a privileged point of view on the processes that I am investigating here. Indeed one should notice that when community groups deal with public health related issues, to generate a 'bottom-up' CD approach – i.e. a situation in which people's more or less direct experience of the problem constitutes the principal tool for collective intervention - is far more complex and challenging than in other cases, like for example when dealing with housing or education. This is because issues such as drug dependency, HIV, Hepatitis C and so on, require 'by nature' a certain level of basic 'technical' knowledge by those who aim to address them. My argument here is that since health is quite composite as an area of intervention in terms of knowledge, expertise, symbolic implications etc., in a way it results easier for organisations that deal with it to bureaucratise (in terms of professionalization), and therefore to depoliticise.

In other words health is a field in which, more than in others, the state can impose its 'form' and its way of functioning. And this is because in health related issues knowledge/expertise can be imposed as power over life: it immediately assumes a bio-political dimension - in the sense Foucault (2010) gives to this concept – investing the production and reproduction of life itself. As a CR activist argues "there is a problem of *representation*", meaning that in contexts where a specific type of knowledge can make the difference regard life, processes of representation (and ontologically speaking, the state is a form of representation) are more

likely to be implemented. Namely, it is more likely that 'experts' start acting *on behalf of* (or for) those who have no expertise. The huge symbolic value 'bio-political knowledge' can assume in this context, together with the 'complexity rhetoric' that experts apply to the issues at stake and the necessity to deal with them as 'professionally as possible' can be used as tools to 'take over' the problem and dispossess ordinary people of the control they had achieved (or could potentially achieve) over it through independent action and collective organisation. When this is the case, "the things the people have fought hard for are taken by those who claim to be leaders [or experts] and given back to the people as 'delivery'" (Zikode 2009). This generates a situation that is "divided between the rulers (the visible subjects) and the ruled (the invisible de-subjectified subjects)" (Holloway 2002:19)

Neocosmos (2004) describes this dispossession through expert knowledge in terms of 'de-contextualisation' or 'abstraction' and ascribes to it a strong depoliticising power. "Technique and science (the bearers of which are experts and state expertise) are thus unavoidably abstracted by the state from the socio-political context and conditions which alone give them meaning, and thus acquire a life of their own, independent of that context and those conditions. To be accessed by ordinary people and democratised, they need to be re-politicised and their technical quality shown to be, at best, only partly independent of socio-political content" (Neocosmos 2004:216). This 'de-contextualisation' or 'abstraction' that Neocosmos refers to is a form of representation - a 'state procedure', as i defined this idea in the theoretical chapter of this thesis. In order to counter de-contextualisation, the "assumption of impartiality that lies at the core of professional claims [and that] mirrors the state's own claim to neutrality (…) must be rejected" (O'Donovan & Meade 2002:8).

De-contextualisation of widespread heroin addiction and related issues is a matter which CR addresses on a daily basis. I find the description by a CR activist of what happens at DTF meetings in the south inner city of Dublin quite illustrative in this respect:

"When you go to the [DTF] meetings there can be 20 people around from different backgrounds; and they are talking about a big range of issues, and policy, and services for drug users, and services for families, rehabilitation services, methadone program protocols and so on. And it is difficult for people from the community to deal with that stuff. *You have to learn the language of bureaucracy*. And now most of the time they are left on their own with that."

This contribution highlights the way in which the abstraction from the context operated by technical/bureaucratic expertise can play an exclusionary, depoliticising role. Indeed by producing a normative type of discourse which just a few skilled people are familiar with, expert language imposes itself as the only one capable to meaningfully refer to the situation and therefore to rule it, interdicting ordinary people to effectively engage. This reproduces a a depoliticised situation. Indeed according to Neocosmos (2004) under these conditions, "frankly political questions regarding the social entitlements and needs of various groups which may touch on the transformation of this order, become subsumed and hidden under issues of technical expertise, claims for greater access to state resources, and the deployment of state largesse within a discourse of state 'delivery'" (Neocosmos 2004:217). As we have seen in section nr1 of this chapter, the emphasis that funding has assumed within discourses on CD is symptomatic of a depoliticised mentality.

5.2.2 'Power-over' and 'power- to' in CD

Bureaucratisation through knowledge/expertise is particularly visible in health related fields such as those in which CR operates, but it is a process affecting CD in all its forms. According to, a south inner city activist, with the advent of partnership and neo-liberal governance, the effectiveness of "everything we do is measured in terms of outcomes. In this context, *community development becomes specialised, and the result is that power is taken from those communities who created the actual organisation*".

I find Susan's reflection quite revealing - especially her last sentence, which I have emphasised in italic. No doubt there is a question of power involved in the construction of independent projects and their resistance to de-contextualisation. We can argue that when – as Susan puts it – "*power* is taken by the state from those who created an independent organisation", a shift in power takes place, which in Holloway's (2011) terms can be described as shift from "power-to" to "power-over". Indeed according to this author power "has two opposed senses. On the one hand is power-to, which is our creative subjective power, a movement of uniting, of integrating my doing into the social flow of doing" (Holloway 2011). On the other hand there is an objectifying power, the same as that according to which the state operates (power-over), which is "instrumental power, (…) a movement of separating, of dividing the done from the doing, of separating my doing from the social flow" (ibid.).

These two forms of power are opposed to each other, because they are driven by two different desires. Power-to is 'positive' because it manifests itself as power-to-do, as a potentiality. When we achieve things together with other people, out of our creativity, that is power-to; it is – as Holloway (2011) puts it – "can-ness, capacity-to-do, the ability to do things". In my view, the circumstances in which CD made the best of its potentialities have

always been when its singular achievements were expression of this collective power-to. When people living in deprived areas of the inner city of Dublin transform a 'non-place', such as for example a dismissed space separating two estates, into a community garden[26] where they can grow foodstuff and engender new forms of socialization in the area, this is power-to. When these same people despite the lack of concern by the Irish state have created alternative institutions - such as clinics, family support networks, community self-policing institutions and so on - in order to respond to problems related to alarming levels of heroin abuse affecting their neighbourhoods, this was an example of ordinary people's power-to.

On the other hand, when the authorities, concerned by the existence of independent forms of organization in working class areas, intervene trying to control or even to co-opt what people have spontaneously created, what they actually do is to reorganise the situation according to a power-over type of structure. This intervention corresponds to an imposition, to the creation of boundaries, identities, taxonomies, hierarchies etc. - because this is how the state works. This can happen in a very explicit way, like for example when the local authority decides to bulldoze a community garden and to give the allotment away (back) to a rich developer. In that case land is subtracted to people's creativity and given back to the market; in this process power-to turns into power-over. As a South African community activist highlights "it is a kind of theft – to take away the valuable things of the people and to put them to work in a system that is against the people but in favour of the powerful" (Zikode 2009). "Doing" argues John Holloway "is broken as the 'powerful' separate the done from the doers and appropriate it to themselves. The social flow is broken as the 'powerful' present themselves as the individual doers, while the rest simply disappear from sight".

[26] This is the case in many areas of the inner city including some of the most deprived including Summerhill. See http://www.photoireland.org/blog/new-work/the-hidden-garden

As we have seen, this ‘conversion’ of power can be imposed with bulldozers, with ‘physical’ power. But there are also more subtle strategies that the state might put in place in order to achieve this shift, such as those that I am describing in terms of bureaucratisation and professionalization, de-contextualisation and so on. Technocracy, thanks to its capacity to create subdivisions, specialisations, taxonomies, standard procedures etc. is an effective instrument to fracture people’s power-to-do. As Carlos Frade (2009:18) argues, “when meeting managerial targets is the master motive driving vocational practices, any language which deviates from counting, efficiency, ‘quality’ and the like is bound to be dismissed out of hand as anachronistic or out of place” – and any political claim is dismissed. This re-articulation, highlights John Holloway (2002), “means not the capacity to obtain some future good but just the contrary: the incapacity to obtain the future good, the incapacity to realise our own projects, our own dreams. It is not that we cease to project, that we cease to dream, but unless the projects and dreams are cut to match the 'reality' of power relations (and this is usually achieved, if at all, through bitter experience), then they are met with frustration” (Holloway 2002:18).

5.2.3 Service delivery, participation and self-activation. Some clarifications

Poor peoples’ politics - and therefore CD politics - should not be conceived as aimed at service delivery – at power-over, as Holloway puts it. Something that a CD approach perceives as wrong in the system we live is the idea that ‘development’ (political, social etc.) is the job of a few skilled representatives who are meant to think on behalf of the majority about their ‘development’. Grass roots organizations such as those that are grouped under the aegis of CD – when they are faithful to their political *raison d’etre* - challenge this top-down approach that sees people as incapable to think and therefore take independent decisions

regards their own lives. As Ruth (activist) says “CD is based on the belief that everybody has the ability to do things and that people never fail when they try, it is when they don’t try that they fail”. Thus the real challenge for an egalitarian type of ‘development’ is that it accepts and assures that people can actually take control over their own lives.

This, one should notice, has become quite controversial in a neo-liberal context where ‘participation’, ‘engagement’, ‘sustainability’ and so on are emphasised as policy/propaganda keywords. Indeed, when participation, empowerment, engagement and so on are advocated by the state their meaning and their articulation to real situations can be highly misleading. On one hand, “what is called ‘engagement’ or ‘public participation’ is often just a kind of instruction, sometimes even a threat. Many times it is done in such a way that all possibilities for real discussion and understanding are closed from the start” (Zikode 2009). And the case of ordinary people’s participation to DTF meetings in the South Inner City is eloquent in this respect. “In these cases what is called engagement is really just a way for the state [or for partnership] to pretend to be democratic when in reality all decisions are already taken and taken far away from poor people” (Zikode 2009).

On the other hand, one should notice that during the last two decades concepts of “exclusion”, “self-activation” and “participation” have been promoted by the authorities in contexts of welfare state demolition. They appeal “to Irish and European policy-makers in part because of [their] relative lack of content and [their] lack of historical and ideological overtones. (Saris et al. 2002:174), their vagueness being their strength. Destructing public services and ‘mobilising communities’ for their own wellbeing are phenomena that go side by side.

In order to avoid miscomprehensions I think it's important to clarify my thoughts on the way I oppose 'delivery by the state' to 'people's self-activation' - since around this opposition rotates the problem of bureaucratisation. Namely, I should emphasise that when I speak about people taking control of their own lives I do *not* mean that they do not need service delivery. Certainly I am not advocating the idea to "let the poor manage their own poverty" as Gaffikin and Morrissey (cit. by Robson 2001:235) cynically describe CD action. Obviously, everyone needs services and goods that he can not provide for himself. Moreover, the problems that local communities experience can be not just internal to them, but they have systemic conditions that require 'systemic' responses – that CD organisations alone can not provide.

What I actually intend to put forward here is that ordinary people should be entitled to have a say on the way in which things that affect their own lives are organised and 'delivered'– not necessarily from a 'technical' point of view, but definitely from a political one. This generally is a very central concern for CD groups that aim to be more than a means to fill social welfare gaps. As Zikode (2009) argues, "it is one thing if we are beneficiaries who need delivery. It is another thing if we are citizens who want to shape the future of our cities, even our country. (…) *Some problems are technical. Some problems are political. But we find that without our own political empowerment we can not even resolve the technical problems*. The solving of even very small technical problems, like a broken toilet, requires that we are first recognized as people that count". This argument refers to South African shack dwellers and their community organisations. Nevertheless it resonates with what I am arguing about CD and independent politics in general. The emancipatory process, which should be a central concern for CD, does not pass through delivery by the state because each

person's emancipation is not something that can be done on her behalf. As Holloway (2010) says, people need to "assume the responsibility for [their] own humanity" (p19).

The same can be argued for deeper social issues such as the heroin epidemic in Dublin inner city. The fundamental objective of movements and institutions that emerged in poor neighbourhoods was not *just* to obtain health services. The problem that they were facing and addressing was political to the extent that the state was not just denying the existence of the heroine issue, "it was also denying the existence of people and communities who were naming that issue" (O'Broin 2010) which can be seen as part of a broader reality in which these people were not counted by the state. Obviously this does not mean that the state was not informed about their existence; it means that it did not recognise their capacity to think – it did not count them as equals. This situation, one should notice, does not have changed after the creation of for example methadone clinics, or DTF; and that is why it is still political.

For ideas of 'participation', 'self-activation', 'empowerment' and so on to be meaningful, the political vision of the situation should always precede other points of view, including technical, economic, and so on. So, as a CR activist argues, "it's time for them [ordinary people, service users] to be effective"; meaning that it is time for community groups to challenge this system that conceives CD as a form of decentralised, second class service delivery that relegates people to a position of passivity and reproduces a situation of inequality and oppression. As I will further elaborate in chapter 6, a few groups (among which CR) are actually trying to address this problem, by generating processes that escape representation and de-contextualisation:

"We work towards mobilising people and we set up a situation (…) On the contrary if we elect representatives to enter in the drug task force we are entering into the system, we are not creating an alternative. By sending people to go into this battlefield of bureaucracy you are putting people who come from very difficult situations in a strange position. It is better to create alternatives" (Chris).

This argument is utterly political gathering some of the most essential 'values' of CD, as it is conceived in the present work. Its central thesis is that representative mechanisms de-contextualise politics and incorporate it to the domain of the state, where it depoliticises inevitably. It is in the interest of community organisations to protect their politics from this danger and keep it at a distance from the state.

5.3 CD's institutional tendency

"But continuity of organisation is a rare and complex thing: no sooner is organisation institutionalised into a form, than it is immediately used by capitalism" (Tronti 1979: 6)

In the previous sections of this chapter I have described some of the processes through which CD organisations bureaucratise, effectively losing their independency and becoming in all respects subsumed in state procedures.

The aim of this section is to enrich the analysis of CD's relation with the state by exploring a tendency that community groups had since the beginning, which is that of generating CD institutions. On one hand I will show how these institutions are a result of people's 'power-

to', as well as innovative and strategically rooted in the socio-historical texture of the neighbourhoods in which CD developed. On the other hand I will argue that, for being easily articulable to state procedures, this institutionalising tendency has constantly exposed CD organisations to the risk of bureaucratisation and professionalization.

5.3.1 CD institutions operating in a 'grey zone'

There is a popular belief amongst community activists that "there is a grey zone between service provision and activism, and community development plays in this grey zone" (Chris). Philosophically, we could paraphrase this statement with the idea that CD is situated in a sort of uncertain space between politics and the state. This idea, despite sounding paradoxical for the conception of politics and the state put forward in this thesis (is there any hybrid space between these two categories at all?), is nevertheless challenging and it deserves to be explored since it addresses an ambiguity which is central to CD and the question of bureaucratization. Politics, for how I defined it in the theoretical chapter of this thesis, is intermittent, or sequential; it is not constant like the state, which always exists – indeed "every historical social situation is also given as a state" (Badiou 2005:143) - "despite the incessant historical mutations of its [i.e. the state's] particular forms" (Russo 2006:673).

So, politics does not always exist, and in the case of CD in Dublin it is clear that historically (see Chapter 2) there have been moments of strong politicization (think about housing actions and responses to the drug crisis), as well as moments of statification (such as the involvement in 'anti-poverty schemes' or PPP) where politics was absent – or restricted to the thought and action of a minority of activists. It is in this sense that I argue that CD is not 'in itself' political. In the inner city of Dublin it developed out of political processes and it has continuously constituted a *possibility* for politics (perhaps the greatest possibility in Ireland

after the decline of the republican movement) but it is not *always* political. Sometimes, as we have seen, distance from the state - which is vital for politics - is absent, or very limited. It is in these phases that CD's ambiguity is more evident - and its description as something situated in a "grey zone" is more pertinent.

As I said, the aim of this section is to explore a feature that I consider to be particularly (maybe the most) significant when it comes to address the idea of CD being located in a grey zone between activism and service provision, or between politics and the state; namely its tendency to generate CD institutions.

Indeed the majority of community organising experiences in Dublin inner city, having politicised around a variety of issues related to deprivation, including the absence (or extreme scarcity and ineffectiveness) of public institutions dealing with huge gaps in education, healthcare, housing etc., came up with the idea to autonomously create such institutions. Of course the idea was not that of instituting a sort of shadow welfare state, but to experiment with models which were alternative to those imposed by the state, for being rooted in contested/conflictual situations and for proposing alternative modes of organisation which aimed to be collective, inclusive and egalitarian. So, it should be clear that here we are not dealing with the development of "state apparatuses", as Luis Althusser (2006) would describe them, but with institutions that pretend to be the 'concretisation' (if this is possible) and expansion of political processes - and therefore aiming to operate 'organically' (see chapter 6), i.e. from within the situation, and at a distance from the state.

Examples of CD's institutional tendency are the already mentioned for instance, drug-services that since the end of the 1970s were set up in order to deal with the drug crisis. But

also think about youth clubs dealing with educational/recreational issues affecting young people in the inner city, community policing fora (see Chapter 7) aimed to address issues of crime and drug dealing, mutual support groups(see Chpter 6), women groups, family resource centres and so on.

5.3.2 CD institutions as counter-institutions

As I said, this institutional tendency can be interpreted from different points of view. On one hand CD institutions/services have constituted an experimental (and to certain extent pioneer) form of 'counter-institutionality', i.e. a rejection of current forms of social organisation; and therefore an attempt to build what Negri (cit. by Cedillo 2007) would describe as "centers of alternative and independent projectuality, communities of negative labor, completely free and antagonistic towards the planning and programming of the reproduction of power of control" (Negri cit. by Cedillo 2007). The historical background to which this quote refers are 1970s workers' protests in the factories of Porto Marghera (Venice), which developed in new forms of workers' committees and other innovative political institutions within and outside the factories. This context is qualitatively different from the inner city of Dublin in the 1970s, where labour was (important but) not the main field of struggle – and where movements did not reach such levels of radicalization as they did in northern Italy. However, in my view, the strive for autonomy that Negri (cit. by Cedillo 2007) describes was shaping both contexts.

Currently, the notion of 'counter-institutionality' has become quite popular within the realm of social movements' theory and practice, the main academic references being Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2009). In their view, social conflict in order to open a path for real change "must be sustained and consolidated in an institutional process" (Hardt & Negri

2009:355). Indeed they argue that political procedures "that fail to develop institutional continuity are quickly covered over and absorbed within the dominant order, like stones that fall into a pool only to see the tranquil surface immediately restored". This institutional process – they emphasise – should not be confused with the seizing by a social movement of state institutions or their substitution with homologous ones (ibid. p355). 'Counter-institutions', as these authors describe them, should be shaped by a sort of anthropological *alterity* capable to make them immune to state-related procedures such as bureaucratization, professionalization etc.

As I said, a first key component of this alterity is that counter-institutions trigger from a political process, or a situation of conflict, and not from a sort of agreement or social contract (which is the way institutions are generally created and thought in contemporary societies). Indeed, according to Hardt and Negri (2009:355) "whereas the major line [contract] seeks to maintain social unity by casting conflict out of society—your consent to the contract forfeits your right to rebel and conflict—the minor line accepts conflict as internal to and the constant foundation of society" (ibid. p355). Intrinsic conflictuality is so fundamental because the lack of it stops institutions being egalitarian.

The way in which institutions can be successfully integrated to a political process is evident in many CD experiences that since the end of the 1960s took place in the inner city of Dublin –but also in current struggles by South African shack dwellers, in the way the 1994 Zapatista uprising in Mexico developed through the creation of autonomous assemblies, 'caracoles' or basic community structures, and juntas of good government, and so on. There is not just one institutional model that can be integrated in a political process. Each situation requires a certain level of experimentation, and "the key is to discover in each case how (and the extent

to which) the institutional process does not negate the social rupture created by revolt but extends and develops it" (Hardt & Negri 2009:357).

5.3.3 Community institutions as politicising machines

The idea that CD institutional experiences developed as a form of 'counter-institutionality', i.e. as an attempt to give consistency to and maintain a persistent politicisation around poor people's struggles in the inner city of Dublin is confirmed by community activists themselves, and especially by those who have been involved since the early stages. None of them sees CD's institutional activity as just a technical matter of problem-solving or service delivery. In their view the link to politics is (or should be) always precedent to any professional concern. The need for institutions comes from the necessity that "something needs to be done in relation to getting organised and *staying* organised" (Claire).

For example during the encounter I had with Lisa, she argued that CD institutions have been set up not just in order to respond to concrete problems affecting poor areas of the city; but also to act as spaces where people could come together and eventually politicise. She describes CD services as a sort of strategy put in place by community activists in order to get in touch with other residents and generate a sense of collective engagement even where this sense was poor or lacking.

As Lisa highlights, we should not forget that CD operates in extremely poor and marginalised situations, which have been frequently excluded from the petit-bourgeois 'civil society' and its forms of public participation. In such context, from an activist point of view "providing services is a direct way of engaging with people. Because people's lives are difficult and sometimes they feel like… I don't want to talk, I don't want to go to a meeting and talk

because I don't have time to think about issues. What they need is a focus, and services engage people on a regular basis" (Lisa). So, in Lisa's view, services were thought as a means to give continuity to CD experiences of struggle – even when there were no big social mobilizations taking place; when people tended to stop thinking collectively and to be overwhelmed by their 'individual' concerns.

The political centrality of these institutions/services is attested by the fact that they were the place where several activists gained the (in some respects controversial, as we will see) reputation to be 'community leaders'. As Lisa highlights, "all the community leaders in these areas have worked in direct provision services and this is where they developed their relationships. And this is also where their credibility comes from, and why people believe in them. And I think this is the positive side". As I will elaborate in the next chapter, thanks to these alternative direct provision projects, CD achieved a level of rootedness - of being 'organic' to the situation – which is very specific to this movement and which no other political organization was able to achieve during the last decades in Dublin. Indeed in Dublin's inner city poor neighborhoods traditional party-style organizations have been 'overtaken' by post-party forms of organization such as CD. Actually there is no left wing organization that can claim such a proximity to the 'proletariat'; and this, in my view, constitutes an evidence of both the potentiality of CD's counter-institutionality and the decline that the party-form has suffered during the last decades.

5.3.4 Counter-institutions and bureaucratization

As I argued, the 'negative side' of counter-institutions is that they can quickly bureaucratise and assume a form correlated with that of the State. As Neilson and Rossiter (2006:394) put it "institutionalization seems to threaten routinization and the closure of possibilities"; and this

is because institutions "habitualize and stabilize patterns of thought, feeling, judgement and action. The word institution, in this sense, describes a pattern of human relation (…) it implies a degree of rigidity or predictability: one that, in the modern context, is (…) associated with the operations of hierarchy, bureaucracy, or the Weberian concept of rationalization" (ibid. p397). In other words an institution, instead of giving consistency to the political process in which it developed, can enter into the dominant form of institution (the one Hardt and Negri refer to as "social contract") which emphasises identity, works through a representative type of logic and neutralizes the possibilities opened by the political process. In Dublin a quintessential example of this type of process is that of Community Policing Fora (CPF). In chapter 7 I will illustrate the way in which institutions such as CPF, despite having developed in the context of people's struggles, bureaucratised quite quickly. Particularly significant in this case is the fact that CPF adopted an 'anti-social behaviour' rhetoric, which on one hand criminalises underprivileged young people and the use they make of public spaces; on the other hand, it blinds CD activists in relation to the eventfulness and political potential that these young people express.

As I mentioned in the theory chapter the idea that it might be possible to 'concretise' a political process in the form of an institution is quite problematic, because politics cannot crystallise into a stable 'form'. To be sure, through movement-institutions, society can benefit of, and to certain extent incorporate, some of the positivity of a political sequence; but institutions can neither constitute the sole basis for the continuation of a political sequence, nor can politics spring from or originate in such structures. As Badiou (2005:122) highlights, post-party politics should be "organised through the intellectual discipline of political processes, and not according to a form correlated with that of the State". This, at the end of the day, is what the political history of the 20th century's party-state has shown.

Some self-reflective community activists like Lisa are completely aware of this problem. As she puts it "the negative side [of this 'institutional' tendency] is that 'services' can become the dominant role; they become like people's job; and activists are tied up in it; and almost like in the case of politicians it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture because your time is cut up. And trying to help the people on a day to day basis, and the challenge to keep structural change on the agenda become almost incompatible". I find remarkable the fact that Lisa associates CD service-managers (institution-managers) with politicians. This illustrates the fact that when one becomes a service delivery professional she is not so different from a party politician. In both cases political subjectivity is normalized into bureaucracy. On the other hand she suggests that the praxis of 'helping people' is not related to structural change. And this is because 'service delivery' is a form of representation, and as such it tends to exclude people's subjective involvement.

So on the one hand, what the case of CD tells us is that the implementation of autonomous political processes in popular situations passes also through the creation of institutions that deal with people's problems and around which they can politicise. Indeed CD did not always operate in the context of strong mobilisations. It frequently had to deal with depoliticised situations, where collective strengths were weak – being nevertheless their objective to organise people's capacity to collaborate for the solution of their problems.

On the other hand, by entering into the 'institutional form', which tends to be based on identity and distribution of places and functions according to criteria of personal skills and expert knowledge, and which demands "unity and concord in decision making" (Hardt & Negri 2009:356), the rupture on which the initial process was based tends to be neutralized –

exposing political organisation to statification. According to Badiou (cit. by Power 2006:329) "the ossification of force into institution can not be the framework that preserves the initial moment of novelty. Structures and organisations are not enough if their participants are not gripped by the motive force that catalysed their initial movement. Placing, institutionalising, is always on the side of the objective: 'every force is a subjective force, and inasmuch as it is assigned to its place, structured, splaced, it is an objective force".

5.3.5 CD institutions as struggle for the right to the city, against displacement

Before concluding this chapter with some further remarks on CD (counter-)institutions and the possibility or not for them to escape bureaucratization and moving beyond the 'public/private' dualism that sets them into a state/market framework, I would like to introduce a further consideration on what I have defined as CD's institutional tendency. Namely that institutions where created by community organizations also as a means to maintain a sort of 'spatial hegemony' in a space such as the inner city, where the poor traditionally live, but whose presence and wellbeing has always been posed under threat by the state authorities. As Goyens (2009) argues "the history of (…) oppositional, decentralysed movements can be better understood when the spatial implications of their ideological practices are critically examined".

Indeed, in Dublin, same as in many other cities on a global scale, processes that David Harvey (2008:33) would define as "urban restructuring through 'creative destruction'" have been implemented by the authorities. This constitutes a result of the fact that urbanization constantly plays a central role in the absorption of capital surpluses - such as, for example, those which the Celtic Tiger generated - at ever increasing geographical scales. This involves

burgeoning processes of particular areas of the city and especially city centers, where life-style is transformed, and quality of life becomes a commodity "in a world where consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy" (ibid. p31). "Creative destruction" corresponds here to the dispossession of the ordinary population of any right to access and live in those (to be) regenerated spaces.

As we have seen CD in Dublin is a grassroots movement that always had a strong spatial, or, roughly speaking, 'territorial' emphasis. There are numerous examples of this: it started in the context of struggles against removals and for decent housing conditions in the city center; it aimed to transform a situation that community activists describe as 'colonial', for being shaped by the rule of middle class outsiders; it prevented local street traders (mainly working class women) from being illegalized or removed from the streets where they were running their business; in the context of the heroin crisis it fought for keeping neighborhoods safe and free from drug dealers, to the point of having to develop community based forms of policing; it fought against the removal of vital public services (such as swimming pools) from the inner city, and so on.

The main issue that in a way shapes all these struggles is that since the 1960's the inner city of Dublin is undergoing a process of structural regeneration, which involves the displacement of the poor (and their problems) from the city center, which is supposed to be playing the role of 'visiting card' for the attraction of globalized capital and investments. On one hand, as Seamus highlights "one of the ways traditionally the state has solved its problems was to displace them somewhere else". So, since the second half of the 1960s large working class estates were built in peripheral areas in order to displace working class communities from the

inner city. A typical example is the construction of 7 fifteen-storey high-rises in Ballymun on the northern edge of the city. The scheme was completed in 1966 housing nearly 20.000 people and was separated from areas of non-public housing by a 12 foot concrete wall. On the other hand, as Pat (ICP) highlights, "because the inner city is the economic core of the country many people argue that getting read of the problem out of it, because of its economic importance, one would not have this social problem in the heart of the city, it would be displaced outside" and displaced in areas such as Ballymun where new forms of ghettoization are produced. I mentioned that this type of process is not just typical of Dublin; as David Harvey (2008:33) highlights "it took more than a hundred years to complete the embourgeoisement of central Paris, with the consequences seen in recent years of uprisings and mayhem in those isolated suburbs that trap marginalized immigrants, unemployed workers and youth".

Already Engels (cit by Harvey 2008:33) addressed this problem in "The Housing Question" arguing that "the growth of the big modern cities gives the land in certain areas, particularly in those areas which are centrally situated, an artificially and colossally increasing value; the buildings erected on these areas depress this value instead of increasing it, because they no longer belong to the changed circumstances. They are pulled down and replaced by others. This takes place above all with workers' houses which are situated centrally and whose rents, even with the greatest overcrowding, can never, or only very slowly, increase above a certain maximum. They are pulled down and in their stead shops, warehouses and public buildings are erected" (ibid. 33)

When the displacement of the poor from the city centre is opposed by forms of resistance – as in the case of CD – the battle becomes harsher and the tactics deployed by the state become

more subtle and vicious. One of them is that to turn contested areas in unbearable places where to live – until eventually residents decide to move out.

Cases of large scale local authority flat complexes such as, for example, Saint Michael's estate, O'Dweney gardens, Theresa's Gardens and Dominick Street that were seen as problematic because of issues of poverty and social exclusion, and inappropriate for a city with Celtic Tiger ambitions, and have recently been (or are being) moved to other areas, are representative of these processes in the inner city.

5.3.6 Sean McDermott swimming pool

Interestingly enough, with the economic crisis some steps are being moved forward in this process of displacement. And through cutbacks the state is being particularly cynical in the creation of an intolerable environment, transforming poor neighborhoods into a sort of "dumping areas"[27] (John) and depriving them of basic services and amenities. Emblematic here is the case of the threatened closure of Sean Mac Dermott Swimming Pool[28], which was brought up several times during interviews as an example. This swimming pool is a stand-alone complex located in Sean Mac Dermott Street, very close to Mountjoy Square, which is where I live.

[27] Cars…
[28] In December 2009, Dublin City Council announced that due to cutbacks in the budget there was no more funding available for that swimming pool.

Map of Dublin North inner city (area between the Noth Circular Road and the river Liffey; Mountjoy Square is located in the upper right part of the map)

This is a place that hosts one of the poorest communities in Ireland and that local activists would describe as an area of "huge deprivation, accumulation of disadvantage, low income families, drug issues, and a lot of disaffected youths" (Seamus). So, the closure of that swimming pool would be a very cynical act by local authorities because with that "you are taking away a facility that actually provides an alternative to all this"; moreover "tens of thousands of children have learned to swim in this pool" (John). Not to mention the fact that that swimming pool was and to some extent still is a bathroom facility for many people in that constituency. "Because there were no such facilities in Saint Josef Mansions [a flat complex nearby] so every week the kids were brought there by their parents. And this was as a result of community activity that those pools were open" (John).

Indeed, the complex was built as a result of people's demands and the announcement of its closure was not well received by the residents. So local CD groups and residents came together to fight this decision and keep this amenity open. On Monday 12th April 2010 they

protested at the City Hall before the City Council meeting. Also thanks to the support of some sympathetic city councilors, the council voted for the preservation of stand-alone swimming pools.

Now, apart from this important victory by the local community, "which is a clear demonstration of people's power in that area" (John), what I am aiming to highlight here is that the intentions of the state were quite cynical and not just driven by an economic type ofrationality (as the cutbacks rhetoric would suggest). As Pat (Seamus) suggests, even from a technocratic/cynical point of view such decisions do not make any sense; they "are going to cost the state much more in a long term". Therefore this is indicative of short-term thinking and insensitivity of the state in relation to ordinary people's problems. As Tina highlights, in that area kids do not have a place where to spend their free time "their environment is reduced to the street, to the traffic". Such an environment will eventually persuade many families to live the area.

I find this case particularly significant to the idea that CD institutions act as a sort of 'anchorage' to the city center for poor people living in the area. In a context of permanent threat of displacement, institutions acquire a double social/political value. Not only around them local people's involvement is organized, but they assume the symbolic value of 'strongholds' to manifest an irremovable (institutional) presence. According to Lisa, "this is why CD happens and this is why it is so important. Because without CD, people would be left behind, and everything would be taken from them, bit by bit; as simple as that"; what the state does is "to cut and divide and spread the problem [poor people] out" Lisa. So one could argue that the existence of a variety of CD institutions provides a sense of stability and permanency to the local community, which goes beyond service provision itself. In this sense

“institutions are – as Neilson and Rossiter (2006:397) argue - always related to the question of security”. They work as a sort of ‘state within the state’.

In a more positive sense they constitute a sort of affirmation of people’s “right to the city” to use Lefebvre’s (2003) famous expression. Since this right is constantly denied or posed under threat by the state’s ‘creative destruction’ strategy, it is central to every CD struggle. Indeed according to Aine “what we wanted for the poor people here [she refers to St. Michael’s estate] was for them not be displaced; that they get to live in their communities (…). *We wanted recognition that we belong to the city just as much as the rich belong to the city*. I think that's a really important value”. Indeed, “the right to the city” as it is described by Harvey (2008) goes beyond the simple faculty to access urban spaces; “it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city. It is, nevertheless, a common rather than an individual right since this transformation inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power to reshape the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights” (p23). The capacity to generate forms of bottom-up institutionality in popular neighborhoods is an important step for those who demand this right to the city. Of course ‘right to the city’ should always be a ‘universal’ demand – one that can never be entirely satisfied by a specific policy or a regulation to be compiled by bureaucrats. Indeed the risk is that it turns into a “legalistic issue of 'human rights' to be fought over in the courts of law between lawyers” (Zikode 2009); or even that, following the same legalistic logic, it becomes a sort of “transcendental guarantee” (Zizek 2004:320) (where the guarantor is the state) that ends up turning people into passive uncritical receivers.

The collective creation of independent CD institutions as rooted in contested urban spaces is in my view a good starting point in the affirmation of people's right to the city. Their main challenge is to keep themselves at a distance from the state. However, this is a difficult task for institutions as a form of collective organization in general – and especially for CD institutions that, as we have seen, act as a sort of quasi state. The challenge, as I will point out in the conclusive part of this chapter is to experiment with new forms of institutionality that go beyond the public/private dualism around which organizations tend to depoliticize.

5.4 Conclusions. Towards a new institutionality beyond public and private?

"Why do the most heroic popular uprisings, the most persistent wars of liberation, the most indisputable mobilisations in the name of justice and liberty end – even if this is something beyond the confines of their own internalised sequence – in opaque statist constructions wherein none of the factors that gave meaning and possibility to their historical genesis is decipherable?" (Badiou 2005:70)

This question has constituted the implicit corner stone of this chapter, in which I analysed the ambiguities of the relation that CD entertains with the state – and which manifest in its bureaucratising tendencies. A 'universal' answer to it can not but being philosophical, having to do with the sequential nature of politics, which does not have a continuity equal to that of the state. However, once we have accepted this ontological fact, and we return to sociological analysis we should notice that processes of depoliticisation of singular political sequences are always different from each other and contingent to the situation and the sequence in which they take place.

To give a sociological explanation of CD's depoliticisation is a difficult task because CD is a assemblage of heterogeneous sequences, rather than just one. A general hypothesis that I formulated in relation to CD in Dublin is that its institutional tendency is central to both CD's political subjectivity and its tendency to bureaucratise and depoliticise. Therefore the question here is how to overcome this impasse? How can CD's institutional autonomy be pushed as far as possible? Which features should CD institutions have in order to achieve the best result?

I will deal with these questions in the next chapter. For now I should make clear that the answer of course can not point to an institutional model which might be implemented in different CD contexts. Experimentation is the only possible way forward. As John Holloway (2011a) highlights "attempts are always contradictory" and CD activists should constantly deal with those contradictions, never putting them aside. As Lisa argues "the service approach sometimes takes away from the fundamental challenge and it is important to keep the balance, although it is very difficult". Activists and researchers should also bear in mind that this organisational problem, has a historical significance. The 1960s/70s and the commencement of a post-party type of politics opened many problems that have not been resolved yet. And the situation of political impasse that societies are experiencing on a world wide scale is a consequence of this. "The rejection of the party as an organisational form and of the pursuit of power as an aim" - i.e. the rejection of the old forms of left-wing politics – "leaves us with an enormous question mark. That itself is important. The Zapatista saying 'caminamos preguntando' [by asking we walk] acquires a particular resonance because we are conscious that we do not know the way forward" (Holloway 2005:171).

Politics without party has inevitably meant the (re)emergence of organisational forms such as the council, the assembly and the 'counter-institution' – which, as I will further illustrate in the next chapter, respond to the need to provide political processes (which are perceived as ephemeral and intermittent) with a "concrete structure". Nevertheless organisational structures (despite their tendency to ossify) might be useful in situations where there is need to be 'anchored' to a contested territory such as the inner city of Dublin.

Since CD institutions are tightly related to this post-party disposition, CD activists should follow Neilson and Rossiter's (2006:401) suggestion to "not escape this fate by any return to the state bureaucracies or [uncritical] fidelity to the existing institutions". Experimentation means that a "radically different form of institution" can be developed, "one that can intervene and work with this situation of uncertainty rather than simply reacting to it" (ibid. p401). Such experimental institutional process allows organisations to achieve some consistency in their interactions and behaviours, and to create forms of life that escape fixation in identity. The central difference between these and traditional institutions "has to do with the locus of agency: whereas according to the conventional sociological notion institutions form individuals and identities, in our conception singularities form institutions, which are thus perpetually in flux" (Neilson and Rossiter 2006:401). Such institutions are perpetually in flux because they are "based on conflict, in the sense that they both extend the social rupture operated by revolt [by a political procedure] against the ruling powers and are open to internal discord". So not only they "consolidate collective habits, practices, and capacities that designate a form of life", but they "are open-ended in that they are continually transformed by the singularities that compose them" (ibid. p401).

6. CD AS A PLATFORM FOR INDEPENDENT POLITICS

In the previous chapter I investigated the relationship between community development and the state trying to give an account of its various facets and illustrating the key obstacles that prevent a full autonomy of CD organisations. The state and the economy -"which is today the norm of the State", as Badiou (2005:144) argues- are categories that any politics is forced to deal with. Especially if politics has a strong institutional tendency, like in the case of CD; and even more if the context of action is urban, where a certain degree of economic dependency is inescapable for everyone.

In this chapter I will investigate this issue from a reverse point of view, a more positive one. Namely I will address more closely the way in which CD can be a platform for independent politics. This capability is mainly due to the fact that CD develops action on the basis of its rootedness in popular contexts – contrary to other political organisations that despite explicitly using a 'working class rhetoric', do not entertain any meaningful political relation with ordinary people – not even in a 'representative' fashion.

In the first part of this chapter (6.1.) I develop the concept of 'organic' as it emerged in my fieldwork. According to many community activists, 'organic' is how CD should be in relation to a situation. 'Organic' means that CD is not a model, i.e. something that can be simply 'adopted' or imposed to a situation by outsiders, but is an idea of organisation that both develops intrinsically to a concrete situation (a popular settlement for example) and that generates unprecedented processes in it. Organic CD is the result of people's creativity and capacity to autonomously organise and take a lead in the solution of their problems. In the second part of the chapter I explore the case of mutual support groups, as they have been developed by Community Response in the south inner city of Dublin. I consider mutual support groups as an interesting experiment in CD, since it constitutes an attempt to counter

bureaucratisation and to return to an ‘organic’ approach. A similar analysis is done in relation to public consultation meetings, or assemblies. Their potentialities are explored in part 6.4 where I analyse the case of ‘Community First’, which I consider to be a rare and interesting example of community re-politicisation micro-processes from the bottom up. Here I illustrate how this political sequence constitutes both an attempt to counter the cuts that the state is imposing on CD in the inner city, and an instance of an ‘organic’ approach that some organisations are experimenting with in deprived neighbourhoods. I conclude by arguing that an important way to push autonomy as far as possible is that of working in order to create an environment that is more favourable to it.

6.1. *CD as ‘organic’ politics*

As I have been emphasising since the introductory chapter of this thesis the politics of CD are aimed to transform people who are not counted, not ‘qualified’ and therefore not allowed to speak –as Spivak would put it- into meaningful political subjects whose action can change their own lives and the society in which they live. During the last two decades of economic boom however, with the bureaucratisation, fragmentation and sectoralisation of CD in the frame of public private partnership this emphasis got lost - together with the sense of a right to claim collective ownership of community based institutions. As a result – observes Mary - many people have started to embrace CD activities “as a sort of charity”. And although “they are always grateful for the services that they receive”, they have started perceiving these institutions as being separated from their reality; as being introduced from the ‘outside’ (or from the ‘top’) and “they became paralysed”.

Although at the moment there is a big indistinctness and overlap between CD organisations, generic voluntary groups, NGOs, charities and so on – where boundaries are difficult to demarcate - I think it is important to always emphasise what historically made (and could still make) the difference of a CD post-party type of approach. In my view this point is crucial not just for a question of academic accuracy, but also because what is at stake here is nothing less than the present and the future of this Irish "homemade" (Sera) form of independent organisation. As I illustrated in Chapter 1 the notion of CD itself is not really helpful because 'community' carries ambiguities of every sort. With the triumph of neo-liberal governance and its emphasis on 'community self-activation', 'sustainability', 'participation' and so on this ambiguity has mounted exponentially.

In my interview with Aine she attempted to make a bit of clarity out of this confusion and provided me with a very interesting insight on how, according to her, CD should work – in order to be faithful to its origins in the inner city of Dublin. Again, her point of view can not be embraced as representative of every activist involved in CD activity. Indeed the lack of collective self-reflexive processes penalises CD also in terms of lack of shared perceptions and 'definitions'. However as I made clear in the methodological chapter, this thesis does not just deal with 'opinions' that are shared by the majority (doxa) of people – and therefore related to common sense which (same as consensus) is structural - , but also of 'subjective singularities', and therefore of the prescriptive and interpreting thought of those who are involved in this research as interviewees or observed actors. Politics in Badiou's perspective is irreducible to structure - or to objectivity i.e. the state-of-the-situation -; it belongs to the realm of the subjective. Therefore in my view, although sociology is affected by "a peculiar theoretical paralysis concerning the question of subjectivities" (2009), this is something it should be concerned with; otherwise, as Russo (2009) argues, this discipline risks to "restrict

itself to counting and recounting the inanity of electoral results" and the analysis of the opinions regard this or that government.

According to Aine "there are different levels of what we understand as Community Development, in the present and in the past. Many community groups grow out of the oppression of people in their areas. Especially here [Aine refers to St Michael's Estate, and more broadly to deprived neighbourhoods in the inner city] community development grow out *organically*. In other places you would have the Church coming in and setting up community projects who may have been looking to get community development money through a community development programme, but this does not automatically mean that they were taking up that community development is about the challenging of inequalities, standing on the side of the poor, in willing to have the courage to lose (…)".

I find these reflections very insightful and central to the arguments of this work; in first place because they make clear that - as I have been arguing in Chapter 3 (History) - even though the state has created agencies that financially support CD groups, this does not mean that each organisation receiving those funds operates according to a community development type of approach or philosophy. Furthermore it can happen that the state, through its power to deliver funds, entitles itself to the faculty of deciding who might be considered as CD and who can not. And the state - as I defined this category in the theoretical section, following Badiou – does not recognise people's independent political capacity. The state does not recognise political subjectivity because subjectivity is 'excessive' and irreducible to the state-of-the-situation's counting of the parts or subsets. This is why the state can not recognise CD the way it came to existence in Dublin; and it aims instead to represent it (and reorganise it) in a normalised, apolitical way, i.e. as service delivery, charity, humanitarian voluntarism and

so on. During about the last 20 years this operation has been particularly successful. Indeed, Aine highlights, "within the Celtic Tiger, I suppose, people thought that they had the services and they were coming in [as 'customers']".

However, things did not always work that way. "In my generation in these areas people were living in horrible conditions, and that has shaped the forms of organization that developed here. But today if a service does after school or peer education etc. that does not mean that it is automatically political". This discrepancy, according to Aine, has become evident in the light of the present situation: "(…) so when we have the crisis in CD and we wonder where the [antagonistic] voice is and where that challenge is coming from … it is not there while people are trying with their head down to keep their job and their project". As I argued in the previous chapter professionalization can be very depoliticising. "Now you can get a degree and work – it has become very professionalized. And you do not have the same motivation for change; there is more a charity dependency" (Aine).

"Organic", the word that Aine used to describe forms of CD which in her view can be considered as being attuned to the political 'tradition' of CD in the inner city, is a very useful concept; especially when it comes to address the question of autonomy in CD. The fact that this notion emerged from the field makes it even more valuable, in my view. To describe a community organisation as having developed *organically* within a certain context means that it was the manifestation of the 'power-to' – to say it with Holloway (see Chapter 5) - of the people living in that context. This being organic to a situation -this rootedness if you want - is a central feature of any political organisation professing to be 'autonomous' or 'independent'. When referring to political processes, 'organic' should neither be confused with 'closed' or 'self-referential' – like the corporatist notion of society as an 'organic whole'; nor should it

be associated with ‘cultural’ features (such as ethnicity, religion and so on) – i.e. to the ‘structural’ bond tiding with each other the members of a certain population; nor should the notion of organic be confused with that of ‘part’, intended as a part of a unifying body such as the state. A political process can be described as being ‘organic to a situation’ just if it is the direct expression of the will and creativity of the people inhabiting that situation.

To be ‘organic’ is nevertheless a fundamental challenge that CD has addressed since the beginning in terms of liberating neighbourhoods from forms of management that activists describe as ‘colonial’. Indeed according to Mark – a leading figure and pioneer of CD in Dublin - an important problem that the north inner city was suffering at the time when (‘2nd generation’) CD organisations were starting to operate, was that residents were not in control of any (formal) collective type of activity taking place in the area. “What we discovered was that all the organizations and facilities that were operating in the area were run by people coming from outside the area. And it was kind of ridiculous; there was this ‘colonial’ scenario” (Mark). CD organizations, according to Fergus, developed (also) as a counter-tendency to this state of affairs.

As Aine makes clear in her reflections, from a CD perspective, the institution of a service by experts coming from the ‘outside’ -or from the ’top’- (which, no doubt, can be very useful for people who live in a deprived community, but this is not the point here) is a form of power-over, for it is based on a ‘service provision’ approach which conceives people as passive ‘users’, ‘receivers’ or at a maximum ‘participants’. This approach is not concerned with ordinary people’s capacity to spontaneously engage with matters that affect them directly. On the contrary it tends to anesthetise this capacity. Therefore it can not be considered as

following a CD approach, which excludes the idea of ordinary people being just passive receivers to be managed.

'Organic' community-based organisation is discouraged by those who are in power because it is immediately political and politicising. Sometimes – as we have seen in chapter 5 - it is discouraged with bulldozers, sometimes with bureaucratic arrangements. "Sometimes it is discouraged with contempt. Sometimes it is discouraged with violence. Sometimes it is discouraged by making simple issues too complicated for ordinary people to understand. Sometimes it is discouraged by just making it too difficult to engage" (Zikode 2009).

This (see chapters 2 and 5) is what happened during the Celtic Tiger era where the scenario that Fergus (activist) described as "colonial" has been to certain extent restored through bureaucratisation and professionalization. Indeed in this phase community groups, while undergoing a process of adaptation to state directives, started to employ skilled workers who were generally coming from outside/middle class areas, and who had a low empathy towards residents, with insufficient knowledge of the history of CD and no intention to be confrontational with the state - their aim being that to make career. This non-organic process has strongly weakened CD. As Seamus argues "you would have these professionals or people from the university who would come and go creating sorts of gaps and vacuums in the spaces, and there was a weakness in the community sector developing leadership and local leadership (…) If you are coming out a university you come out with that sort of grand liberal and progressive ideas but they do not necessarily translate to where local people are and you have to be able to be where people are in order to develop. (…) You can't come in an transplant ideas without building some empathy with the people and live where they are and be where they are in their shoes. So there was a problem in terms of the community

fragmentation". Professionals, according to Damien, "don't have any other relation to the area except that they work here, they work very hard, they work on good projects, but at 5 they go home". 'Organic' activists like him are born in the area "I never worked anywhere else and never wanted to live anywhere else. And we did have at one stage a policy of prioritizing local people into the jobs but with the increasing professionalism we couldn't do that, because the state said: we can not give you the money to pay for that job unless the person has these qualifications. And these qualifications didn't exist there, so you are talking about people who have been through the third level and have specific professional skills"

As Cox and Mullan (2001) argue, "as this process develops, activists are increasingly polarised, with the selection out of an elite capable of working on these terms and hence able to participate at state and national level and the consequent exclusion of other activists from real decision-making (…). As these become full-time and skilled jobs, such activists become subcontracted civil servants; and increasingly these positions are given, not to the 'organic intellectuals' of community organisations, but to middle-class outsiders in possession of educational credentials."

Although these bureaucratic processes have become systemic in CD, some groups such as for example Community Response are trying to invert this depoliticising tendency, through their daily effort in researching new paths of rootedness in popular neighbourhoods. As I will illustrate, these attempts are experimental; they possibly lack a consistent and coherent theoretical engagement (which this thesis attempts to provide) by the actors; and their outcomes are necessarily ambivalent. Nevertheless, as I should illustrate, their singularity and political interest is indisputable.

6.2 *Mutual Support Groups: Community Response's attempts to reintroduce an organic approach to CD*

Community Response's (CR) activity in the south inner city was introduced in Chapter 5.2 where I discussed the obstacles that bureaucratisation poses to CD organisations through the imposition of an expert/professional knowledge type of frame. I also emphasised that these obstacles are even more challenging for organisations that, like CR, operate in sensitive fields such as health and the body. As we saw, in this context expert knowledge/discourse operate as mechanisms of exclusion interdicting people's direct intervention in the solution of their problem (say addiction) and therefore in the control of their own lives. This generates processes of delegation and representation, which de-contextualise the problem and undermine CD.

The strategy that CR initially adopted to challenge de-contextualised service provision consisted in directly intervening on its 'weaknesses'. Indeed – as a CR activist explains - "we were in a position of recognising gaps in service delivery that the HSE and nobody else were able to fill. We came up with modules that did change service delivery radically – training local people as community drug workers and designing the type of training that was accessible to people, and in the end there were some advances". For example CR were arguing for community drug teams rather than medical led responses to addiction; they did not just demand methadone clinics but they claimed the need for a type of response that they define as "holistic"; which means that in their view "there is no point in having a service just for the person who is experiencing addiction. There need to be services for his family, for the future generation that is assisting to the devastation caused by heroin and so on" (Chris). Heroin, in this perspective, is not just an individual problem; all the population should be concerned and mobilise towards its solution.

As I highlighted in my critical analysis of CD's institutional tendency (chapter 5, section 3), the danger with this counter-institutional (or alternative-service) strategy is that it can end up creating a sort of second class welfare provision system, which both plays the game of the state by replacing it in difficult areas and by requiring lower resources, and depoliticises CD. However, I also concluded by arguing that if one is self-reflective and recognise the contradictions that are intrinsic to this form of organisation, rather than glossing over them, a certain independency can be maintained and interesting outcomes can follow up. Of course this approach involves a high level of experimentation, because central to is not just to create the conditions for the population to collaborate, but to develop processes that are as organic as possible to it. An experiment that I find particularly full of potentialities - since it showed to be capable to generate some political consistency in the south inner city - are mutual support groups, as they have been developed by CR. Mutual Support Groups (MSG) may be defined as autonomous self-help non-judgemental organisations based on the lived experiences of families affected by drugs. Just in the south inner city there are around 13 of such groups. The aim of the MSG network is to spread the initiative throughout Ireland, by raising awareness of the difficulties faced by families in coping with drug use, while recognising the important role that they play in supporting the recovery of the drug using family member.

6.2.1Mutual support groups

From an 'organic'-political point of view, a first remarkable aspect of MSG is that they allow the creation of new and stronger forms of solidarity among the population, in opposition to the atomization engendered by a top down service delivery approach, which is dominant in western societies. In the case of drug services, 'atomisation' means for example

individualisation of the cure ; distribution of those who are affected according to the frameworks of various state institutions (heroine addict/ HIV patient/ criminal) each one with their own set of expert knowledges and exclusionary practices (O'Broin 2010); depoliticisation of the problem as reduced to each individual's health and the body. As a result of that drug dependency starts to be seen as just an intimate, personal matter; a "serial behaviour falsely presenting itself as individual virtue" as Sartre (2004:351) would put it.

CR put a strong emphasis on MSG because besides being effective in dealing in an holistic way with heroin related issues, this form of organization allows people to meet each other, to discuss with each other about the situation and perceive their problems the way they actually are; that is to say collective, political and not just individual. It is in this sense that I consider MSG to be a very effective grassroots platform for politicisation.

MSGs are mainly composed by family members of drug addicts and in some cases also by drug addicts themselves. The way they are organised and the activities they do in the south inner city are inspired by Boal's 'theatre of the oppressed'. According to the organisers, this approach is not just effective in relation to heroin. It also allows people to use their own creativity and to "develop their ability in social analysis so if there is something to be done they can consider it for themselves". In other words MSGs stimulate people to collectively develop critical thought on the situation, and to act accordingly.

According to Chris, MSGs are a form of organization that is currently gaining some popularity in Dublin's disadvantaged areas, since new groups are frequently coming up. Some experiments have also been done in prisons and hospitals, an important focus being the problem of Hepatitis C. Paradoxically, the state is not really aware of what this activity

involves. Indeed it "would have no understanding of what we are doing, nor the prison [management]; as far as they know we are dealing with information about Hepatitis C (…) but what is happening is an analysis of what is going on and what needs to happen so that people are not just more informed about Hepatitis C but can take decisions for themselves. And this is also an attempt to change the power of the medical profession over the patient" (Chris).

Family support groups and other similar activities in the south inner city have achieved some positive results in the struggle to re-establish forms of 'power-to' where 'power-over' had become dominant. Since the last year (2008), when the government started to hold back all together with funding for CD, these results started to become tangible. At a grassroots level community organisations are increasingly less perceived as 'charities', "and what is so exciting – highlights Mary - is that now people who use the services actually claim those services. We want these services and we have the right to claim them. People feel that they can shape what is happening".

One should be aware that here we are talking about re-creating the conditions for politicisation in contexts (Ireland, Dublin's deprived neighbourhoods) where this is not easy at all, for reasons that I illustrated in the introduction to this work. Activists are aware of this, indeed in their view "these are just simple acts of resistance, they are not hugely political they are involved in small changes and this is very slow". However, changes in perception such as that described by Susan can not be underestimated. As I will illustrate below, such results achieved by MSG can open the possibility for unexpected moments of politicisation.

6.2.2 *Public consultation meetings*

In my view, a sign that reveals that something is actually starting to move within this hyper-bureaucratised scenario is the fact that (with the cutbacks) neighbourhood assemblies in community centres and other venues are being organised again - levels of attendance being quite encouraging according to the organisers. The organisation of open meetings, public consultations and assemblies has always been central to a CD approach. However, during the last two decades this habit has been a bit put aside because bureaucratisation and professionalisation have put a strong emphasis on representativeness and effectiveness in decision making – which involves hierarchies, well defined positions, expert knowledge etc. The problem, as Cox and Mullan (2001) noticed is that since the 1990s many CD project have devoted much time in convincing elites, instead of dialoguing with ordinary people; and this has drastically reduced people's direct engagement. Indeed with the partnership turn, the emerging of a 'deciding', educated and skilled leadership as representative, and therefore separated from the population had made open and 'inclusive' meetings out-dated and dysfunctional. To the extent that they were not viewed as suitable to 'effective decision making' processes, or to 'intricate' policy discussions.

As Holloway (2005) highlights, the public assembly, as an expressive form, tends to be structured horizontally. It encourages the free participation of everyone and aims to reach consensus in its decisions. This horizontality, encourages "the expression of people's concerns, whether or not they are 'revolutionary' or 'political'" (ibid. 172) and peoples suggestions whether or not they are 'skilled'. "Councils – continues Holloway (2005) - have been a characteristic feature of the current wave of urban struggle: not just of the neighbourhood councils of Argentina, but equally of some of the *piquetero* groups, of the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, of the *Centri Sociali* of Rome, Milan or Turin, of the

altermundista movement in general" (p172). As a form of organisation they differ substantially from the party, which is "conceived as a means to an end, the end of winning state power. In the council what is important is the effective articulation of collective self-determination; in the party, the important thing is to achieve a pre-determined goal" (Holloway 2010:40).

The fact that, although this was a distinctive feature also in CD, with partnership it has nevertheless declined is not surprising. Indeed, as John Holloway (2005:173) puts it, capital and the state are "the ever-repeated negation of the council" – i.e. the negation of people's self-determination. From their point of view public assemblies are not legitimate. Of course people are allowed to gather and share their opinions; but, as far as the assembly is informal (i.e. not located in a state/bureaucratic framework) the decisions that they eventually take have no recognised power - unless they have been validated a priori by the appropriate bodies, they count for very little indeed. It is for this reason that, according to Aine, many CD 'leaders' "went into policy too much and in the separation of the leadership from the roots instead of uniting the two". In other words the need to be recognised by the state generated an irreparable disconnection from the grassroots. However, if one wants to follow a CD approach, "you have to bring your leaders along and you can't have a gap in the middle; and the policies have to change from the bottom. A lot of [ordinary] people have been involved in policy work over here in St Michael's Estate" (Aine). In the present scenario assemblies constitute an important missing link between 'leaders' (or 'organic' intellectuals) and ordinary people. Their reintroduction can certainly contribute to the re-politicisation of CD.

In the following section I will illustrate how MSG and neighbourhood assemblies constituted the cornerstones of a 'micro' political sequence which took place in summer 2010 in the

south inner city of Dublin. Although this sequence neither attracted the curiosity of the mainstream media nor has it had visible repercussions at a national level, it nevertheless generated a rupture in the local service system, which is impossible to heal; at least in the consciousness of its protagonists, i.e. ordinary people who experimented with their capacity to autonomously organise and whose relation with the state and with each other may have altered significantly as a result.

6.3 Community First political sequence – outcome of CR's organic approach.

So, as I already mentioned, some (rare) local initiatives are starting to organise public consultation meetings and with a good turnout as I could personally ascertain in one of these events that was held in July 2010 in Nicholas of Myra community centre (south inner city).

As I will illustrate in this section, I consider this meeting to be an event of particular importance for the aims of this thesis. Indeed it is contextualised in a sort of micro political sequence whose principal points I will first resume. This sequence is not just significant for the fact that it constitutes an evidence of forms of bottom-up re-politicisation at local level, but also because it provides important elements to understand the ties to which CD is bound in a situation of neo-liberal partnership, and the possibilities it would have if only could liberate from those ties.

6.3.1.Reconstruction of the "Community First" political sequence

The background of this case is again Dublin's inner city and the austerity measures that the Irish state is imposing on the nation - which so far have particularly hit the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

For instance, the office of the minister responsible for drug task forces[29] was looking to reduce the budget. For the upcoming budget (at the time December 2010) they decided for a cut of the 10 %. As a means to implement this decision a letter was sent by the drug task force to every single project listing the cuts that would have been applied, including the redundancy of 2 family support workers positions, the drastic reduction of the community addiction training programme and cuts to the addiction services provided by about five different local projects. The letter also mentioned that projects had two weeks of time to appeal these decisions.

People were quite shocked by that verdict, their feeling being that "it was like to be dictated by a central office; as if you were working in a supermarket. You just got the memo when you were told what was happening and you were supposed to deal with that" (community activist)

[29] Drugs Task Forces were set up in 1997. They were developed to combat the threat from problem drug use throughout the country through the use of an area-based partnership approach between the statutory, voluntary & community sectors including public representatives. There are 10 regional and 14 local drugs task forces covering the Republic of Ireland. While Regional Drugs Task Forces operate from a wider geographic base than Local Drugs Task Forces, they follow the same principle operations. The Local Drug Task Forces were established to cover areas which statistically had higher rates of problematic drug use. Drug task forces composition is as follows: Chairperson (nominated by the Partnership, in consultation with the Task Force and the National Drugs Strategy Team); Statutory sector (Departments that participate in the DTF are Health Boards, Garda Síochána, FÁS, Probation & Welfare Service, Local Authorities, Youth Service, Education and Science, Social, Community and Family Affairs); Community sector (6 community representatives are nominated for each drug task force); Voluntary sector (one representative elected for each task force); Elected representatives (up to 4 local elected representatives are invited to formally participate in the work of the Task Forces).

Shortly after they got the letter, a number of local project managers gathered to discuss the situation. They decided that it was essential to call a public consultation meeting in order to inform the local community and especially service users about what was happening, and take a collective decision about what was to be done. They also decided that they would not enter in the appeal process because there had been no consultation with the community – which is fundamental in a CD type of logic.

The first public consultation meeting had a good attendance (~100), evidencing great responsiveness and concern by local residents. Attendees were community workers, service users, drug users and in general people who were involved in mutual support groups. It was clear that people were very surprised by the fact that the local drug task force (which they supposed should act in a supportive way in relation to local projects) was taking up the work of the government in terms of implementing the cuts.

Indeed their first demand was to directly talk with their representatives in the local drug task force, in order to know how they could possibly justify that attitude. In the South Inner city area there are 4 community representatives involved in the drug task force (DTF) and no one of them had made any contacts with any of the projects who were going to be affected by that decision. Another outcome of that meeting was the decision that local teams (independently from the field in which they operated) would act in solidarity, in order to avoid that individual projects would be picked off and targeted – which seemed to be the administration's strategy. The name Community First was finally given to this coalition of people and organisations fighting against cuts to drug services in the south inner city.

So Community First invited those community reps involved in DTF to another public meeting giving them two weeks' notice and sent a notification letter to the local DTF. As a response one community representative apologised that he could not go and the rest of them refused to attend the meeting not giving any excuse whatsoever. Since none of the 4 representatives attended the second public consultation meeting, during its course decisions were taken on what to do next independently from them. The idea to write another letter to the DTF requesting again a meeting with the community representatives was brought up.

After DTF answered that they were in the position neither to direct community representatives to meet anybody nor to decide with who they should meet, CF asked the permission to participate at the next DTF meeting itself, which they saw as the only possibility left to talk to them. As a response, a form was sent to CF people arguing that that was the process to be followed in order to be eventually admitted to their weekly meetings.

Above (chapter 5) I mentioned the fact that the south inner city DTF management is characterised by a corporate rather than a democratic style. After the closed and defensive attitude it had had in relation to CF, people started to perceive this organisation as even more undemocratic and detached from their problems.

So, at this point CF decided to write a letter to Minister Pat Carey asking to personally intervene because "we felt that local democracy was being foreclosed, that we did not have the possibility to engage with local democracy, that we had no access to our representatives". However, even this effort resulted ineffective – the letter got no answer - and therefore CF called a 3rd public meeting which is the last they have had to date.

At this third meeting people were hugely frustrated and this is where they finally took the decision to take to the streets and protest. A demonstration was scheduled for the upcoming DTF meeting. According to one activist "this is something unusual to happen at a local level, where issues tend to be resolved more diplomatically through community development channels. But we did not have the opportunity to do that and people were quite angry about that. Especially because it impacted directly their lives; because services like those which were going to be affected like community support and drug services literarily saved people's lives … with huge interventions in families etc. So huge things were at stake; *it was not just about the cuts and funding but it involved issues at human level, involving locals among which there was a very close bond over a period of time*" (activist).

So, at the 3rd assembly people took the decision that they would demonstrate outside the building where the upcoming DTF meeting was going to take place - in which community and state representatives were going to vote the cutbacks. Finally CF also decided to sign a petition, declaring that they would not vote their confidence to their community representatives.

The day of the protest people gathered very early in the morning at the DTF headquarter and they stayed there demonstrating during the entire meeting, which went along for about 3 hours. While waiting that DTF people would come back out, protesters were chanting slogans and singing satirical songs. CF had only one sympathetic person taking part to the DTF meeting and feeding back information on what was happening in it. According to his report, the DTF presented budget and planned cutbacks, and then they unanimously voted that the cuts should go through, except for two people who voted against. Cuts were applied to specific projects which were chosen on the basis that they were not considered to be

‘frontline’ services, i.e. services that directly engage with drug users (such as for example family support networks).

After the demonstration, DTF people expressed their condemnation of what had happened. They denounced that they had been afraid to get into their cars after the meeting was over, that they had felt abused and that they had never felt so scared in all their life, “almost as if they were going to be killed” (activist). However, people who took part to the demonstration “were mainly middle aged people who were attending family support: not there to kill anybody. Quite the opposite” (activist). Moreover, the HSE representative on the DTF and the general coordinator reported to the HSE (the project funder) that there was a ‘health and safety’ issue during their last meeting in the south inner city. They also argued that they could not carry out their work comfortably because they felt that they were under threat. As a result, some HSE workers who took part in the demonstration in solidarity were targeted as people who should not have been involved in it.

However a number of the drug services also put in train a legal process, calling for a review of the way in which drug task force representatives had conducted their work. Indeed, many raised an issue of conflicting interests, since people who had made the decisions about cuts, were also sitting on the board of management of projects that were not been cut. Therefore people’s suspicion was that they had signed cuts that definitely were going to protect their own services.

At the moment of writing this story, the results of CF struggle are still uncertain. However what count in my analysis (see next section) are not actual results but the political process, which as I will illustrate is itself an interesting outcome.

Indeed I will argue that the real success of a political procedure in a situation as the one I investigated derives from the degree of collective awareness and aspiration to change that it manages to spread among citizens, from the level of creativity that they deploy and from the eventual temporal duration or repercussion of the sequence. In a real political sequence this creativity/duration, does not exhaust with the meeting of a demand (cutbacks being stopped). And it is shaped by an energy that is shared, universal and not imposed by the top.

6.3.2 Analysis of the CF sequence (part 1): 'eventfulness' and subjective conditions

The events that I have been narrating in the previous section are quite rich of interesting nuances and supportive of some central arguments that I am articulating in this thesis. A first point is indeed that the austerity measures taken by the government are in some cases contributing to split the previous 'artificial' unity shaping both local groups and partnership institutions. As CF's case illustrates, these ruptures are breaking the very idea of a community "sector" and constitute opportunities for the emergence of new forms of politicisation. However, one should also notice that this politicisation is not just the simple consequence of 'objective' conditions. By themselves, historical facts such as the crisis, austerity measures, neglect, control, repression, the mounting bureaucratisation etc. do not constitute a guarantee for politics. Indeed politics - despite being situated in specific (objective) contexts - can just rely on subjective conditions that are independent from the state-of-the-situation. To put it in other words, politics is not just a matter of frustration for adverse material conditions, or a reaction to them. Politics, Badiou (cit. by Neocosmos 2007:66) argues "is not an opinion or a consciousness" about the state of affairs; but "it is a thought which fixes new possibilities"; it is a sort of "invention, irreducible to the state, to classes, to the management of the social, to power" (ibid. p66).

This disconnection between 'objective conditions' and politics is particularly evident in Ireland, which despite being one of the European countries that were hit the most by the crisis – with disastrous consequences for the lives of ordinary people – it was also amongst those who responded more passively to it. On the other hand, this disconnection was also highlighted by recent events in Arab Countries, which clearly show that a political process can suddenly kick off even in places where sociological analysis would have argued the opposite due to the absence of objective (economic) conditions and for reasons related with authoritarianism, political culture, religion etc..

In my view, in order to fully understand the singularity of the CF sequence one has to, on one hand admit that the austerity measures to certain extent contributed to change many people's perception of the situation. On the other hand however, it is fundamental to recognise that its subjective conditions exceeded the crisis and the cuts. In my view these subjective conditions are - as always - quite random and 'eventful' – in no way they can be artificially produced or forecast; but in this case they are also related to (or facilitated by) the organisational work that groups such as Community Response have conducted along the years in that neighbourhood through their 'services' and 'networks' (City Wide) - at an adequate distance from the state and faithful to an 'organic' approach to CD. Indeed, it is not a coincidence that such a singular expression of people's collective will took place in that form, in that specific area and not elsewhere. According to a CF activist the reason why so many people were involved in organising collective resistance to the cuts "is because through their participation in mutual support groups and peer to peer education they had a personal experience in community development organisation". In other words, a grassroots political consistency was already present in the neighbourhood thanks to the way in which the common struggle

against heroin and other issues related to deprivation was organised. The cutbacks just constitute the 'trigger' of an exceptional event, i.e. the rupture in the system of local representation, and the perception/performance of this rupture by local residents. This accidental event opened up new possibilities; i.e. it provided the existing grassroots consistency with the opportunity to take a further step in its development.

Thus, the decisive event here is not the economic situation in itself (the crisis, the cuts), i.e. something that simply 'happens' in the realm of the state and the economy. But it is something that interrupts the chain of domination and in doing so sensibly changes people's subjectivity, their way to be in the world. In this case the unpredictable Event, the rupture, happened at the intersection of the crisis and the subjective work carried out by CR.

In my view it is important to recognise and emphasise that this day by day organisational effort was precedent to the cuts; i.e. it was courageously carried out in a phase such as the Celtic Tiger where independent organisation was the last concern for most of the people in this country – including many CD activists who were more focused in obtaining recognition (formal and material) by the elites. Even more decisively, this effort was not just carried out in a representative fashion (as political parties and NGOs would eventually do), but by ordinary people in first person. This consistency was therefore the result of people's engagement in the transformation of their relations with each other and in the self-transformation of each one of them through critical thinking ("using their own creativity in developing their ability in social analysis" as an activist puts it) and through a collective assumption of responsibility in relation to the situation on a daily life basis.

6.3.3 Rupture with representation

As I remarked previously, during the CF sequence, more than the protest itself, general meetings played a fundamental role by providing an egalitarian space where the process could evolve in a non-representative fashion. The second CF meeting is particularly significant in this sense; "*everyone who wants to speak can speak*" was the opening remark. This might sound quite obvious or naïve to people who believe freedom of speech to be a consolidated feature of our democracies. However, meeting attendees were people who many academics would describe as 'the underclass'; i.e. people who in Dublin share specific living conditions (generally in council estates where rates of unemployment are high) and who are stigmatised (in some cases racialised – see Chapter 7) – their desires and their thoughts meaning nothing for the rest of the population. In a famous paper titled "Can the Subaltern speak?" Spivak (1994) concluded that he can not. What does this enigmatic statement mean? Of course subaltern people can *talk*, they can have their 'opinions', as long as these opinions have no resonance in the way the situation is officially described and organised. According to Spivak (1994), there is a fundamental difference between 'speaking' and 'talking'. In a political process such as the one I am describing here, to speak means, as Badiou (2007) would put it, to contribute to the construction of a truth process; it means to prescribe an idea to the state of the situation. This is very different from giving one's 'opinion' and from 'participating' in a frame – say local governance – as defined by the power players. As Zikode (2009) highlights "what is called 'engagement' or 'public participation' is often just a kind of instruction, sometimes even a threat. Many times it is done in such a way that all possibilities for real discussion and understanding are closed from the start. In these cases what is called engagement is really just a way for the state to pretend to be democratic when in reality all decisions are already taken and taken far away from poor people". In this context 'engagement', 'participation', 'opinion' etc. do not escape the logic of representation. The

statement that “everyone who wants to speak can speak”, which opened the second CF meeting is therefore not so naïve as it seems. To speak here means to challenge the neo-liberal ideology of participation.

The importance of this (second) meeting resides in the fact that on one hand it is in this framework that CF was constituted as a concretisation of the decisive rupture between DTF, community representatives and ordinary residents/ community workers. This rupture is so significant because it took place *within* the ‘sector’ – i.e. within the governance body which presented itself as unitary and coherent. It developed along the border between bureaucrats and non-bureaucrats, between people’s independent thought and the state. The realisation of this rupture had the effect to shock some of the meeting attendees, who came up with consternated cries such as “the [DTF] budget ignores the people who use the services!”; and “the DTF is completely out of touch with what is happening on the ground”; and “how can it be that community people are trying to screw other community people” – which by the way exposes the idea of ‘community people’ to its ideological vagueness. The fact that community representatives were not present contributed to reinforce this rupture; “I don’t even know if they are interested; if they were, they would be here” argued an attendee.

So, this specific meeting constitutes the scenario of a collective awareness rising on the fact that something got ‘broken’ in the representative mechanism of local community governance. As I said previously, it is in this sudden illuminating of a situation and showing new possibilities that reside the centrality of the event in a political process. However, the consolidation of this awareness was not immediate, since the truth of the situation was made invisible by the participation ideology, by the idea of a homogeneous and solid ‘community people’, ‘sector’ etc.

Indeed, the first reaction to the fact that "we were betrayed by our representatives" (meeting attendee) was the wish to elect new representatives. The idea that what needed to be challenged was state-dependency itself and that autonomy should be reinforced was not affirmed immediately, but emerged progressively.

The elevation of the level of political awareness is attested by the fact that although the meeting was devoted to the theme 'fight against the cutbacks', discussion quickly developed into something more articulated than just a simple outrage/denunciation of the state's financial hostility. Cutbacks are undoubtedly a central issue for CD in the present phase, but also a 'superficial' one, as I contended in Chapter 5. The 'real' underlying issue goes far deeper than that and touches the relation between CD and the state, which is not at all limited to financial agreements, but involves ties that compromise CD's egalitarian capacity. Interestingly, at a certain point during the meeting the idea that "the situation demands a *political* response" was put forward. And this idea was supported by many remarkable statements made by people from the local community, such as "we have to change the way the state thinks", or "people should be involved in the decisions that concern their own lives", which, by the way, is a fundamental principle of CD. These declarations lead to a definitive misrecognition of the community representatives' representativeness as well as to the decision to organise a real protest.

6.3.4 Mechanisms of depoliticisation

As I anticipated previously a further element that I consider worth to analyse in this case is that it shows that the system of local democracy - so called partnership, or local governance - not only interdicts the 'participatory' process that it ideologically affirms to facilitate, but it

also shows that decision making is only apparently decentralised and inclusive. These ambivalences are functional to mechanisms of reproduction of a depoliticised situation which governance - on behalf of the state - constantly deploys - especially in popular contexts - in order to undermine people's capacity to independently organise.

In CF's case, forms of interdiction were clearly applied when people started to politicise and to organise outside what activists refer to as "the usual channels" – i.e. when the voice of ordinary people started to 'count' within a real political procedure, over which 'representatives' did not have any control. At this point the reaction of the state bureaucracy was to create boundaries that ordinary people could not overcome and to delegitimize any process of organisation that was unsupervised by the state. I am referring here to the way in which people's participation in DTF meetings was prevented; or to the way in which representatives deserted the consultation meetings called by the community without giving any justification whatsoever.

This is how a CF activist describes this sudden closure of 'usual channels': "we [CF] discussed what was happening locally and what issues we wanted to bring up to the DTF and we tried to set up the usual mechanism [of participation], but there are some older organisations there [that have a sort of hegemony within the partnership] which tend to tie things to bureaucracy and to be paranoid. And they feel that something open and inclusive is a threat in some way". This sort of bureaucratic self-defensiveness traces a visible boundary between politics and the state. Indeed when an issue is political one can neither expect openness from the state, nor can one expect that it recognises independent forms of organisation around that issue as 'legitimate'.

As an activist argues “the meeting for us was not the scapegoat for community workers but it was a means to *understand who our reps were*. And we realised that there was some fear there; they were afraid to come to our meetings”. This is because a political meeting takes always place at a certain distance from the state; i.e. in a space where the presence of the state is interdicted. Representatives’ fear was therefore fear to engage in an egalitarian confrontation with ordinary people; as well as fear to be ‘punished’ by the state for having overcome the boundaries that it had built in the situation in order to depoliticise it. Moreover, when a political procedure is on, it is impossible for one individual to maintain at the same time his ‘institutional’ position and its political subjectivity. It is impossible in other words to be state and subject of politics at the same time. As Alain Badiou highlights in such a situation, if one individual wants to become a subject, he has to take a clear decision, which involves a certain amount of courage. “Nietzsche’s imperative, ‘become who you are’, finds a worthy echo here. If one is to become a subject, it is because one isn’t one yet. The ‘who’ that you are, as subject, is nothing but the decision to become this subject” (Badiou 2003:73)

Therefore –concludes a community activist - “it is always better if [at political meetings, protests etc.] there are people who are ‘community people’ [who do not have anything to lose] and not workers [state bureaucrats], because a worker at the end of the day has always to report back to its agency and he has restrictions”.

As it happened with CF, the depoliticising power of state bureaucracy can manifest itself as criminalisation of dissent; i.e. a sort of bureaucratic ‘terrorism’ aimed to inhibit people’s facility to decide to become subjects of a political sequence. In our case this mirrored in attitudes such as open condemnation, pinpointing of individuals as responsible for what was happening, groundless accusations of violence, use of a ‘health and safety’ type of rhetoric

(which, as we know, is applied when meaningful reasons to forbid are lacking), and so on. By the way, the stunningly limited capacity by the institutions (for example DTF) to tolerate conflict shows how influenced the situation is by the climate of consensus that was produced during the Celtic Tiger.

To conclude the analysis of this micro-experience of CD re-politicisation at a local level I would like to emphasise a point that was discussed at a public meeting jointly organised by the Provisional University[30] and CF in Dublin (03/11/2010). Namely that what other community groups can learn from this experience cannot be grasped in terms of a more or less successful 'model'. The political processes that I analyse in this thesis are experimental, embedded in specific localities, and always ambiguous in their outcomes. I consider them to be not a 'model' for transformation to be applied universally, but rather as an example of what CD is capable of when it undertakes paths of autonomy and critical self-reflexivity. The CF case constitutes also a sign of the fact that - despite the passivity showed by the Irish society after the economic downturn - something may be slowly starting to move in the urban 'underground'.

Moreover, when we deal with politics, a 'model' can not be deemed as a good in itself. Indeed a successful model could be exported to other contexts (say other neighbourhoods in Dublin) but still not work. This is because models do not entail any 'magic' potential in themselves. Struggles for emancipation are always embedded in concrete situations; and a singular politics is just thinkable from the point of view of the concrete situation in which it develops, i.e. from the point of view of the subjects who are involved. As a community activist remarked, in each concrete situation "you have to literarily invent something else and

[30] PU is an independent, Dublin based students organisation promoting autonomous education and resistance to the neoliberalisation of the University.

not repeat old patterns. It is hard because you have to try and re-imagine all this". This brings us back to the 'nature' of politics, which, as I described it in the theoretical chapter, is to be singular, sequential and always sustained by the subjective creativity of the people who are involved in it.

Therefore what I find worth to be 'exported' from this Community First experience is the aspiration to develop a non-representative type of politics in which ordinary people can think for themselves without anyone to do it on their behalf. A politics in which through their collective involvement in issues that affect them, people can actually develop independent critical analysis and recognise that the structures that are supposed to 'include' them (such as for example drug task forces, methadone clinics and so on) can contribute to the reproduction of their 'disempowerment'. This would not have been possible without the 'organic' efforts by CR, especially in terms of MSG and the capacity that this form of organisation has to generate collective consistency in poor areas.

Indeed - as Holloway (2005:173) highlights - an important way to produce political processes and push autonomy as far as possible is that of working in order to create an environment that is more favourable to it. What any particular group can achieve in terms of independence clearly "depends on the strength of an entire movement pushing in the same or similar directions. The strength of the component groups depends on the strength of the movement, just as the strength of the movement depends on the strength of the component groups" (Holloway 2005:175). This strength in the case of CD corresponds to the will and capacity by every single group or project to break with the logic of representation and to catalyse spontaneous ruptures and events that are difficult to integrate into the texture of domination

(i.e. state & capital). This could help a fragmented CD ‘sector’ to exit the present impasse and liberate from overwhelming forms of state normativity and control.

7. CD AND YOUTH. THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF CD

After having discussed bureaucratisation, professionalization and latent political events in the field of CD it is now time to address a problem that in my view is at the root of the crisis affecting this movement at present. I am referring to the 'youth issue' or the 'generational gap', i.e. the lack of a new generation of activists engaging with CD politically. As I have mentioned previously, CD is now 'aging' and it is difficult for older activists to face current challenges. There is a desperate need for young people wanting to take charge and fight for CD. In the first part of this chapter (section 7.1) I will address the problem of the failure of a new generation of politically engaged CD activists and leaders to emerge. Why, I will ask, a movement that since the beginning was so concerned with the politicisation and awareness rising among underprivileged young people found itself in this condition of generational stand by? Research shows that this problem is related to three main issues, including (a) the charisma of Tony Gregory and his group, which generated processes of delegation and demobilisation; (b) professionalization/bureaucratisation, which created a generation of middle class professionals who are both little prone to struggle and just 'sympathetic' with the context in which they found themselves working; (c) but even more crucial, the ambivalent approach to youth that CD is displaying at the moment – whose ideology is condensed in the notion of 'anti-social behaviour'. This approach, I will argue, prevents a meaningful relation between activists and underprivileged young people to be built. For finding it hard to politically relate to 'working class' youth, CD tends to fail in reproducing itself as a political subject.

In section 7.2, with the purpose of critically addressing the ambiguities that characterise CD's approach to youth I will investigate the places in which CD concretely relates itself to young people. At a formal level the two main youth related institutions are youth clubs and Community Policing Fora. I will show how in both cases the approach to youth is informed by an 'anti-social' behaviour ideology which tends to criminalise young people and articulate

the question of their development in terms of management, (crime) prevention, diversion and control. Very little positivity can be found in this perspective. The CPF case is of particular interest to this thesis because it constitutes a partnership version of previous forms of community self-policing which were political and independent from the state. In their practice the idea of anti-social behaviour was absent: given the conditions in which community self-policing developed it did not make sense.

CPF's (and youth work's) policing approach and their actual collaboration with the police are very problematic elements in my view. Indeed underprivileged neighbourhoods in Dublin are shaped by a particularly tense (not to say antagonistic) relation between youth and the Gardaí – with young people being targeted, harassed and racialised in their day to day life. In section 7.3 I will illustrate how this discrimination and targeting of underprivileged young people works. Ethnographic research done at CPF sessions is used to support my arguments. Among other ideas, I will highlight the notion of 'scum', which has racialising effects on working class (especially young) people, playing a central role in dismissing them. To support this idea I will do a parallel with the notion of 'racaille' ("scum" in French) used by Sarkozy to tag young people living in underprivileged neighbourhoods in the outskirt of Paris. This was eventually followed by the Banlieue unrests in 2005. In section 7.4 episodes of juvenile insubordination such as those which in Dublin culminated with the 2006 Riot will be interpreted as a response by youth to injustice and discrimination. To conclude (7.5) I will critically address the ineffectiveness of CD to meaningfully deal with such events - and more in general with young people's rage and latent desires. I will suggest that in order to overcome the impasse (which is in large part 'generational') CD should return to its 'organic' approach and get meaningfully involved in ordinary people's struggles - like those informally carried out by underprivileged young people.

7.1 The youth issue (i.e. the problem of leadership)

I previously mentioned the fact that an important point for CD activists has always been the need to counter what they perceived as a sort of 'colonial' condition shaping the inner city's underprivileged neighbourhoods. In their view, the lack of a local leadership was an important aspect of that problem. Therefore they saw the training of young people who could actually have a say on the way in which local projects and facilities were managed as a possible solution. In this spirit they started to develop institutions which could both supply the lack of recreational facilities for young people in the inner city and be the place where a new generation of 'leaders' could be trained and politicised. As Lisa refers about a group of activists operating in the Summerhill area in the early 1970s, for example, "they wanted to develop some activities for young people in a flat complex; but the grounding idea was to develop local leadership. It was about trying to involve local young people and develop their leadership skills so that they might be able to come through and be the people who are running these facilities; because all over the years professionals have always come from the outside to run services. And the idea of CD is that local young people should be given the opportunity to develop skills in order to be not only service users but to become leaders" (Lisa). This strategy follows an 'inner city style' CD approach to the extent that – as we have seen in Chapter 5 – it involves the creation of an institution (a youth project in this case) aimed not just to service provision, but also to the production of a collective political consistency around it. For example an early purpose of the North Central Community Council (NCCC – see Chapter 2) was to gain local control of summer projects for young people in the area. Indeed the Catholic Youth Association (CYC) had the monopoly of funding in that field. Changing this situation involved a "long drawn out conflict between NCCC (including some of its constituent groups such as Sackville Street Tenants'

Association, North Wall Tenants' Association), Dublin Corporation and the CYC. A major breakthrough came when Sackville Tenants' Association was given the contract by Dublin Corporation to run the summer projects (Kelleher & Whelan 1992:28).

In relation to the allusion that Lisa makes to the notions of 'leader' and 'leadership', it should be emphasized that with them she does not mean a tiny group of charismatic and skilled people being able to influence and lead the rest of the local population. To certain extent such a group already existed in the inner city. It was composed by people like Tony Gregory who had a strong political and ideological background and a history of engagement in popular struggles. The notion of leadership here is not an elitist one. As Lisa puts it "the idea that became central in CD was that *young people should assume the leadership*" (Lisa); thus meaning a 'popular leadership', with the idea of 'young people' being transversal, indicating all the youth (i.e. the future adults) and not just a part of it.

Despite the fact that along the decades CD has set up many youth projects managing to obtain good levels of attendance by local young people, by analyzing the present state of affairs in CD it is clear that the plan to create a new generation of 'leaders' has not been really successful. Indeed, as Lisa highlights "if you look at the leadership now it is still an old generation, and young people with few exceptions have not come through". The Community First initiative itself (see chapter 6) was mainly composed by middle aged people. This is a problem that CD activists are aware of and which they find it hard to deal with; especially in a phase such as the present, which is shaped by the implementation of austerity measures involving cutbacks and restrictions to CD. Activists agree that resistance to these attacks would be much more effective if fresh energies and thoughts were present. However, this is not the case. Just a few young activists are actually ready to 'fight' for CD. In my view, there are three main (interrelated) reasons for this 'generational' impasse. I will present them in historical order.

(a) The first reason is the almost mythological aura that has been constructed around some historical leaders. Indeed it is well known that activists like Tony Gregory acquired a huge symbolic value for people living in the inner city and beyond. Tony is remembered by everyone as a champion of the people. There is a belief that after his death no one will ever be able to replace him: "it's the people's loss. There will never be another Tony Gregory" declared Christy Burke (2009) after he passed away. This charisma, as we have seen in Chapter 3 has produced processes of delegation. "It was almost like… the group around him became seen as they were the *community leaders responsible for anybody else*" (Lisa). Under this condition, CD became dependent on the performance of leaders operating *on behalf of the population*, with the result to demobilise ordinary people. Indeed "people are not getting involved in politics and I think it may be because there is such an charismatic group of community leaders, because they have such a 'success'; and people do not feel the need to get involved; they do not feel encouraged to get involved" (Lisa).

In the 1980s this reputation resonated in the unprecedented electoral success of Tony Gregory, which in this sense can be interpreted as ambivalent: it contributed to CD's shift towards state-politics; and it made a single community candidate responsible for the emancipation of 'his' people. Evidently both these tendencies clash with the political innovations that had been introduced by CD since the end of the 1960s.

This depoliticising trend continued along the years and it is not surprising that the majority of today's recognised leaders are still those who came up in the 1970s. Although their charisma still enables them to captivate the mature part of the population[31], they fail to meaningfully relate themselves to young people, who are not showing much interest to get involved – if not in a very 'practical' way or as 'service-users'. Amongst other aspects this is due to a sort of

[31] It is not a case that Maureen O'Sullivan (grounding her electoral campaign on the idea that she is the 'Gregory Candidate') got recently elected as independent TD.

generational/cultural gap that CD people find difficult to overcome. Indeed in Claire's view "old leaders find it harder to engage with young people than it was in the 70s because today people have passed through different life experiences, including wealth and related things which were absent before" (Claire). After the economic boom young people have started to see wealth and consumer goods all around them; they have been sold the message that there are opportunities for everybody out there - and an infinite range of choices. But reality is that many underprivileged young people have been excluded from this wealth and their choices are still seriously limited. This makes the experience of 'being young' quite different than it was in the 1970s; and old leaders are unprepared to deal with this 'anthropological' transformation. Thus the remoteness of CD leaders "from the everyday lives of young people is partly to blame for their inability to relate to and understand how young people view their world. It is also the measurements that are used to gauge political awareness that are the problem" (Vernell 2010:29). In order to deal with this problem some 'emergency measures' are starting to be deployed by aware activists. William, for example, is involved in the production of a new piece of work using drama, trying to get young people "to talk about life experiences and issues that affect them in the area - so that they can at least start to debate them collectively". However, this process is not immediate "and there is going to be a generation gap even if they start taking action now" (Lisa).

2-The second reason why a new generation of activists failed to emerge is professionalisation; i.e. the fact that with the advent of governance partnership many young people joined the movement as professional workers. Many of them came from other areas of the city, having eventually studied social work at the university, which gave them many theoretical ideas and little knowledge of the local reality. The involvement of professional workers has also produced a sort of fragmentation, with people coming and going, preventing long term engagement with the local population. Previously "a lot of the old community

activists who emerged, who were educated and empowered, would have stayed in their communities". Instead, with professionalisation "you would have people coming from the university staying and leaving creating sorts of gaps and vacuums in the spaces; and this has constituted a weakness in CD developing local leadership" (Seamus). Moreover there is also a question of understanding and empathy involved. Indeed "you would have much more middle class people coming into the sector, who would neither necessarily have an empathy with the people who they were actually working with; nor understanding where CD emerged from". So, whereas before there was a lot of history and understanding of where CD came from "with the introduction of paid professionals this understanding and this attachment were not obvious anymore" (Seamus).

From these actors one can not expect that they take charge of CD's struggles - as someone who is seriously committed to CD politics would actually do. Indeed to directly engage with marginalised people and create a CD 'organic' type of approach is not something straight forward; "you have to be able to sit with them, to listen to them and then start organising from the point of view of their own experience and so you can actually generate change. Life experiences have changed but that has not changed. What is needed is still someone who knocks on doors, who gathers people around a cup of tea and get them to talk. (…) So, the problem is that we stopped doing what we were doing and look what happened" (Claire).

This 'activist' attitude described by Maura in this quote would be particularly useful in the current phase where technical/professional skills tend to become marginal, compared to other more fundamental political urgencies. As (Carl) highlights, "the old generation of leaders has dealt with this type of problems in first person. But they are now getting retired and in the meantime no one got used to take real political decisions". The professionalization process has contributed to the creation of gaps which are now difficult to fill: "many of those people

are now 60 years of age so there is a gap and there are no people in their 20s who are ready to take over" (Lisa).

7.2 CD's relation to youth

The first two causes (representation and professionalization) of what I have defined as a 'generational issue' affecting CD were broadly discussed from different points of view in previous chapters. The third cause tightly relates with the first two, but since it refers to more recent scenarios its description is less straight forward. In my view it corresponds to an ambiguous (conceptual and practical) approach to youth that CD has developed in recent times and which is articulated through the idea of 'anti-social behaviour'. This conception, I will argue, is problematic because it is grounded in a state-rhetoric, which is uncritical and depoliticised, preventing CD activists to set the basis for a meaningful engagement with young people, one that could eventually lead to a solution of the generational problem and perhaps the broader crisis affecting CD.

In order to understand the ambiguities that currently characterise CD's approach to youth it is essential to explore the places in which CD concretely relates itself to youth. At a formal / institutional level there are two main such institutions in Dublin, namely youth clubs and Community Policing Fora (CPF).

7.2.1 Youth Clubs

On what concerns youth projects, I find it easy to pinpoint their ambivalences. To start with - as I argued previously – it is easy to understand why they did not become the 'leadership workshops' for which they were thought initially. Indeed in Dublin it is difficult to find a youth project whose primary goal is – to put it with Schott-Myrhe (2007) - the liberation of the youth and adults who are involved. In my view the principal cause of this lack is to be

ascribed to the fact that youth projects operate as places of sociality, diversion, prevention and control utterly devoid of political ambitions. This is deducible from the type of activities that they offer and from the rhetoric that organisers tend to display.

It is important to highlight the fact that as such, notions of 'youth project' and 'youth work' are quite neutral and do not say much about aims and objectives and the ideological horizon in which they are articulated. However, as Schott-Myhre (2007:21) points out, "the role of the youth worker is constituted at the intersection of a number of cultural discourses" which are typical of the historical-social situation in which his activity takes place. Currently "many of these [discourses] have to do with the marginalization, categorization, normalizing, pathologizing and de-politicizing of youth. Others have to do with the construction of 'truth regimes' and 'disciplines' displayed in discourses about professionalization, maturation, progress, rationality, science, medicine, expertise and social control (…) the identity of the youth worker is comprised of these intersecting discourses that affect their descriptions of themselves, their roles and how they come to understand their relationship to the youth they serve" (Schott-Myhre 2007:21).

Also in Dublin youth work is informed and sustained by different types of ideologies and discourses. In my view, amongst them, the hegemonic one[32] rotates around the idea that youth work is a means to *divert* those engaged in *anti-social behaviour* onto other avenues of *legitimate* activity – which are normally lacking in poor communities affected by unemployment, early school living and lack of leisure infrastructures.

Statements like "we need to keep young people busy and off the streets" (Peter), show how in reality youth work is embraced as a sort of *extension of policing* in terms of crime prevention and control. The relation youth-work/policing is not just metaphorical. The level of

[32] I am obviously referring to investigated areas in Dublin.

collaboration between youth projects and the police is particularly high in Dublin. For example, Community Policing Fora (see section *7.2.2*) are formally linked to both the Gardaí and local youth projects, a great portion of the activity they do involving efforts to "divert those engaging in so called 'anti-social behaviour' into youth groups or community groups as a means of preventing further offending" (Connolly 1997:24). Or think about the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme which involves youth workers and specially trained Gardaí called Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers. The Programme is designed to divert young people who came to the notice of the Garda from committing further offences. Curiously enough, to be admitted to the program the child must accept responsibility for his or her criminal behaviour.

The policing function carried out by CD youth projects and their actual relation to the police apparatus is extremely problematic in my view. As I will argue in section 7.4, based on personal observations, Dublin's deprived neighbourhoods are characterised by a particularly tense (not to say antagonistic) relation between youth and the police – with young people being targeted, harassed and racialised on a daily basis. What both CD activists and police officers define as 'anti-social behaviour' frequently consists in acts of rebelliousness against a situation of oppression felt at grassroots level. To treat this problem as a simple matter of 'lack of education', 'subculture', 'deviancy' or 'crime' is misleading and dangerous. To be sure this attitude moves CD away from the solution of its 'generational problem'.

A major consequence of this policing and 'diversion' approach is that youth projects tend not to critically discuss the situation with young people. Youth crimes are constantly re-conducted to a behavioural problem; as if being involved in a crafts workshop instead of hanging out in the streets could really constitute a meaningful solution to the problem at stake here. Indeed the way youth workers work with young people most of the times follows what Martin (community artist/ youth worker) calls an "educational convention" involving

“outcome expectations” in terms of “learning skills” and “being able to measure them”. Thus for young people the choice is reduced to “whether to buy into it or not... and this does not realise their potential”.

As Lisa highlights, in youth centres young people “are involved in practical activities but not in the understanding of why there are issues affecting their communities”. The problem is that currently the main objective of youth projects seems to be that to occupy young people’s free time, to ‘entertain’ them in ways that are not harmful, but without proposing any meaningful intellectual or political alternative to rage, depression and self-destruction. On the other hand, youth workers operate as state agents; to the extent that as Thomas says “they constantly categorise” young people. By doing so they reinforce their identitarian position (their belonging to a subculture etc.) instead of exploring their potentialities beyond the (non-)place they occupy in society. This reproduces a paternalistic type of approach that does not attempt to generate a genuine alliance between adults and youth. “So it’s hard to understand, because there is a lot of activity in our projects, a lot of leadership training etc., but it becomes very focused on doing works in the projects and they are not getting involved in politics” (Lisa).

Obviously here the point is not to evaluate youth centres and youth work from a social/ educational point of view. My critiques go beyond the nevertheless sincere and valuable effort that is put on a daily basis by many people working in these institutions. My point here is political. My aim is to address the question of why youth projects failed in producing a new generation of politically organised citizens which was a primary goal for CD when it came to being in the inner city of Dublin. The answer in my view is that youth work is almost entirely captured by state-procedures. As Scott-Myhre (2004:17) puts it “youth work is permeated with this sense of powerlessness. The disciplinary edge of youth work with its rules, diagnostic categories, therapies, spaces of containment/confinement and over coded

descriptions of youth have constructed edifices of capture which constantly seem to overtake and render impotent any effort to crack their surface".

On what concerns Community Policing Fora (CPF) the argument is similar but a bit more complex. Indeed CPF do not directly deal with youth. personally I have never seen a young people at a CPF session. However, 'youth' seems to be their main concern. In my view CPF play a central ideological role in the way in which both CD and the state represent young people. More concretely, CPF are sites where a discourse is produced and reproduced according to which underprivileged young people mainly constitute a problem of *anti-social behaviour* management. As we will see, this discourse plays a key role in depoliticising CD's relation to young people. Since CPF are a relatively recent experiment in CD organisation I will give a bit of background to them.

7.2.2 Background to CPF

The overall project started in 1997 when the inter-Agency Drugs Project (IADP) and the Inner City Organisation Network (ICON) proposed the establishment of a 'Community Policing and Estate Management Forum' (hereafter the Community Policing Forum) to the North Inner City Drugs Task Force. It was agreed that the CPF, following a partnership type of approach, would involve local residents in the north-east inner city, public representatives and representatives from the local Drugs Task Force, ICON, an Garda Síochána and Dublin City Council. The general aim of the CPF would be to enable these parties to "develop a co-ordinated strategy in response to drug dealing and drug-related anti-social behaviour in the north inner city" (Connolly 2002). The original Board, which was established in April 1999 consisted of a Chairman, TD Tony Gregory; the Chairman of the local Drugs Task Force, Fergus McCabe; a local community representative, Tony Dunleavy; who is also a member of the local Drugs Task Force and is involved in anti-drugs groups, two Garda Inspectors, Frank

Clerkin and Jim Cannon; and a representative from Dublin City Council, Jim Beggan (Connolly 2002). A co-ordinator was also appointed (CD activist Marie Metcalfe), to bridge between the local community the Garda and Dublin City Council.

After about seven months of preparation which involved the holding of approximately 17 Board meetings and 52 local community meetings and the distribution of four and a half thousand explanatory leaflets the first introductory meeting of the CPF was held on the 15th of December 1999 at Store Street Garda station – which was attended by over 50 local residents (Connolly 2002).

Officially, CPF meetings are aimed to provide local residents with the opportunity to raise matters of local concern to relevant state agencies and to allow these agencies to respond to those concerns and to account for their activities since the previous CPF meeting. Eventually agreement can be reached between state agencies and local residents as to future actions to be taken in relation to issues affecting the area. As it is officially stated, the general purpose of CPF meetings is to "provide the community and the state agencies with an opportunity to identify and address the local drug problem and related *anti-social behaviour* in a coordinated way". All this, they say, constitutes an unprecedented opportunity for people to influence the way in which issues are prioritised by the police forces on behalf of the state.

The formal aims of the CPF are:

1. To reduce local fears and address concerns in relation to drug dealing and associated anti-social behaviour.
2. To improve communication between the Community and an Garda Síochána in relation to drug dealing.
3. To assist in the resolution of difficulties between the Gardaí and the Community in relation to drug dealing.

4. To improve communication between Dublin City Council and local residents groups and to encourage the development of new residents groups.
5. To promote community development, particularly in relation to the drug problem and
6. To improve the quality of life for local residents. (Connolly 2002:6)

In order to understand how this project could be implemented so quickly and with such a good consensus in traditionally police-hostile Dublin inner city areas one has to go back to the historical roots of community-policing in Ireland.

7.2.3 Roots of community policing in Ireland

CPF are considered by many CD activists as a great innovation in the field of community development. At first sight this might sounds controversial. Indeed it is well known that inner city communities never had a good relation with the police. The way in which issues are prioritised by the police on a daily basis tends to enhance this hostility. I am thinking about, for example, police officers harassing street traders of fruit and vegetables (a quite typical scene in the city centre) and allowing heroin dealers to carry on their business undisturbed. But I am also referring to 'lines' of police men protecting middle class night life spots such as Temple Bar - and harassing working class kids (hoodies), who are not welcome in these areas of the city. Or think about the management of traffic and parking spaces in the inner city, where poor neighbourhoods are frequently used as dumping areas for touristic buses etc.

Nevertheless, by considering the social, historical and political roots of community policing in Ireland one can guess why CPF exist and why it was not so difficult to involve ordinary people in their implementation. On the other hand, for community self-policing has independent and anti-state origins, one can also guess why the state could be interested in the development of (and participation to) such a project.

CPF can be considered as a sort of partnership version of previous forms of community self-policing, an activity that has a wide tradition in Ireland, especially in poor communities that were systematically excluded by the post-colonial state. Many of these communities have developed over time forms of organisation to combat youth alienation, levels of violence against women and children and the threat of drugs - which involved the transfer of control over policing away from the state and its localisation it in the community. So, one could argue that community self-policing in Ireland comes from the need "for a marginalized and neglected community to develop and utilize its own resources in order to maintain cohesion" (Connolly 1997).

In Dublin the main example of community self-policing (one that in my view had a huge influence on the development of CPF) were Concerned Parents Against Drugs (CPAD, see also Chapter 2.), who organised as a response to the heroin epidemic of the 1980s. The CPAD movement can be described as a highly sophisticated community-based self-policing initiative: "its local network system of information coupled with the fact that *it was not tied to the state* were its principal strengths" (ibid. p31). Independency was a particularly emphasised since residents "were prepared to provide information to the CPAD on condition that it would not be passed on to the Gardaí" (ibid. p31). CPAD was temporarily successful to stem the heroin epidemic, whereas the state, due to a combination of inability and lack of interest had failed. Faced with containment mechanisms, exclusion and injustice "communities (…) have organised their own truth finding procedure" (Connolly 1997:24). There are many examples of community self-policing organisations in and outside Ireland. Comparable developments can be found in Nicaragua, in Palestine, in the townships of South Africa under the apartheid regime, and in the areas held today by the Zapatistas of Mexico (ibid. p22).

Traditionally community self-policing in Dublin has been carried out by several non-state organisations[33] performing preventive or diversionary roles in the policing activity. In recent years the Inner City Organisations Network (ICON) has performed a central role in identifying the policing requirements of Dublin's marginalised communities. Considering the central role it played in the constitution of CPF, one could argue that ICON has acted as a sort of bridge between this new 'partnership' model and previous autonomous forms of community self-policing.

Indeed it should be emphasised the way in which CPF differentiate themselves and break with the old approach. By following a governance partnership approach they involve formal collaboration and alliance with the state – which was not present before. This alliance produced substantial changes in the conception and the practice of community-policing, with the police playing now a central role in the process. In my view, this shift had huge historical implications in the inner city, since it broke a sort of taboo.

Indeed one of the problems that the CPF had to deal with initially was to get people to actually talk to the police. It was hard to bypass the hostility and distrust that inner city residents have in relation to the Gardaí. As Connolly (1997) suggests, policing in the Republic maintained a number of colonial features. After independence – he argues - "only the membership altered" (pp.60). Moreover, Garda members were predominantly from rural Ireland having little familiarity with – and sympathy for – Dublin's working classes. Although today the situation has changed, the attitude of the police towards the urban poor has remained ambiguous, alternating the use of force with lack of care.

On what concern the youth issue (which is what interests the most here), the shift from autonomous community self-policing to a CPF model involved a *shift in terms of how youth*

[33] In nationalist neighbourhoods in Northern Ireland community policing was performed by the IRA only.

is addressed at grassroots level. Ideologically this change corresponded to an unprecedented emphasis on the idea of 'anti-social behaviour' and related rhetoric, which are based on criminalisation of the young poor.

7.3 CPF, the anti-social behaviour ideology and youth criminalisation

I should premise that the 'ideology' currently shaping CPF's (and CD's) approach to youth does not differ too much from a common sense perception of it. This vision can be described as depoliticised first of all because it refers to youth as a 'condition' which is not associated with images of the future (MacDonald, 1999:3), no longer a possibility for change, but mostly a problem – a sickness - for which is to find a 'technical' cure. Under this condition, any form of juvenile insubordination (especially if performed by the poor) is immediately condemned as a 'social pathology'. This attitude often degenerates in the criminalization of behaviours, which were previously perceived as being 'normal' and tolerable.

In a CPF (26.05.2010) that took place at a Garda station in central Dublin, a big part of the discussion rotated around episodes of 'anti-social behaviour' by local young people. Paradoxically, attendees repeatedly pointed out young people "gathering" and "hanging out without anything to do" in public spaces as being the main cause of this problem.

The equation youth congregating / anti-social behaviour is particularly sinister in my view. As sinister is the fact that CD activists (apart from rare exceptions) tend not to oppose any critical argument to it - when this equation comes up in CPF meetings. Paradoxically the most known community leaders, those who actually started the CPF project in Dublin seem to be uncritical too. A very few of them argue for example that young people in the inner city of Dublin have almost no place where to spend their free time; or that except for some youth projects (where activities are structured and supervised by adults) and other private places

that can only be accessed by those who have money to spend, the only spaces available to young people for coming together and socialising are public streets, squares and parks.

Nevertheless in Dublin groups of working class young people 'hanging out' generate tangible moral panic and hysteric reactions from the rest of the population. Following this common sense perception, discussion at CPF meetings normally lead to few positive ideas and many interventions on the necessity to repress anti-social behaviour: people demand more police intervention and police officers tirelessly ask attendants to "report *suspicious* activity". CPF attendants frequently come up with accusations and statements which are symptomatic of this moral panic. For example someone in the audience once reported that he had repeatedly witnessed a group of young people "drinking *cheap alcohol*" nearby his house – as if drinking *expensive* alcohol would be different. This says much about the class background of this anti-social behaviour ideology. In another case someone demanded police intervention against a group of young people – one of them in a wheelchair - who were regularly playing football on a central square, bothering the bystanders – as if a police operation was needed to resolve this issue. It also happens frequently that people suggest that the police should always intervene and disperse groups of more than five people. In other countries such rule has actually been applied to some 'sensitive neighbourhoods'. Another controversial aspect of CPF is that they frequently deal with specific cases and pinpoint individuals that both residents and police officers seem to know very well. When this is not the case police officers insist that they "need the information about who is doing it" whatever case of anti-social behaviour they refer to. This custom of pinpointing people at meetings between residents and the police is practiced in other countries such as France where, "Anti-Social Behaviour Orders [ASBO] have turned the most petty disputes among neighbours into personally tailored edicts of exile, banishing a marked individual from a street corner or proscribing the wearing of hooded tops within a specific zone" (Anonymous). In the UK young people seem

to be the most targeted by anti-social behaviour orders: "the experience to date (…) is that ASBOs have been used mainly against children and young people, rather than adults, frequently for 'offences' such as 'hanging around'" (Hillyard et al 2005:191).

In many European countries special laws are being introduced, which in 'exceptional circumstances' confer ' exceptional powers' to the police forces and institute non-jury special criminal courts (similar to those used to repress CPAD) where suspected individuals can be judged under non-constitutional conditions. In Ireland, for example, there has been a big debate about the so called anti-gang bill[34] which foresees the introduction of special regulations for cases dealing with 'gang related crimes'. According to Damien, as the crisis deepens rulers "are introducing much more authoritarian laws on the basis of the crime rates. So they are introducing laws which will allow them to take people to special courts and non-jury courts. (…) What they say is that like this we can get rid of criminal gangs (…) mainly in disadvantaged areas, where these gangs have developed around drug issues. When they bring in the drugs they also bring guns and there is warfare between gangs for who controls the territory. And so they have the capacity to intimidate witnesses, to do crime robberies, to attack cash delivery vans and so on. So the government argues that ordinary people are too intimidated to witness against them, they say that juries would be targeted, so the only way we can deal with them is a special court where there are no juries and where the rule of evidence are different. This is what they say it is for, *but of course they can use the same methodology to lock up people for all sorts of stuff later. Groups of youths can be treated as gangs"*. Not accidentally in my view, these laws have been introduced in Europe after the spread of new forms of juvenile rebelliousness that culminated in youth riots all across the continent – which I will deal with below.

[34] I am referring here to the Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act, 2009 and The Criminal Justice Surveillance Act, 2009. The act provides new legislation for prosecutions of people who are suspected to be involved in criminal gangs organising serious criminal, subversive or terrorist activity for the first time.

On the other hand, sometimes at CPF meetings there are attendees who, out of frustration about what is being said, explode and denounce this ideological distortion. For example, someone once highlighted the fact that "kids are let on their own with nothing to do"; that they are "stopped, searched and harassed by the police several times a day" which is a reality that whoever lives in the inner city can not deny. An attendee once emphasised that "*they are not animals*" – lamenting the condition that I previously describe in terms of 'racialization' affecting a big part of the underprivileged young population in Dublin. At one CPF it was even an older police officer - himself particularly frustrated - who argued against the majority's opinion that "we should not confuse 'anti-social behaviour' with 'adolescent behaviour'" – which is something every young person should have the right to.

These transitory moments of critique, however, are obviously not enough to build up an alternative approach to youth for CD. In order to do that, the negative stigma affecting young people needs to be challenged.

7.3.1 Stigma (the notion of 'scum')

The problem in my view is that underprivileged young people are the object of forms of discrimination that the idea of anti-social behavior enhances, since it tends to tag and criminalize specific groups. As Mark Fisher (2009: 21) highlights, it is not "an exaggeration to say that being a teenager in late capitalist Britain [but this might be applied to Ireland as well] is now close to being reclassified as a sickness". Especially, I would add, if besides being young, one is poor, and lives in certain 'problematic' areas of the city. In the inner city of Dublin "local penchant for track suits, sovereign rings, and particular hairstyles became the uniform of the enemy" (Saris & Bartley 2002a:15) in the eyes of state officers, middle class people and often locals too. In order to understand who are the designated 'victims' of

this 'war' one should check at who is "the typical Mountjoy[35] prisoner": according to Connolly (1997:57) he "comes from a usually large family. His family lives in a corporation house or a flat in the inner city. He will probably have left school at 14 or earlier. He'll be relatively uneducated in the formal sense. He'll be likely to be in its early or mid-20, and have been unemployed for at least half the time since its 15th birthday and his current imprisonment. He will have received its first conviction before he was 16 years of age and will have been detained before the age of 18".

As I anticipated above, in Dublin, underprivileged young people are affected by forms of stigmatisation which tend to be 'racialising'. If you are dressed in a certain way and if you have a certain way of speaking you will always be watched with suspicion by the people. You will not be allowed into clubs, and in general you will be kept far from the spots (such as Temple Bar) where the middle classes enjoy their nights – and you will constantly be targeted stopped and searched by the police as I have been able to observe on a daily basis in the neighbourhood where I live.

In 2005, Nikolas Sarkozy (French minister of the interior, at the time) used the word *scum* (*racaille* in French) to name what he viewed as French society's 'ill' part, including those two young boys whose death would have sparked the big *Banlieue* uprisings some weeks later. Sarkozy's unfortunate expression is widely used in Dublin. It is commonly addressed to underprivileged people living in specific neighbourhoods where 'anti-social behaviour' is 'endemic' according to what you hear on TV and at CPF, and where – as I will illustrate below – acts of disobedience and generic rebelliousness take place constantly; acts such as those that culminated in the 2006 Dublin riot[36]. One of these neighbourhoods is the one

[35] Mountjoy Prison is located in the north inner city of Dublin.
[36] In the aftermath of the riot the Gardi spoke of "a scumbag element from local pubs". The "blog-sphere" has spoken of knackers, scumbags, scangers and other endearing terms that middle class bloggers have for people

where Terence Wheelock used to live until 2005 (just some months before the 2006 Dublin riot), when he, at the age of 20, died after falling in a coma when in custody of an inner city police station (Weelock 2008:3). In my view much of the rage that young people displayed during the events of February 2006 was also consequential to the recent death of Terence. Indeed the way he was treated by the police is symptomatic of the relationship that these young people entertain with the state apparatuses. In an interview with Terence's brother he declared that "the Gardaí show total disrespect for lads in working class areas (…) it becomes: these are all *scumbags*" (ibid. p3).

I find the idea of 'scumbag' quite interesting from an anthropological point of view. Indeed like *racaille, scumbag* is attributed to a type of subjectivity which in Badiou's (2007) words could be described as "uncounted". Considered from a point of view internal to the situation this subjectivity "has no recognizable element or qualities of its own. As far as 'normal' inhabitants of the situation are concerned these groups seem to have nothing in common with the other groups that populate the situation – they seem precisely to have nothing but their own be-ing" (Hallward 2003:118). From the point of view of 'normal' inhabitants, 'scumbags' certainly belong to the situation, but as an anomaly. They consider them to be insiders, of course, but without really being part of civil society. They can not see any positivity or potential in this category. Thus the ideology shaping the situation is grounded on the belief that *no political capacity can be ascribed to them*. This belief, as I should illustrate below, plays a central role in the way in which acts of rebellion by these people are consensually interpreted (as anti-social behaviour).

According to Badiou, it is a question of stability: the situation is safe, as long as this type of subjectivity can be "safely dismissed under a collectively sanctioned label" (Hallward 2003:

---

from certain parts of Dublin. Eye witnesses ringing newstalk and today fm again talked of "scum bags out for a fight".

120) including, depending by the cases, scumbag, *racaille*, illegal migrant, troublemaker and so on. For those who pronounce this word, 'scumbag' constitutes an attempt to identify something that eventually escapes representation.

A 'scumbag', it could be argued, is a "proletarian" to the extent that, as for Ranciere (1992:61), "it is the name of an outcast", which is not to say "a poor wretch of humanity", but "the name of those who are denied an identity in a given order of policy". Ontologically speaking, this group is located "at the edge of the void", i.e. in a place "in which it is possible, (…) to approach the situation from the bias of its indistinct, or generic humanity" (Hallward 2003:118). In Ranciere's (1992: 61) words this is an "in-between" in relation to the distribution of names, statuses and identities: a place in-between humanity and inhumanity, in-between citizen and number, and so on. The "intensification of existence" (Badiou 2003:141) of this "in between" is what happens in episodes of rebelliousness and insubordination – which are commonly dismissed as 'anti-social behaviour' - and which in Dublin culminated in riots like the one of 2006, and others.

The argument that I will defend in the last part of this chapter is that if CD really wants to compensate for its failure to politicise underprivileged young people and build a new generation of CD leaders in underprivileged neighbourhoods, should start from these ephemeral events of juvenile rebelliousness, i.e. from both the critique and the desire they implicitly express. CD activists should be unconditionally by the side of the youth, whatever state, media and public opinion say about them. In order to do this however they have to reject the anti-social behaviour ideology that they themselves contribute to produce and reproduce in CPF and youth projects.

7.4 Spontaneous juvenile insubordination in Ireland and Europe. Possibilities outside the anti-social behaviour rhetoric.

As I previously mentioned, from the 1990s onwards there has been an intensification of collective clashes between what one would generally described as underprivileged, non-formally-politicized young people and the police, which have become a routine feature in many declining post-industrial neighbourhoods in Europe. This does not constitute an absolute novelty: as Hardt & Negri (2009:237) highlight, *jaquerie* [the name they use to indicate this type of revolts] is a praxis that cyclically returned, punctuating modern history. However, what is striking about the last two decades is what Lagrange (2006:54) refers to as the "institutional loneliness" of these actors; that is to say the absence of any relation to political parties, unions or other formal political organisations. Because of their lack of an explicit political connotation these events were first "barely noticed by the media and tacitly accepted by city managers until they jumped outside their usual range in sheer intensity and geographic spread" (Wacquant 2008). In the last decades also Dublin has been cyclically affected by events of spontaneous youth rebelliousness. Think for example about the youth agitations which took place in Cherry Orchard in 1995 and 1996; the first in correspondence to the Halloween night and the second following the infamous 'horse protest' (Bartley & Saris, 1999; Saris & Bartley, 2002a; Saris et all, 2002). In 2004 it was Finglas[37], a neighbourhood situated in Dublin west, to be theatre of confrontations between local young people and the police. The most significant case, however, is probably the 2006 Dublin riot. The 25th of February 2006, what was meant to be remembered as the Love Ulster[38] march, completely run out of the control of the Gardaí after groups of youths from the surrounding estates, who according to witnesses did not even know about the march but were attracted by the confusion, transformed the counter-demonstration in an anti-police riot of unprecedented

[37] Here an architectural barrier erected by local authorities kicked up the rage of the residents. a night of violent riots followed, where petrol bombs and fireworks where thrown against the police by youths from the nearby estate (see Irish Times, 2004:3)

[38] A demonstration organized by Love Ulster, a Northern Irish loyalist group, in order to remember loyalist victims of the I.R.A.

dimensions[39]. According to Indymedia reporters this "represents the first time in living memory that the very poorest and most marginalised elements in Irish society expressed themselves politically, undirected as it may have been" (Indymedia 2006).

More recently, during Queen Elisabeth's visit to Ireland (17-20/05/2011) – which mobilised an unprecedented amount of police forces – small youth riots broke out during day and night in several areas of the city. I personally witnessed a couple of these episodes. They are certainly typical to Ireland's republican anti-imperialist tradition, but they also constitute part of a pattern which has developed recently and has been spreading throughout Europe and beyond. Last decade's main events took place in France[40] (winter 2005/2006 – two months before the Dublin Riot; coincidence that in my view would be naïve to consider as random) and Greece[41] (winter 2008/2009). After last winter's youth revolts in the Arab World (so called Arab Spring) the political consequences of this 'chain' of events are still open. Indeed, recently they have inspired new forms of organization as it is the case of the ongoing M15 movement in Spain[42].

It is not my intention to provide an in depth analysis of these ongoing processes. As I said before, my intention here is to analyze to what extent these fragmented and random explosions of rage and desire can constitute a 'space' that is worth to be explored by CD in

[39] For several hours the very core of Dublin city centre was under the control of local disadvantaged youth. "Every time that the riot squad managed to advance a few metres, they would have to leave a line of police to guard any of the side streets that they had passed as more and more locals came out to see what was happening. There were crowds massed all along the side streets and most of their sympathies appeared to lie with the rioters" (Indymedia Ireland 2006). Overwhelmed by the mob, and especially by its impressive fearlessness and determination, the policemen just attempted to protect themselves, as the Loyalist march seemed to be almost forgotten. Behind the lines of the rioters, every sort of capitalist symbol became a target and looting broke out. "Across the road, a young boy, he can't be more than 16, uses a length of pipe to smash the windows of the Ulster Bank. A cheer erupts…Outside Schuh…a man who looks around 18 uses a rock to bash away at the plate glass… After several attempts, the glass on the doors begins to splinter and shatter, metal barriers are hauled up and seconds later, young man and women run into the shop coming out with a variety of booty including shoes and boots and bags. 'Have you got size six?' asks a girl to her friend" (Irish times 2006)

[40] In November 2005 a wave of simultaneous riots rocked France for three long weeks in reaction, again, to the death of two young boys from an impoverished neighbourhood who were escaping police. (Wacquant 2008:19).

[41] In December 2008, the killing by the police of Alexandros Grigouropoulos, a 15 years old school student from Exarchia, a poor working class area of Athens was the spark that ignited a huge revolt in Greece.

[42] At the time of writing this chapter the July 2011 London Riots (which spread to other cities in England) had not taken place yet.

order to resolve its ‘generational problem’ - outside the depoliticizing ideology of anti-social behavior.

In recent years a big amount of literature has been devoted to youth riots. Yet, in my view, the most interesting political interpretation of them has been provided by Alain Badiou (2005a). According to him what kicked off that large scale process were precisely both the racism and police oppression that on a daily basis affect ‘working class’ young people’s lives. The description that Badiou does of the situation in Paris presents some similarities with what one can observe on the streets in Dublin and in CPF. As he highlights “it is above all against the ideology of security [sécuritaire] and against the incessant police harassment that these kids are rising up, against the cops in the estates who everywhere and at all times exert their control, with insults and intimidations, even of kids of 13 or 14. These days an estate is a squad of listless and malevolent cops, an unhinged command centre [commissariat], all too happy to throw themselves on a few kids playing football, on small gathering of youths, who Sarkozy, their great chief, has personally authorised them to treat as ‘scum’ [racaille]” (Badiou 2005a). This is the main point in his analysis: underprivileged young people, who in common sense are seen as just troublemakers engaging in anti-social behaviour are rising against the police, against harassment and against daily humiliation. In the same paper, to illustrate these humiliations, he gives a vivid account of his adopted black son’s life: “I can’t even count the number of times he’s been stopped by the police. Innumerable - there is no other word. Arrested: six times! In 18 months. What I mean by arrested is when you are taken, in handcuffs, to the police station, when you are insulted, latched to a bench, left there for hours, sometimes kept for a day or two. For nothing” (Badiou 2005a). This type of experience, which is shared by so many young people in Dublin, can be very frustrating for anyone. It is not surprising that at the first opportunity this frustration can turn into collective rage against the police the state and common people. What the youth riots show, according to

Badiou (2005a), is that this politics of police and security, which is shared by all the parties (and, unfortunately, CD groups in Dublin) "is not consensual at the level of people [les gens]. It is a politics against people and the youth say so by doing what they do, with their own means".

I find Badiou's perspective particularly interesting because it helps to understand the legitimacy of this form of protest – which is not just expression of impotency as some commentators (for example Zizek 2009) have argued. Burning cars and chasing the cops makes much more sense if seen as motivated by pride – by a desire to respond to police harassment, demonstrate one's power and restore respect – than if motivated by economic victimization, cultural fanaticism, or political manipulation as many sociologists have argued. 'We are not victims, we are masters of this area, and we do as we please' this is young people's implicit message. This is why Badiou gives them his support. No matter how misguided the riots may be when it comes to organise politically, the pure and simply anger at the daily insults and humiliations and the desire to respond is enough to justify them.

As Baudrillard puts it (2006:7) "all the excluded, the disaffiliated, whether from the banlieues, immigrants or 'native-born', at one point or another turn their disaffiliation into defiance and go onto the offensive. It is their only way to stop being humiliated, discarded or taken in hand. In the wake of the November [Paris 2005] fires, mainstream political sociology spoke of integration, employment, security. I am not so sure that the rioters want to be reintegrated on these lines. Perhaps they consider the French way of life with the same condescension or indifference with which it views theirs. Perhaps they prefer to see cars burning than to dream of one day driving them".

In Dublin – the same as in Paris - the people who took part in the rioting were largely drawn from the urban poor, mostly marginalized young men from impoverished estates; people that

the middle classes normally write off as 'scumbags' and that sociologists define as the 'underclass'. No wonder that after the 2006 Dublin riot what implicitly emerged from the flood of journalistic analysis and prominent declarations was the consensual idea that those young people alone would have been incapable of any spontaneous and independent initiative. Indeed, as a backdrop to the canonical blame game between politicians, one of the most pressing mainstream questions regarded the (political) identity of the obscure mind that orchestrated the riot – and this question continued to divide the opinion for the weeks to come, never having been definitely answered. *Ordinary people's incapacity to independently organise is a consensual belief in the 'West'*. It is strongly ideological for it reveals a general inability/unwillingness to interpret phenomena in a way that does not reflect a dominant top down worldview. Kaulingfreks (2008:2) recently observed that in this kind of circumstances the idea that events were orchestrated by an obscure authority, capable of controlling the ignorant masses is much cosier then the idea of a spontaneous uncontrolled explosion of popular anger. However, young people's achievement was to organize what Badiou would call an "immanent overturning of the laws of appearing" (2003:143); which is to say a powerful subversion of the dominant idea according to which subaltern young people are affected by a permanent collective incapacity. Indeed, for a moment they showed to be able to overcome the depoliticizing forces acting against them and to deploy an unknown and unprecedented power.

As Badiou argued in relation to the events of 2005, "we have the riots we deserve" (Badiou 2006:114) – and an unexpected, angry, unorganized and decentralized explosion as the ones we have witnessed in Europe during the last decades is what one can expect from a society where the youth of popular classes have been abandoned to their own plain exposition to neo-liberal capitalism and the police.

7.4.1 Depoliticised organisations

The idea that I would like to put forward here is that by addressing the youth issue in terms of anti-social behavior, and by not being able to meaningfully engage with underprivileged young people's rebelliousness, CD manifests a loss of its old capacity to be 'organic' to popular situations. This loss is the main cause of their present crisis.

Some activists seem to be completely aware of this situation in which they kind of act more as policemen than educators or 'organic intellectuals'. However, they also seem to have no idea of how to organize in order to overcome this impasse. As Peter argues "if we disappear, in this area there would be massive explosions and violence, and the government just gives us sufficient money to keep a lead on the problems in the area". Indeed, we have already illustrated the approach of youth work's, with its rhetoric of keeping young people off the streets and replacing 'anti-social behavior' with (according to them) more 'meaningful' activities. "It might be that working this way we are not doing the country a service in the long term – continues Peter - because the anger should be here, it should be coming out, as it happened in Paris recently, and the government responds, the people respond".

However, community workers are frequently unwilling to operate in ambiguous circumstances. Many of them have embodied the anti-social behavior ideology. Others are afraid that the state might punish them by withdrawing funds - as it actually happened in Wheelock's case, where, despite a big popular movement had come up, CD organizations maintained an extremely cautious attitude.

However, despite the politics of police and security being shared by all parties, NGOs and CD organisations, the spread of juvenile rage and antagonism shows that among young people there is no consensus on this policy. On the other hand, what is dramatic in this

situation is that young people find themselves alone in front of the police (Badiou 2005a). This fact shows the level of depoliticisation of existent political organisations, which are incapable to capture the completely different compositions, desires and realities which seem to be seeking a new consistency in these neighbourhoods (Invisible Collective 2009). Depoliticized CD organizations, not only demonstrate themselves unable of assuming a moral and ideological leadership[43]. Paradoxically they do not even manage (or attempt) to oversee the return to normal when disorders start. Depoliticized politicians and community 'leaders' take distance from radical acts and criminalize the youth who perpetrate them. In the name of 'integration', 'security', 'legality' and 'stability' (in the name of the state-of-the-situation on behalf of which they operate) they contribute to the 'policing' of the situation. Indeed at the end of the day they are unable to articulate any positive approach to juvenile insubordination, but they keep dealing with it as a sort of 'technical problem' for which is to find a 'solution'.

Councillors and elected officials, associations and local administrations organise actions against the youth in the name of civil society. As Badiou (2005a) asks: "for how much longer can adults and parents remain silent? The youth must not be left to face the police alone. It is necessary to rise up against the police harassment of which they are the object. Parents must stand side by side with them". And so in my view have to do CD activists, rejecting both the anti-social behaviour ideology and the state's blackmail in terms of funds. This would allow them to link up with those youth from which they have lost contact during the last decades – and perhaps build up a new generation of 'organic' activists who might be able to reactivate CD's valuable struggles.

7.5 Conclusions (alliance youth adults)

[43] Young people neither vote nor go to their demonstrations.

As I said, a point that I find noteworthy in Badiou's perspective is the total and absolute support he gives to the young 'troublemakers'; unlike left wing parties, whom he accuses of paralysis. "Why do they not try to organise a great demonstration to protest against what has happened? Because they share the same vision, save for a few nuances (the police, but a "neighbourhood" [*de proximité*] police)"

In my view CD activists should (following Badiou's metaphor) act as young people's 'political parents' and be with them in the face of injustice and state repression, not against them. "At least – says the philosopher - those [activists] who do not let themselves be organised by the theme of the defence of material goods, because they know that burnt cars or buildings mean nothing when compared to the question of what will become of the youth. A huge question which, after these youth riots, has become a question posed to everyone, a question for everyone" (Badiou 2005a).

In my view cynical and dismissive attitudes towards young people and their rebellions are symptom of a huge *generational gap* shaping society. The fact that CD finds it difficult to reproduce itself politically is due to the lack of links between present and passed struggles. As I am trying to illustrate from both a theoretical (Chapter 2) and an empirical (Chapters 3 and 7) point of view, on the one hand today 'adults' make 20th century's struggles incomprehensible to young people. On the other hand they despise present youth revolts dismissing them as acts of hooliganism or anti-social behaviour. They are unable (or unwilling) to positively engage with the rage of thousands of young people in European deprived urban areas. The worse side effect of this 'dismissal' of young people's subjectivity is that those who are responsible for the political orientation of young people abandon them, depriving them of that generational alliance which is fundamental for an effective critique/negation of the world as it is. The lack of such an alliance complicates the things for the younger generations. As Thomas (community artist, youth worker) says "when you are

young sometimes you are not able to articulate what the problem is". With the result that rage might assume a nihilistic orientation – like for example destructivity for its own sake or self-harming through the abuse of drugs and alcohol.

As Schott-Myhre (2007) puts it, a collective subject "can only be found in the intersections where we come together to produce the world. Certainly one place where that occurs is in the sets of relations between the social categories called youth and those called adult". This is evidently a pedagogic problem. 'Political fathers' urgently need to meet with young people in "encounters that produce subjects" (Situaciones 2005:604); they need to generate new affinities and finally construct a new virtual bridge between past and future political sequences. In order to do that, adults have to realise that young people "are critical and interactive but it is just difficult to see that" (Martin). To build meaningful relations with them and share those criticisms "is a very slow process" for no one of the two parts is used to do that. As Martin suggests "for this to happen people have to tell their own stories. It is almost therapeutic: by sharing our stories we might be able then to see some new possible stories".

To conclude, echoing Hardt and Negri (2009) I argue that CD should pedagogically embrace events of youth rebelliousness as actual "*schools of organization*" (238). Indeed, on one hand these are very fertile sites where young people whose independent capacity to think and organise is constantly undermined find the determination to rebel against this situation and expose it to its contradictions. On the other hand this "intensification of existence" (Badiou 2003:141) opens new possibilities for activists to build new bridges with the younger generation. Obviously there is no universal model for this, but just possible experimental practices in situation. And situations always differ from each other. "We only know how to start" argue Colectivo Situaciones (2005:609) "and that very relatively".

Although ephemeral and limited, the sense of victory rioters have experienced most be in a way elaborated and preserved as a possibility, or to put it with Situationes, as “memory as potencia”: a *mise en perspective* that goes beyond the dialectic victory/defeat. After the Copenhagen riots of 2006, for example, the youngsters from immigrant backgrounds who had seemed to display an emotionally inspired protest without formal political claims, with the help of a local youth worker were able to communicate their motives in a letter sent to the press (Kaulingfreks 2008). CD activists could definitely learn much from this type of initiatives.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The nature of the state and the cutbacks

In the present context of crisis and depoliticisation, an essential feature of the nature of the state has emerged clearly, whereas under previous conditions (political dynamism in first place, then – in Ireland - the economic boom) it was partially covered and more difficult to discern. Namely that the nature of the state (the state 'in itself') is not egalitarian. Ontologically speaking, it operates as a mechanism of "distribution of the sensible" – as Ranciere (1992:58) puts it – assigning individuals to places and functions and "making one" of the subsets of what is presented. The nature of this distribution is ritualistic/bureaucratic, hierarchical and militaristic.

On the other hand emancipatory politics is rare. When it comes into being, it has the capacity to limit this tendency, forcing the state towards more egalitarian ways of operating. However, by definition[44], politics can not be generated by the state itself. On the contrary, when emancipatory politics is absent or weak, state powers tend to expel - to literarily get rid of - egalitarian rules and institutions (such as for example those created by movements like CD), or to submit them to bureaucratic, apolitical logics. It is actually what has happened at global scale from the 1980s onwards, a historical phase that has been affected by depoliticisation. A key consequence of depoliticisation has been the wiping out of previous political achievements, including the destruction of public services and "and all forms of solidarity and social protection that guaranteed a minimum of equality in the social fabric" (Ranciere 2012), erosion of workers' rights, privatisations, reorganisation of national education systems according to neo-liberal concerns and in general unprotected exposition of ordinary people's lives to the rule of capital.

[44] This refers to the theoretical approach informing my research, which in this paper has been just briefly introduced.

On what concerns CD, during the Celtic Tiger due to extensive provision of funding people had the illusion that 'the sector' was experiencing a positive and flourishing phase. However, as we saw, affluence covered the bureaucratising and depoliticising tendencies that CD groups were getting through while assuming forms which were increasingly correlated to that of the state. This lead to a loss of independence that in the present economic crisis proved deleterious for CD. Indeed since 2002 (but more drastically since 2009) the Irish state by considerably reducing funding provision to CD, exposed the sector to its accumulated dependencies and weaknesses. However it is also evident that CD's impasse is not just related to the austerity measures implemented by the state. Rather it has to do with processes of bureaucratisation and the failure of groups to 'reproduce' themselves as political subjects.

Previously, in 2004, analysing the outcomes of their research, Powell & Geoghegan (2004) commented that "what is striking about this data is that community development in Ireland is almost completely dependent on the state for funds" (pp 128). They also observed that CD was mainly composed by paid workers. In the light of recent events this analysis sounds like an alarm bell. Indeed the sustained attack community organizations have experienced in recent years has taken advantage of CD's dependency from the state – which can be considered as one of its major weak points for the time being. Policy-makers discount CD as a disproportionate body, which needs to be drastically shrunk, or at least submitted to as much bureaucratic control as possible. Cutbacks have been particularly severe and endemic, mainly hitting those projects that are viewed as more confrontational in terms of challenging government policy. However, as a youth worker (Steve) has noticed, organisations can also be affected *indirectly* by cuts; especially those who rely more on networking with the others.

When it comes to quantifying cutbacks to CD, some interesting figures are provided by a recent report by Brian Harvey (2010), who found that the community and voluntary sector

has already taken a disproportionate[45] share of on-going budget cuts. A precise assessment of the cuts to CD is very problematic due to the difficulty to frame CD as a specific 'object' (see chapters 1 and 2) and the fact that cutbacks are still being applied following an approach that is differential and difficult to track. According to Harvey (2010:10) the analysis of the cumulative effect of the funding cuts for the voluntary and community sector over the two years 2009-2010 is broadly in the order of the 15% mark.

Austerity manoeuvres started with the "withdrawal of funding from the national Community Workers' Co-op[46] for its independent research and evaluations and from Pavee Point[47] for its poster campaign for equal citizenship for Travellers. Then Pavee Point was publicly threatened for its perceived support for a homeless sit-in by Roma at a motorway in Dublin" (TR 2010). Year 2009 concluded with the sudden termination of the Community Development Programme (CDP). This programme dated to the European Poverty 2 programme (1984-9) which funded a number of local community development projects against poverty, including family resource centres, which are informed by a similar ethic and approach (Harvey 2010). Under the management of the Combat Poverty Agency, the CDP expanded to a programme of 180 projects, typically with a core of 2-3 staff and a budget of €20,000 to €40,000 (ibid. p9). Previously to 2009 CDPs "received a letter from their funder, the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, not only warning them not to be associated with political organisations but also bluntly telling them they were funded to implement Government Policy" (TR 2011). At the end of 2009 the government announced the closure of the Community Development Programme, to be integrated with the Local

[45] The view that the voluntary and community sector has been identified for disproportionate attention in cuts is not a polemic, but a factual observation, indeed, according to Harvey (2010) in 2010 the headline figure for the reduction of funding in the voluntary and community sector is in the range of 9% to 10%. This is the typical percentage which recurs most frequently. This figure nevertheless contrasts with the national budgetary cut of only -1.8%.

[46] See Chapter 3

[47] Pavee Point is an NGO supporting Irish Travellers, an indigenous minority ethnic group in Ireland. Pavee Point is a partnership of Travellers and settled people.

Development Social Inclusion Programme. According to Harvey (2010), as part of this process, 31 projects were selected for closure, with the right of appeal to officials in the department. The remaining 149 CDP voluntary boards will be wound up, with staff and assets transferred to the partnerships. Although CDPs had the right to refuse transfer, the minister had made it clear that by exercising it they would never receive departmental funding again (ibid. p9). A disproportionate number of CDP closures were in Dublin inner city. "Two of these were managed by Seánie Lambe and Mick Rafferty, two nationally known community leaders for more than thirty years. Both had been active supporters of Tony Gregory from the beginning" (TR 2011). Also many state organizations concerned with social policy and important to the work of community groups were closed, merged, abolished or integrated (e.g. Combat Poverty Agency, Office of Active Citizenship). Others were severely cut (e.g. Equality Authority, Human Rights Commission) (Harvey 2010:14).

These and other measures according to some activists (TR 2011) reflect a strategy well documented in Naomi Klein's book The Shock Doctrine: use any crisis, whether human-made or natural, to undo social gains achieved by mass social action over decades. This process, I would add, is far smoother in a context of depoliticisation, where those achievements are not supported by an independent political effort. According to Harvey (2010), likely consequences will include a reduced policy and representational capacity for the sector, "which may be one of the purposes of government in applying such differential savings. There will be a loss of voice. In a country which has the lowest level of social protection in western Europe, the civil society voice for an enlightened social policy will be even smaller in the future". Cuts will also imply a reduced capacity to respond to social issues that are growing and qualitatively evolving in times of financial crisis and austerity. And so on.

As I noted above, the situation is paradoxical because although CD's origins are independent from funding schemes and bureaucratic concerns, cutbacks are seen by many organizations as a possible dead end. In my view this perception of the situation is distorted and apolitical. It constitutes the outcome of a process of depoliticisation which the sector has undergone with particular intensity during the Celtic Tiger years.

Currently, a shared feeling amongst activists is that the state wants to definitely get rid of the 'sector', and curently, the best way to achieve this is to cut funding and dismantle the hyper-bureaucratised relation it entails with it. The consequences are seen as irreversible: "it is really difficult to try and predict, but if I am a little bit philosophical about it, - argued an Inner City Partnership worker - everything has a cycle and in this field we are coming to the current end of this community cycle (Seamus). Many CD activists (Paul, Tina) describe this situation as a "limbo"; others refer to a sort of "state of shock" that many of them experienced after the first attacks: "there was a situation of shock at the beginning with people thinking 'this can not happen; these projects can not be shut down'". This shock produced some months of actual paralysis: "people for a while did not know what to do, but now there is a sense that they need to respond". Indeed the state's cynical attitude has ended up kicking off a wave of indignation among activists.

For example, according to Mick Rafferty (2010) the McCarthy report[48] "in a most *dismissive and arrogant* phrase to probably ever have been used in the field of social policy states that these programmes have shown no evidence of positive outcomes. This is an *insult to the thousands of people* who have struggled to ensure that their communities have decent services and equal opportunities to those who are better off". Cynicism and lack of recognition from state authorities are strongly denounced in this quote.

[48] Sort of policy guideline for the reorganisation of the voluntary and community sector

Activists have also been disillusioned and disappointed by the public private partnership model, which can be considered as dead after the crisis, with private investors suddenly holding back and the state bailing out their debts. The engagement and efforts of CD groups in planning, crafting and implementing processes of partnership regeneration have been extensively documented by John Bissett (2008). After a twelve years long struggle the regeneration project of Saint Michael's Estate (Dublin) died with builders walking away and new proposals being introduced, which were actually the shadow of their former. "The experience of regeneration in St. Michael's Estate – argues John Bissett (2008) who was himself involved in the process as a community worker - would suggest that the actions of the state have done more to maintain and consolidate inequalities of power than they did to change them".

At the minute, CD groups are attempting to absorb cuts through a series of measures and responses aimed to avoid dismissals and redundancies. However, as Harvey (2010) highlights, their performance and outputs will fall as they attempt to do more with less and respond to the social distress that follows economic collapse. In my view, there is a fundamental task that goes beyond saving CD service provision. It involves rethinking and reorganizing egalitarian politics capable to resist and eventually reverse the processes that have submitted CD to state (depoliticised) logics. Funding and economic resources should be considered as secondary to political priorities.

8.2 Two discourses and two responses to the crisis of CD

Currently there are two ideological perspectives or discourses describing and articulating possible responses to the crisis of CD. One could define them as (1)'liberal' and (2)'social-democratic'. Although these two perspectives are distinct, there are overlaps between them.

Like for example the fact that none of them emphasise the political roots and potential intrinsic to CD; relating it instead to state/market logics.

(1) From a liberal/neoliberal perspective CD's market/business possibilities are emphasised. For those who advance this idea CD has to turn into a virtuous agent of economic development, otherwise, they say, it will not be able to survive the present economic conjuncture. Therefore, for them 'the sector' has to get in line with the changing economic climate. They say that activists must look to the market in order to save CD. Paradoxically, in their beliefs destruction is placed alongside the promise of a bold future made of innovation and entrepreneurialism.

For example, at a public meeting organised at SIPTU, supporters of this idea were arguing for the construction of a social economy (which they described as very weak to inexistent in Ireland) in order to create jobs in a context of community business and community enterprise where service provision would be just one of the various "products". "We need – they argued - people with engineering skills, with construction skills, etc. In the community services programme the focus is just on services… people are just social workers and we need to go beyond that. For example the community business has a big role to play also in the green economy (…)" (SIPTU discussant). This of course would involve a process of advanced skills building, where workers' expertise and managerial capacity are developed in terms of commercialisation. In this process government money "would just play a secondary role". Moreover the supporters of this perspective lament that "community enterprises are currently not able to access money that are available to modern business ventures". So "they should have access to the city enterprise board (…) but the enterprise culture is quite weak. We need people who create jobs and people who create enterprises. There are tonnes of highly skilled people who could contribute". Thus, to conclude, they see the marketization (and therefore gentrification) of the 'community sector' as the only possible option: "we need to

reinvigorate communities as enterprise and wealth creators and employers. Social service provision on its own will not be sufficient". This is in few words the neo-liberal, market oriented approach to dealing with cutbacks and the crisis affecting the 'community and voluntary sector'. Of course the idea of re-inventing the social economy should not be considered as an absolute novelty in the field, since experiments of this type were already being developed previously. There are for example companies like "Business in the Community Ireland"[49] who for years have been organising workshops for community groups in deprived neighbourhoods on how to build up a "positive engagement" with businesses by developing community investment strategies which support business objectives. On a broader scale, the public private partnership project itself can be seen as an attempt to 'creatively' reorient the sector towards the market and the economy.

(2) The perspective that I described as 'social-democratic' presents itself as opposed to its neo-liberal counterpart. Indeed it attempts to subtract CD from market forces claiming that 'the sector' has to work for the public good, not according to private interests. Therefore, they argue, it needs to be funded by the state and managed as a sort of aggregated public sector. According to them the state needs to protect CD. And in their view there is no alternative to state-funding, since "alternative independent sources, like Chuck Feeney's Atlantic Philanthropies, are rare and are very specific about what they fund" (TR 2011). Behind this approach is the idea that "because community projects do the state's work in matching its own deficiencies they should be funded and resourced by the state. Indeed it does this more effectively and more efficiently and with better value for money" (TR 2011).

However, there is a problem with the argumentation that CD should work for the 'public good'. Namely that currently the hegemonic idea of 'public good' happens to coincide with the market. It is just through economic growth – reads the current ideology - that public good

[49] See http://www.bitc.ie/

is possible. Thus, paradoxically the 'social democratic' argument needs to justify its opposition to the cutbacks with an economic type of argument; namely with the idea that they would be deleterious for the economy of the country. As they put it "the challenge for the community sector is to show the government and the general public that it not only delivers essential services, but also has economic benefits for the country" (SIPTU speaker). And of course the best way to 'demonstrate' this is to present concrete facts; figures like for example the value of the voluntary and community sector to the economy which is €6.5bn; with a level of state funding in the order of €1.89bn (Harvey 2010:14) - altogether, the financial value of volunteering to the Irish economy has been estimated at between €204m and €485m (ibid. p14). These numbers are aimed to support the idea that also from an economic point of view (which is now the default point of view of the state - its "rule" as Badiou would say) cutbacks make little sense.

Cuts to the community sector – 'social-democrats' argue – evidence a lack of vision since "*economically* they are going to cost the state much more in a long term. In terms of prison places, community fragmentation and disintegration, health services and drug abuse" (Seamus). "The combination of heavy job losses and reduced services in the area will create a toxic legacy that will affect the next generations" (Speaker Siptu). Which means "more poverty, more exclusion (…) more pressure on health services and criminal justice. Crimes related to poverty will soar. Why will the government cut this sector now?". And this job of prevention, according to them, can not just be carried out by volunteers. Indeed "a well-functioning volunteer force is dependent from professional staff to recruit, induct, train and retrain. Cuts are likely to lead to a loss of volunteers", who will drop out a not enough supportive environment.

These are in general the arguments that ‘neo-liberals’ and ‘social-democrats’ put forward when it comes to critically address the cutbacks issue and devise alternative approaches to the question of CD’s future sustainability.

There are substantial differences between these two perspectives: in the first case emphasis is placed on market forces and entrepreneurialism, whereas in the second case to be emphasised is the role of the state in supporting community based service delivery. However, both these approaches share the implicit assumption that CD is something ‘objective’ (a sector, a welfare-apparatus) which needs to be managed based on external and structural forces (state & capital). There is little doubt that the world of CD is influenced by structural constraints and forces that constantly tie it into a net of objectifying relations. Labour division, market, profit, exploitation, hierarchies, bureaucracy, personal interest etc. are all elements that, to variable degrees, operate within CD, since they shape the collectivity as a whole – and CD is not external to it. However, by totally identifying CD with these ‘objective’ forces and tendencies something central gets lost.

Namely, none of the two introduced perspectives seriously takes into account the roots of CD as an independent, organic movement, reflecting ordinary people’s creativity and capacity to organise themselves. They do not emphasise CD’s subjective side, its being a platform for emancipatory politics, which is what historically (see Chapter 3) made it so popular in Dublin’s deprived neighbourhoods and beyond.

Without acknowledging these features as well as other still unexplored potentials *intrinsic* to CD – this is the argument of my conclusions – it will be extremely difficult for anyone to re-imaging and experimenting with forms of CD at a distance from external interests and powers. I will also argue that this ‘distance’ is essential if one pretends to be funded by the state without being co-opted by it. Before doing that however, I will need -from a disciplinary

point of view- to ‘justify’ me as a researcher providing these ‘political recommendations’. Do social sciences have any legitimacy to give suggestions to political actors? How should this debate be framed?

8.3 Political recommendations versus policy recommendations

In the methodological section (Chapter 4) of this thesis I have argued that social sciences and politics are linked since their ‘evolution’ and ‘renovation’ depend on subjective processes in the realm of possibility – that is to say outside “what there is”, i.e. the “state of the situation”. However, a question that I have not answered yet is to what extent social sciences can be meaningful when it comes to addressing political issues; what kind of ‘feedbacks’ can social sciences provide to political movements and actors?

Today, when academics discuss the political role of social sciences they place a big emphasis on research as a source of ‘*policy* recommendations’. They argue that we should provide policy makers with high quality and ‘objective’ analysis for them to produce ‘more accurate’ protocols and regulations. As Erik Swyngedouw (2007) highlights, a consequence of this idea is that “while considerable intellectual effort goes into excavating the practices of instituted policies, very little attention is paid to what constitutes political democracy as a political configuration associated with a particular public space”. Thus, researchers produce a self-declared neutral/objective type of analysis that is policy-oriented, but that does not really take into account the structural context framing policy-making. As if that context operated on a technical, structural/functionalist basis. In this ideological frame debate is reduced to disputes “over the institutional modalities of governing and the technologies of expert administration or management” (Swyngedouw, 2007).

Under these conditions academic debates on management and policy recommendations, more than creating links between social sciences and politics, end up linking these disciplines to the state. This is depoliticising. Pierre Bourdieu (2002) himself referred to this activity as "policy of depoliticisation" for it relegates political thought to the terrain of capital and the state. Emphasis on policy recommendations submits research to concerns related to bureaucratic management. In this perspective the work of researchers does not differ much from that of advisors of state bureaucrats or social engineers. "Against this policy of depoliticization - argues Pierre Bourdieu (2002:31) - our aim must be to restore politics, that is, political thinking and action, and to find the correct point of application for that action".

On the other hand, I think that my research outcomes clearly show that the formulation of policy recommendations aimed, for instance, to 'rescue' CD would be a pointless exercise. I consider this argument to be valid for two obvious reasons: the first is that policy makers (no matter how post-structural is our conception of neo-liberal governance) are state agents and their current attitude towards CD is deeply hostile: it would be pointless to advise them to do the opposite of what they are actually doing[50]. The second reason is that -as I have been arguing along this thesis - a 'revitalization' of the sector can neither pass through a new partnership (i.e. the delivery by the state of new funding schemes), nor from alternative forms of bureaucratic regulation, i.e. new 'policies'. Recommendations which could eventually help CD to overcome the present impasse need to be subjective and political in nature. This means that they need to be addressed to CD groups and activists themselves. In my view, recommendations should encompass questions and reflections aimed at generating prolific debate amongst them. To be politically meaningful recommendations should not in any way restrict thought to the terrain of management/administration.

[50] This is something that only social movements, with their strength could possibly achieve.

However, as we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, at present Social Sciences find it particularly hard to get beyond this loop. And the state constitutes a sort of default position of any attempt to think and research politics. Under this condition, "sociology today, especially political sociology, (…) often restricts itself to the inanity of counting and recounting electoral results" (Russo 2009); or the "endless measuring of rates of circulation of preferences and behaviours conducted in the service of spurious interests and in conformity with the taste of the day" (Frade 2009:10). These are symptoms of the fact that these disciplines are "affected by a peculiar theoretical paralysis concerning the question of subjectivities" (Russo 2009) – a question which, as I have been repeatedly emphasising is nevertheless central to politics. As Frade (2009:29) argues, "by privileging deterministic explanations and reducing politics to social engineering" social sciences have historically contributed to the general depoliticizing of society. "And yet, the question must be posed, is social science meant to reflect society or is its task rather to think it through? For the latter, let us admit, cannot be done in the context of the former" (ibid. p12).

My aim in the last part of these conclusions is therefore not to provide policy recommendations based on supposed 'objective conditions' of CD and the social realities it operates within, but, based on the findings of this thesis, to think through the situation politically, towards the re-creation of a space of independency for CD. The following 6 recommendations are presented as a list of separate items. However they are obviously interconnected and overlapping with each other. They are not 'prescriptions' but just suggestions based on the singular point of view of my study, attempting to open a debate more than to provide dogmatic answers.

8.4 Recommendations

The independent political experiences - the “points of autonomy” as Badiou would call them - that CD repeatedly introduced in Dublin during the second half of the 20th century are under serious threat or have been incorporated into the domain of state politics. Cutbacks are not the ‘cause’ of this process. However by breaking the previous surface of consensus, their introduction has contributed to uncover contradictions, which along this thesis I have described in terms of bureaucratisation, professionalization and depoliticisation.

One should start by noticing that a time of crisis is also a time of opportunity. But one should also be aware that for such opportunity to ‘materialise’, it is not enough for these favourable circumstances to be there. If previously the situation was muddled by the abundant profusion of funding - which had the effect to accommodate many activists – now, in the new scenario, with contradictions becoming clearer, conflict tends to rise again. In the meantime also the struggle to resist and reverse cut-backs has started and is constantly evolving. As I have illustrated in chapter 6 small victories are possible, encouraging, and much can be learnt from them - like in the case of the opposition to the closure of a public swimming pool in the popular area of Seán MacDermott Street; or like the Community First campaign, opposing cuts to drug services in the south inner city (see Chapter 6). Although some positive signs are easily detectable, as I argued in Chapter 7, the cutback/fight-back logic is insufficient and, in general, there are no predetermined outcomes. And the result of the struggle in which CD is involved will depend by the imagination and creativity of activists themselves.

The following 4 points are recommendations/reflections that I would like to address to activists and groups who are interested in redeveloping independent forms of collective organisation and resistance in a CD context.

1 Be independent

As I repeatedly argued along this thesis from various perspectives, currently I consider being vital for community organisations that they re-conquer the old space of independency, i.e. a political space at a distance from the state. The lack of a clear separation between (emancipatory) politics and state-politics in the praxis and thought of CD is central to the impasse that this movement is currently experiencing.

CD politics have entered too much the domain of the state and its agenda - having lost that "distance" which, in the theoretical perspective of this thesis is referred to as vital for the creative production, or continuation, of an emancipatory political process.

Of course the structural relevance of the state needs to be acknowledged. Independence, according to Ranciere (2012), "does not mean losing interest in or acting as if these agendas did not exist. It means building one's own dynamic, spaces of discussion and ways of circulating information, motives and ways of action directed, first of all, towards the development of an autonomous power to think and act".

As we have seen, independent politics operates outside institutional legitimate areas, because it consists in the opening of new possibilities that are overlooked, or considered to be impossible from a structural point of view. Emancipatory politics is made by the uncounted, not by those who count, so called 'stakeholders'. As Ranciere (quot.by Butler and Ntseng 2008) puts it, we should oppose a politics "that makes decisions on the people, for the people, instead of the people; a politics that holds that in the political order, all sections of the community have been assigned their proper place". A space where independent emancipatory politics can actually emerge "is constituted in the moment when people's movements and actions proceed from the brutal truth that "we are on our own" and move forward only once they have clarified that we are finished with the (anti)politics of the state project".

This, one should notice, is nothing new for CD. Indeed, I have illustrated how in Dublin this movement is rooted in spontaneous popular protests (late 1960s) addressing issues of housing, education, healthcare and other problems affecting people living in underprivileged areas of the inner city. The heterogeneous composition of these struggles reflected the political dynamism that in that phase characterised many movements on a worldwide scale. Their political subjectivity was "in excess" to the surrounding political culture, including that of the orthodox, state-centred left.

In times of crisis CD activist should take inspiration from those pioneering experiences, remembering that the problem is not just to react to adverse state policies (such as the austerity measures currently being implemented by the government), but to produce powerful collective processes irreducible to the state and to any form of dependency from it.

In order to achieve this, the CD movement should not just look to what happens 'outside' (the crisis, the cuts, etc.) but constantly refer to and analyse its own history and its own engagement in on-going struggles.

2. Be self-reflexive

The analysis of some interesting politicising experiences has suggested (Chapter 6) that an important step in the construction of people's "power-to" might pass through the opening of in-depth self-reflexive processes[51], which might be beneficial to define the present situation from an independent (subjective) point of view. Introducing the Community First case we have seen that a crucial moment has been when people involved in the local CD scene understood that unity within the "community" was just an illusion. This realisation triggered an irreparable fracture between people and "bureaucrats".

[51] A processes is self-reflexive when action or analysis goes back to, refers to, and affects the entity perpetrating the action or analysis.

In my view, that was a positive outcome since, as Richard Pithouse (2006) puts it, "sustained collective reflection on the experience of struggle continually advances the understanding of what has to be fought and how it has to be fought".

Self-reflexivity is nevertheless important after a phase dominated by Public Private Partnership where bureaucratisation has heavily affected CD activists' capacity to read and think the situation from a point of view that does not correspond to that of the state. This in turn has deteriorated their relation with ordinary people, especially underprivileged youth as we have seen, which might experience a sense of betrayal. Self-reflexivity can be also useful to separate those 'components' of CD that have managed to 'preserve' some of the original spirit, and those which have irreparably depoliticised. Although this is something that a number of CD groups are starting to do by organising public assemblies, as it has been the case of Community First and the Spectacle of Defiance and Hope[52], these rare initiatives constitute just a first step towards a new process of change to be developed from within the CD movement.

3. Do not just demand. Build people's own power-to.

A key element to the organisation of a movement aiming to operate with a certain degree of autonomy is not just to make demands upon rulers, but to build up people's capacity to (even just in part) 'accomplish' those demands.

In Chapter 5. I criticised the state delivery logic for it tends to develop processes of professionalization and bureaucratisation amongst CD groups, which generate depoliticisation. Indeed, expert knowledge (on which state delivery is based) has the capacity to abstract issues (related for example to poverty) from the context and conditions that give them meaning, and in which they might be addressed politically. After acquiring a life that is

[52] The Spectacle of Defiance is broadly based alliance of Community Organisations from Dublin and beyond, which came together in 2010.

separated from their social context, those issues can be technocratically managed by the state. I also argued that to be accessed by ordinary people and democratised, these issues need to be re-politicised and their technical quality shown to be, at best, only partly independent of socio-political content (Neocosmos 2007:50).

Interestingly enough a question that politicians and state authorities keep posing to movements that are ambiguous in relation to why they are rebelling or what they are protesting for is: "what are your demands?". As Robert Jensen (2011) suggests referring to the on-going "Occupy Wall Street" movement, "the demand for demands is an attempt to shoehorn the Occupy gatherings [and, in general, independent political organisations] into conventional politics [i.e. state-politics], to force the energy of these gatherings into a form that people in power recognise, so that they can roll out strategies to divert, co-opt, buy off, or – if those tactics fail – squash any challenge to business as usual".

Likewise, in the experience of South African community activists "the language in which people's struggles are turned into 'delivery protests' is a language that has been imposed on our struggles from outside – it is not our language". Indeed this demand-delivery logic allows those who claim to be leaders (like politicians, policy makers, NGOs and so on) to take the things people have been fighting for and give them back to them as delivery. "You fight for justice – for equality and for the world to be shared - and you end up with the promise of 'service delivery'. (…)To call our struggles 'service delivery protests' is a way of making them safe for our oppressors".

Therefore, in Jensen's (2011) view, an appropriate response to the demand for demands should be "we demand that you stop demanding a list of demands".

For example, CD's anti-austerity campaign is mainly based on the demand to "stop the cutbacks". This is completely legitimate. However, the fact that a claim for funding is the

only point around which collective action and thought are organised is the symptom of a very strong dependency from the state. Moreover, to frame the problem in those terms does not help to understand that the real cause of CD's crisis goes beyond the cutbacks - being related to its failure to reproduce itself as a political subject, as I illustrated in Chapter 7.

As French activists (Anonymous) put it "the problem with demands is that, formulating needs in terms that make them audible to power, they say nothing about those needs, and what real transformations of the world they require". Moreover, "there is no set of demands, which, once met, would bring politics to an end" (Anonymous). Indeed, would additional funding provision resolve CD's crisis?

Of course underprivileged people constantly need to fight for land, housing, education and so on. But this should be embraced as just part of a major struggle for equality and dignity. Since "the politics of equality, justice and freedom runs far deeper than the question of forcing the government to keep the promises that it has made to us on service delivery" (Abahlali baseMjondolo 2010)

4 Be close and real to the people

CD's philosophy is not about representing people who are affiliated to the movement. This is what NGOs and political parties usually do. On the contrary, CD's principal aim should be to provide a space in which people represent themselves and organise collectively towards their own emancipation. Whereas representative politics is concerned with obtaining state power in order to be able to bureaucratically manage it "for the people", CD's philosophy should follow the idea that nobody can emancipate people on their behalf. Since emancipation can only be the result of people's courage, direct engagement, and creativity.

However in order to achieve ordinary people's direct engagement a movement needs to be, as we have seen, "organic" to their lives. It needs to support a "home-made politics" (Zicode 2010) – a vital politics that everyone can understand and identify with. In my view CD politics should be directed by underprivileged people for underprivileged people. Therefore it needs to be practiced in places where these people live or that are accessible to them, at times when they are available, and in a language that they can easily understand. This is not to say that middle class people (like activists, intellectuals etc.) should be excluded. But that they should be respectful, not trying to impose a pre-conceived political line based on their professional skills or ideological knowledge. Indeed a "politics of what is close and real to the people" (Zikode 2009) is to be understood as a politics that does not start from an "external" theory but from what people may say, think and do from a point of view which is internal to a concrete situation or process. This approach is not adverse to theory, it just emphasises the necessity to start from real life experiences of suffering and resistance. In my view, that's where the 'real' of a situation is to be found.

Finally, another important aspect of this "living politics" is that it needs to be elaborated in common and democratically; i.e. in opposition to party politics and other top-down approaches like those practiced by most NGOs. It is a popular egalitarian project that does not involve profit, individual success and power.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Interviewees were anonymized. In the following table I just indicate the fake name I used (gender is unchanged), the broad "fields" in which each of them operates and when the interview took place.

Aine	CD activism, family support, urban regeneration.	09-09-2010
Aine + Edward	CD activism, family support, urban regeneration	17-06-2010
Lisa	CD work, addiction	23-09-2010
Damien	Pioneer community activist	22-09-2009
William	Pioneer community activist	24-03-2010
Mark	Pioneer community activist	03-03-2010
John	Pioneer community activist - politician	14-03-2011
Seamus	Partnership worker	20-04-2010
Mary	Addiction CD worker	15-05-2010
Claire	CD project coordinator, training	19-04-2010
Sam	CD training	03-02-2010
Chris	CD activism, addiction	07-04-2010
Ruth	CD worker, after-school	13-04-2010
Carl	CD project manager	11-06-2010
Peter	Youth project worker and manager	05-03-2010
Martin	Youth worker, artist, Cd activist	17-12-2009
Steve	Youth worker, project manager	04-05-2010
Paul	Youth worker	10-07-2010
Marion	CD activist, politician	21-03-2011

Erik	Activist, migrant rights	12-02-2011
Tina	CD worker, addiction	10-02-2010
Monica	CD worker, youth, addiction	28-04-2010
Sera	CD project manager, addiction	12-05-2010
Sorcha	CD worker, addiction	24-05-2010
Rebecca	Youth worker	25-07-2011
Ronan	Activist	02-09-2011

LIST OF MAIN EVENTS AND INITIATIVES I ATTENDED AS OBSERVER/ETHNOGRAPHER

Public meeting on community activism, involving actual community activists, Seomra Spraoi 3 Feb 2010 – participant observation, 2 hours.
Community Policing Forum, Fitzgibbon Street Garda station 21.9.2010 - participant observation, 1h, 30min.
Community Policing Forum - Store Street Garda station 26.05.2010 participant observation, 1h, 30min.
Community policing forum, Fitzgibbon St. Garda station 30.6.2010 - participant observation, 1h, 30min.
Community Policing Forum, Store Street Garda station, 27.10.2010 - participant observation, 1h, 30min.
Community public meeting, fight the cutbacks, St Nicholas of Myra community centre 26.7.2010 participant observation, 1h, 30min.
Community sector “A Cut Too Far”, Siptu 15.9.2010, participant observation, 2h 30 min.
Youth concert and performance, at Bradog youth centre. Participant observation, 1h
Future arts event, 08-05-2010, Exchange, participant observation, 1h
Guided visit at Saint Michael estate 24.6.06, 1h observation
Guided visit at Fatima mansions 24.6.06, 1h observation
Launch of the “family support network” at Nicholas of Myra community centre 22.09.2010 participant observation, 1h, 30 min

Demonstration against cutbacks 29.09.2010 participant observation 1h, 30 min
Reel Youth, young people's arts event, Film Base. 1hour participant observation
Panel discussion and open discussion on urban regeneration at Anti-Poverty Agency, 14-07-2009. Participant observation 1hour
Event on social centres and community activism organised in Seomra Spraoi. 2 hours participant observation.
Theatre of the oppressed event – on peer support for parents of drug abusers - Community Response 17.6.2010, participant observation 1h, 30minutes
Guided visit at Fatima mansions, 20.05.2010, observation 1h
Visit at Smithfield Police Station where an art project was taking place, being run by a community artist and youth worker, observation 2hours 20-10-09
Community First and Provisional University joint event, open discussion 04/11/2010
Anti Racist Network and Provisional University joint event, open discussion 6/11/2010
NGOs Alliance against racism meeting, activist meeting, participant obsrvation 19/04/2010
Seomra: Beyond the Crisis, public meeting on Social Movements, Seomra Spraoi. 7/5/2011participant observation
Spectacle of defiance meeting 21/06/2010 participant observation, 1h and 30 min.
Visit to city community garden, 18/04/2011, participant observation 2h
Spectacle of defiance meeting 12/07/2010, participant observation 1h and 30min
Anti Racism Network meeting on aging migrant communities in Ireland 29/06/2011, 2 hours
Spectacle of defiance demonstration 15/12/2010 participant observation 2h
Spectacle of defiance demonstration 16/12/2011 participant observation 2h
Workshop on CD at Occupy Dame Street with Cathleen O'Neill, CD activist, open discussion. 1h

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abahlali baseMjondolo. (2010). *A Letter to our German Comrades*. http://libcom.org/library/letter-our-german-comrades (consulted the 14/05/2011)

Acheson, Nicholas et al. 2004. *Two paths, one purpose: voluntary action in Ireland, North and South.* Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Althusser, Luis. 2006. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". In Storey, J. (ed.) *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*. NJ: Pearson education, pp.336 347

Anonymous, *Call* (no date, place or publisher). http://theanarchistlibrary.org/HTML/Anonymous__Call.html (consulted the 20/02/2009)

Atkinson, Paul and Hammersley, Martyn. 1994. "Ethnography and participant observation". In Denzin, NK and Lincoln, YS. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications pp. 248-261.

Badiou, Alain. 2010. *The Communist Hypothesis*. London: Verso.

Badiou, Alain. 2009. *Logics of Worlds.* London: Continuum.

Badiou, Alain. 2008. "We need a Popular Discipline: Contemporary Politics and the Crisis of the Negative". *Critical Inquiry*, 34, pp. 645-659.

Badiou, Alain. 2008a. "The Communist Hypothesis". *New Left Review* 49, pp. 29-42.

Badiou, Alain. 2008b. *Financial Crisis, Spectacle and Corresponding Realities*. http://mikeely.wordpress.com/2008/11/01/badiou-financial-crisis-spectacle (consulted the 25/02/2009)

Badiou, Alain. 2007. *Being and Event.* London: Continuum.

Badiou, Alain. 2006. *Polemics.* London: Verso.

Badiou, Alain. 2005. *Metapolitics*. London: Verso.

Badiou, Alain. 2005a. *On Riots that Come after Pain.* http://infinitethought.cinestatic.com/index.php/site/index/badious_lorganisation_politique_on_the_french_situation/ (consulted the 15/08/2007)

Badiou, Alain. 2003. "Beyond Formalism. An Interview". *Angelaki*, 8, 2, pp. 111-136.

Badiou, Alain. 2001. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil.* London: Verso.

Badiou, Alain. 1998. "Politics and Philosophy". *Angelaki*, 3, 3, pp. 113-132.

Balso, Judith. 2010. "To Present Oneself to the Present. The Communist Hypothesis: a possible Hypothesis for Philosophy, an Impossible Name for Politics?". In Douzinas, C. and Zizek, S. (eds.). *The Idea of Communism.* London: Verso pp. 15-32.

Bartley, Brendan. and Saris, Jamie. (1999) 'Social exclusion in Cherry Orchard: another side of suburban Dublin', in A. MacLaren and J. Killen (eds) *Dublin: Contemporaries Trends and Issues for the 21st Century*, pp. 81–92. Dublin: Geographical Society of Ireland.

Baudrillard, Jean. 2006. "The Pyres of Autumn". *New Left Review*, 37, pp. 5-7.

Bertaux, Daniel. 2003. *Racconti di vita. La prospettiva etnosociologica.* Milano: Franco Angeli.

Bisset, John. 2008. *Regeneration: public good or private profit?*. Dublin: Tasc/New Island

Bourdieu, Pierre. 2002. “Against the policy of depoliticisation”. *Studies in Political Economy* 69, pp 31-41.

Burke, Christie. 2009. *There will never be another Tony Gregory.* http://www.anphoblacht.com/news/detail/36905 (consulted the 21/11.2010)

Butler, Mark and Ntseng, David. 2008. *Politics at stake: a note on stakeholder analysis.* http://www.abahlali.org/node/6398 (consulted the 21.08.2010)

Cedillo, Raul Sanchez. 2007. *Towards New Political Creations. Movements, Institutions, New* Militancy http://eipcp.net/transversal/0707/sanchez/en (consulted the 26/10/2008)

Collins, Tom. 2002. “Community Development and state building: A shared project”. *Community Development Journal,* 37, 1, pp. 91-100.

Connery, Christopher. 2009. “The End of the Sixties”. *Boundary 2,* 36, 1, pp.183-210.

Connolly, Johnny. 2002. *Community Policing & Drugs in Dublin. The North Inner City Community Policing Forum.* Dublin: CPF (pamphlet).

Connolly, Johnny. 1997. *Beyond the Politics of ‘Law and Order’. Towards Community Policing in Ireland.* Belfast: Centre for Research and Documentation

Coombs, Nathan. 2011. “Political Semantics of the Arab Revolts/Uprisings/Riots/ Insurrections/Revolutions”. *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies*, 4, pp. 138-146.

Cox, Laurence. 2010. *Another world is under construction? Social movement responses to inequality and crisis.* NUIM E-prints Archive. http://eprints.nuim.ie/2199/ (consulted the 11/09/2011)

Cox, Laurence and Mullan, Caitriona. 2001. *Social movements never died:community politics and the social economy in the Irish Republic.* NUIM E-prints Archive. http://eprints.nuim.ie/1529/ (consulted the 14/11/2010)

Cullen, Barry. 1989. *Poverty, community and development*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1991. "What is a Dispositif?" In AAVV. *Michel Foucault Philosopher.* London: Routledge pp. 159-168

DHAC. 1969. "Editorial". *Squatter* 1, pp. 1.

Dobson, Ernie. 1988. "Community work and the reform of social work training". *Talking Point* 93, pp 2-3.

Fisher, Mark 2009. *Capitalism Realism: Is There no Alternative?* London: Zero Books.

Flood, Andrew. 2010. *Meeting Room and the Dublin anti-drugs movement of the 1980's.* http://anarchism.pageabode.com/andrewnflood/meeting-dublin-anti-drugs-movement-cpad (consulted the 12/01/2011)

Foucault, Michel. 2010. *The Birth of Biopolitics.* New York: Palgrave.

Foucault, Michel. 2005. *Poteri e Strategie*. Milan: Mimesis

Foucault, Michel. 2004. *The Order of Things.* London: Rutledge

Frade, Carlos. 2009. "The Sociological Imagination and its Promise Fifty Years Later: is there a Future for the Social Sciences as a Free Form of Enquiry?". *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 5, 2, pp. 9-39.

Geoghegan, Martin and Powell, Fred. 2006. "Community Development, Partnership Governance and Dilemmas of Professionalization: Profiling and Assessing the Case of Ireland". *British Journal of Social Work* 36, pp. 845–86.1

Goyens, Tom. “Social space and the practice of anarchist history”. *Rethinking History*, 13, 4, pp. 439-457.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1972. *Prison Notebooks.* International Publishers.

Gregory, Tony. 1979. *Seamus - The People's Councillor.* http://www.irsp.ie/Background/costello/costellotrib.html (consulted the 21/02/2010)

Guattari, Felix. 1984. *Molecular revolution. Psychiatry and politics.* London: Penguin.

Hallward, Peter. 2003. *Badiou: a Subject to Truth.* Minnesota: Upress.

Hanley, Brian and Millar, Scott. 2009. *The lost Revolution. The story of the official IRA and the workers’ party.* London: Penguin.

Hanna, Erika. 2010. “Dublin’s North Inner City, Preservationism, and Irish Modernity in The 1960s”. *The Historical Journal* 53, 4, pp. 1015–1035.

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio. 2009. *Commonwealth.* Harward: University Press.

Hardt, Michael and Negri, Antonio. 2004. *Moltitude:War and Democracy in the Age of Empire.* New York: Penguin Books.

Harvey, Brian. 2010. *Analysis of implications of 2010 budget for the voluntary and community sector.* Dublin: Impact Trade Union.

Harwey, David. 2008. “The right to the city”. *New Left Review,* 53, pp. 23-40.

Hess, Andreas. 2007. “Against unspoilt authenticity: a re-appraisal of Helmuth Plessner's The Limits of Community (1924)”. *Irish Journal of Sociology* 16, pp. 11-26.

Hilliard et al. 2005. *Poverty and conflict in Ireland. An international perspective.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Holloway, John. 2011. *¡Que se vayan Todos!*

http://www.johnholloway.com.mx/2011/07/30/%C2%A1que-se-vayan-todos/

(consulted the 26/06/2011)

Holloway, John. 2011a. "Rage against the rule of money". Oral presentation at *Social Movements Beyond the Crisis*, May 7th, 2011, Seomra Spraoi, Dublin.

Holloway, John. 2010. *Crack Capitalisn.* New York: Pluto Press.

Holloway, John. 2005. "Zapatismo Urbano". *Zapatismo. Critical political and cultural practice*, 29, 1, pp. 168-178

Holloway, John. 2002. *Change the World without Taking Power.The Meaning of Revolution Today*. New York: Pluto.

Indymedia. (2006) *Dublin Riots: What Happened and Why.* http://www.indymedia.ie/article/74528 (consulted the 25/09/2008)

Irish Times. 1968. "Controversial group wants action on housing". 17th of June, pp. 8.

Irish Times. 2006. "Riots and looting in Dublin city centre". "28th of February, pp. 17.

Jensen, Robert. 2011. *Occupy demands: Let's radicalise our analysis*. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/11/201111191022862285.html

(consulted the 01/11/2011)

Kaulingfreks, Femke. (2008) "'Fuck Normalization' Young urban 'troublemakers' as meaningful political actors". *Magazine for Resistance Studies*, 3.

Kelleher, Patricia and Whelan, Mary. 1992. *Dublin communities in action: a study of six projects.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

Latour, Bruno and Woolgar, Steve. 1979. *Laboratory Life.* Beverly Hills: Sage.

Law, John. 2004. *After Method. Mess in Social Sciences.* New York: Routledge

Lee, Anna. 2005. "Community development in Ireland". *Community Development Journal* 38, 1, pp. 48–58.

Lefebvre, Henri. 2003. *The Urban Revolution.* Minneapolis

Le Grange, Lesley. 2007. "(Re)imagining method in educational leadership and management research". *South African Journal of Education*, 27, 3, pp. 421 – 429

McAleavey, Richard. 2012. "Opportunity structures knock?" http://knaves.posterous.com/opportunity-structures-knock (consulted the 10/01/2012)

McDonald, Kevin. 1999. *Struggles for Subjectivity: Identity, Action and Youth Experience.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Meade, Rosie. 2005. "We hate it here, please let us stay! Irish social partnership and the community/voluntary sector's conflicted experiences of recognition". *Critical Social Policy* 25, 3, pp. 394-373.

Motherway, Brian. 2006. *The Role of Community Development in Tackling Poverty in Ireland.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Neilson, Brett and Rossiter, Ned. 2006. "Towards a Political Anthropology of New Institutional Forms". *Ephemera theory & politics in organization,* 6, 4, pp. 393-410.

Neocosmos, Michael. 2009. "Civil society, citizenship and the politics of the (im)possible: rethinking militancy in Africa today". *Interface: a journal for and about movements* 1, 2, pp. 263 – 334.

Neocosmos, Michael. 2009a. “The Political Conditions of Social Thought and the Politics of Emancipation: an introduction to the work of Sylvain Lazarus. In Vale, P and Jacklin, H. eds. *Re-Imagining the Social in South Africa: Critique and Post-Apartheid Knowledge*. Johannesburg: UKZN Press

Neocosmos, Michael. 2007. “Development, Social Citizenship and Human Rights: Re-thinking the Political Core of an Emancipatory Project in Africa”. *Africa Development* 4, pp. 35–70.

Neocosmos, Michael. 2004. “Thinking the Impossible? Elements of a Critique of Political Liberalism in Southern Africa”. *Identity, Culture and Politics* 5, 1 & 2, pp. 207-234.

O’Broin, Michael. 2010. “Community Development: Lessons for Social Movements”. Oral presentation at *Better Questions Seminar Series,* Seomra Spraoi, Dublin, February 3rd 2010.

O’Cinneide, Seamus and Walsh, Jim. 1990. “Multiplication and Divisions: Trends in Community Development in Ireland since the 1960s”. *Community Development Journal* 25, 4, pp. 326-336.

O’Donovan, Oral and Meade, Rosie. 2002. “Editorial introduction: Corporatism and the ongoing debate about the relationship between the state and community development”. *Community Development Journal*, 37, 1, pp. 1–9.

O’Donovan, Oral & Valery, Tony. 1992. *Paid employment in the voluntary sector*. Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Pithouse, Richard. (2006). “Struggle Is a School: The Rise of a Shack Dwellers’ Movement in Durban, South Africa” http://monthlyreview.org/2006/02/01/struggle-is-a-school-

the-rise-of-a-shack-dwellers-movement-in-durban-south-africa (consulted the 18/10/2009)

Piven, Frances Fox and Cloward, Richard. 1979. *Poor People's movements.* New York: Vintage Books.

Poirier, Jean et al.1995. *Histórias de vida. Teoria e prática.* Oeiras: Celta.

Popke, Jeff. 2008. "Geography and ethics: non-representational encounters, collective responsibility and economic difference". *Progress in Human Geography* 2008, pp. 1-11.

Powell, Fred and Geoghegan, Martin. 2004. *The Politics of Community Development*. Dublin: A&A Farmar.

Power, Nina and Toscano, Alberto. 2009. "The Philosophy of Restoration: Alain Badiou and the Enemies of May". *Boundary 2* 36, 1 pp.27-46.

Power, Nina. 2006. "Towards an Anthropology of Infinitude: Badiou and the political subject". In Ashton, P. et al editors. *The praxis of Alain Badiou.* Melbourne: Repress pp. 309-338.

Pozzana, Claudia and Russo, Alessandro. 2010. *Continuità / discontinuità. La contemporaneità mondiale della Cina*. (Consulted the 20/12/2010)

Punch, Michael. 2005. "Problem Drug Use and the Political Economy of Urban Restructuring: Heroin, Class and Governance in Dublin". *Antipode* 37, 4, pp. 755-774

Rafferty, Mick. 2010. *One year on.* http://www.cta.ie/?p=97 (consulted the 26/10/2010)

Ranciere, Jacques. 2012. *Democracy is not, to begin with, a form of state.* http://knaves.posterous.com/jacques-ranciere-interview-democracy-is-not-t (consulted the 21/01/2012)

Ranciere, Jacques. 2006. *The Distribution of the Sensible.* London: Continuum.

Ranciere, Jacques. 1999. *Dis-agreement. Politics and Philosophy.* Minnesota: Minnesota University Press.

Ranciere, Jacques. 1992. "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization". *October*, 61, pp. 58-64.

Robson, Terry. 2001. "The co-option of radicalism: conflict, community and civil society: community action and social change in a post-colonial context". *Critical Sociology* 27, 2, pp. 221-245.

Rolston, Bill. 1980. "Community Politics". In O'Dowd, L. Rolston, B. Tomlinson, M. *Northern Ireland between civil right and civil war.* London: CSE Books.

Russo, Alessandro. 2010. "Did the Cultural Revolution end Communism?" Eight Remarks on Philosophy and Politics Today". In Douzinas, C. and Zizek, S. (eds.). *The Idea of Communism.* London: Verso pp. 179-194.

Russo, Alessandro. 2009. *Did the Cultural Revolution end Communism?* http://clubpolitico.altervista.org/8didthecultural.html (consulted the 01.05.2011)

Russo, Alessandro. 2008. *Destini dell'Università.* http://clubpolitico.altervista.org/7destiniuni.html (consulted the 01.05.2011)

Russo, Alessandro. 2006. "How to translate Cultural Revolution". *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7, 4, pp. 673-682.

Russo, Alessandro. 1998. “The Probable Defeat: Preliminary Notes on the Cinese Cultural Revolution”. *Positions*, 6, 1, pp. 179-202.

Russo, Alessandro and Pozzana, Claudia. 2005. “After the invasion of Iraq”. *Positions* 13, 1, pp. 205-214.

Sabel, Charles. 1996. *Local Partnerships and Social Innovation*. Paris: OECD

Saris, Jamie et al. 2002. “Culture and the state. Institutionalizing ‘the underclass’ in the new Ireland”. *City*, 6, 2, pp173-191.

Saris, Jamie and Bartley, Brendan. 2002a. “The Arts of Memory: Icon and Structural Violence in a Dublin 'Underclass' Housing Estate”. *Anthropology Today*, 18, 4, pp. 14-19.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. 2004. *Critique of Dialectical Reason.* London: Verso.

Scott-Myhre, Hans. 2004. “Radical Youthwork: Creating a politics of mutual liberation for youth and adults”. *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, 19, pp. 89-94.

Shaw, Mae. 2007. “Community development and the politics of community”. *Community Development Journal* 43, 1, pp. 24–36.

Situaciones, Colectivo. 2005. “Something More on Research Militancy: Footnotes on Procedures and (In)Decisions”. *Ephemera*, 5, 4, pp. 602-614.

Situaciones, Colectivo. 2003. *On the Researcher-Militant.* http://eipcp.net/transversal/0406/colectivosituaciones/en (Consulted the 30/09/2010)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1994. “Can the Subaltern Speak?”. In William, Patrick and Lara Chrisman (eds.). *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: a Reader*. Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Swyngedouw, E. (2007). *Where is the political?* Antipode Lecture, IBG/RGS Annual Conference, London, 29 August – 1 September 2007.

Memorial Lecture, Annual Conference of the AAG, Boston, 16-21 April 2008.

Tiqqun. 2003. *La comunità terribile. Sulla miseria dell'ambiente sovversivo.* Rome: Derive Approdi.

Tovey, Hilary and Share, Perry. 2000. *A Sociology of Ireland.* Dublin: Gill and MacMillan.

TR. 2011. "The future of the community sector". *Socialist Voice*, January 2011 http://www.communistpartyofireland.ie/sv2011-01/index.html (consulted the 25/03/2011)

Tronti, Mario. 1979. "Lenin in England". In Red Notes (eds). *Working Class Autonomy and the Crisis: Italian Marxist Texts of the Theory and Practice of a Class Movement*. London: Red Notes and CSE Books.

Trucker, Vincent. 1989. "Community Work & social change". In CWC. *Community Work in Ireland. Trends in the 80's Options for the 90's*. Dublin: CWC.

Vernell Sean. 2010. *Don't get young in the third millennium. Capitalism and the demonising of the young working class.* London: Bookmarks Publications

Wacquant, Loic. 2008. *Urban outcasts.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wang, Hui. 2006. "Depoliticized politics, multiple components of hegemony, and the eclipse of the Sixties". *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7, 4, pp. 683 – 700.

Weelock, Larry. 2008. "No Justice. Just us". *Red and Black Revolution*, 14, pp. 3-7.

Wu Ming. 2011. *Disintossicare l'Evento, ovvero: Come si racconta una rivoluzione.* *http://www.wumingfoundation.com/giap/?p=3832* (consulted the 21/07/2011).

Zikide, S'bu. 2008. *Land and Housing*. Speech delivered at the Diakonia Council of Churches Economic Justice Forum, Durban 28/08/2008. http://libcom.org/library/land-housing-sbu-zikode (consulted the 26/08/2010)

Zikide, S'bu. 2009. *The high cost of the right to the city.* http://www.abahlali.org/taxonomy/term/1093 (consulted the 25/05/2009)

Zizek, Slavoy. 2009. *Violence.* London: Profile Books

Zizek, Slavoy. 1999. *The Ticklish Subject: the Absent Centre of Political Ontology*. London: Verso.

Zizek, Slavoy. 2004. "The Ongoing 'Soft Revolution'". *Critical Inquiry*, 30, pp. 292-323