



## From revolutions to uprisings<sup>1</sup>

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1. The translation of the text was produced by the Model Translation Office of the USJT under the coordination of Nivia Marcello.

### Abstract

There are many different ways of expressing indignation about the current structure. Concerning the power established by a state or even moral organizations that control social bodies and actions, the most common way of manifesting occurs through occupation of the streets and use of “slogans”, demonstrating resentment, and either employing or not barricades and / or depredations of the physical space. However, there are different ways of manifesting named by various authors (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016; FOUCAULT, 1994; ARENDT, 2001; BENJAMIN, 2006; FLORESTAN FERNANDES, 2000; BADIOU, 2012; HOBBSAWM, 1995; CANDIOTTO, 2013; GOHN, 2014). From revolutions to uprisings, for instance, there are clear differences concerning internal organization, purpose and action. And, even within each of the concepts, it is possible to observe different readings when analyzing the perspectives of writing of each author. In this article we will analyze and qualify different spheres and ways of manifestation or collective action, thinking about their contradictions and modifications throughout history, especially for understand social movements and activism within the contemporary scenario.

**Keywords:** revolutions; uprising; social movements; activism.

## Introduction

**P**eople are commonly organized in anti-oppression movements because of contradictory social arrangements, inappropriate power, conflicts of interest and ideologies to express dissatisfaction with the current power and to carry their own convictions. These organizations can be unions and political parties, network of collectives such as NGOs or flash mobs in which different agents occupy public or private space because they think they have common goals to fight side by side. These demonstrations of indignation may be named according to their organization and purpose. In the present article, some of these forms of the similarities and differences between these forms of resistance such as revolutions, revolts, insurrections and uprisings will be analyzed. The main focus of this work is on revolutions and uprisings, bringing to light events such as the French May 1968 and the June 2013 Days in Brazil besides proposing a debate around different themes.

Georges Didi-Huberman published the book *Uprisings* in 2016, the result of his exhibition at the Jeu de Paume International Gallery in Paris. Didi-Huberman worked the processes uprisings through the visible and the invisible. In the introduction: “What makes us rise up?” This indignation comes with the questioning of what to do in dark times, implying that revolt is a movement arising from the darkness of some periods. According to Michel Foucault (1994, p.547) “the uprising is a way in which subjectivity is (not that of the great men, but that of an ordinary one) introduced into history and gives it its breath “. On the blackness, obscure times, Didi-Huberman writes:

Dark times; what to do when darkness reigns?  
One can simply wait, bend, and accept it. We tell ourselves it will end. We try to get used to it. Or rather, in the darkness, we painted the piano white. As we get used to it – and this soon happens, because man is a fast-adapting animal

– we do not expect anything else. The time horizon of waiting ends up disappearing, as all visual horizons had disappeared in the darkness. Where darkness reigns without limits there is more to wait. This is called submission to the obscure (or if they prefer obedience to obscurantism). This is called the death drive: the death of desire. (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016, p.14).

According to Didi-Huberman, uprisings would happen as responses to these dark moments, when people are pushed to their limits and join demonstrations carefully organized or possibly considering strategies of struggle. A clear objective in relation to the act of revolt is not always present. Sometimes a fuse ignites an almost uncontrollable wave of struggle and power, or other times modes of organization with a common goal to demonstrate, often related to the expectation of seizure of power. These moments are distinct forms of demonstrating indignation.

When people manifest themselves in this way, the action may be called by an inaccurate name as opposed to their goals or tactics. This type of approach can be understood; after all, uprisings, rebellion, and revolts may resemble each other in certain respects and, under certain conditions; they may evolve or even be confused. In contrast, in some situations this proximity indicates a fundamental ignorance of what is at stake. (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016, p.29).

sue about “uprisings, rebellions and revolts”, similarities and differences between the concepts of revolution, revolt, uprising. Some important processes of upheaval in the last 220 years of Western History (since the bourgeois revolutions) were investigated.

### **From revolutions to uprisings: May 1968, counter-conduct, resistance and social movements in the contemporary setting**

The historian Ricardo Oliveira da Silva, in his article *Revolution, History and Time* (*History: debates and trends journal*) affirms the modern concept of revolution arose in Europe in the second half of the 18th century. In the same period, History also received its modern conception, a fact linked to the process of secularization, in other words, a break with religious ties and with the past and pointing to a future in a new world. That is, the conceptualization of History of modernity comes with a “task of the revolution”. (SILVA, 2015, p.251). This revolution of genesis similar to modernity follows five premises that have directly influenced political and social movements since the 18th century: (i) acceleration of time; (ii) social purpose of political movements; (iii) universal and permanent character; (iv) appearance of the new ; (v) rejection of the past as a value in the present. It is possible to define revolution as “the historical space that separates one power from another power, and where an idea of human action in history is substituted by the instituted” (FURET, 1988, p.40).

Insurrection were analyzed to understand the is-

Although Silva (2015) affirms the concept of revolution, as understood today, had its genesis in the 18th century, the term was used in the previous century in the sense of politics. In contrast, its meaning is the first definition of the noun: the return of the past at that moment. At that time, demonstrations which aimed at a break with the government were called mutiny, uprising, insurrection, riot, or rebellion; not revolution. Therefore, it was in the following century, through Enlightenment, that revolution came to be understood as transformation, disruption, pointing to the future, no more as a return. Besides that, the concept is connected with the notion of passing time, with dynamism in the movements and with a change of how we relate to the past. Silva (2015) shows other characteristics of the term, from political sphere to the social one and its universal character. The author says that revolution as a modern concept related to two main elements: rupture and time. Both form a third one: irreversibility.

The debate about the notion of revolution was carried out by many other thinkers and has an important reference in Hannah Arendt. The author says that in the 18th century, the concept of revolution was no longer linked to astronomical events and is now referred as human actions (ARENDR 2001). In this context, the term begins to deal with the expectation of a new beginning, still deformed, after the end of a period of oppression. Arendt (2001) argues that the search for

change leading to revolutions has, in general, an attempt of freedom.

The idea of freedom becomes central in the search for understanding the meaning of revolution for Arendt, which means that not all conflicts, taken from the State and/or wars can fit into what the author designates revolutionary process. If rebellious groups do not become part of the political scene, there is no revolution.

We can only speak of revolution when this characteristic of novelty is present and when the novelty is linked to the idea of freedom. This clearly means that revolutions are more than successful insurrections and we have no right to call a coup d'état revolution or until we see a revolution in every civil war. (ARENDR 2001, p.39).

Freedom speaks of a direct relationship with politics here. According to the author, there is no possibility of freedom departing from the social sphere and from external relations. Internal freedom is directly related in Arendt, with a certain passivity that ends up making individuals apathetic and sometimes slaves. Freedom implies the contact with other individuals in common public spaces. (ARENDR 2001). Therefore, it is necessary to understand the concept of revolution in Arendt leads to non-individual, but political – the direct relation between this freedom and the existence of plural public spaces through which these free men can speak and act in political terms.

Walter Benjamin understands revolution is only possible with the destruction of capitalism. Therefore, he denounces the false alliance of struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, pointing to the fact that in the Paris Commune it was already clear that it would not be possible the two classes to fight side by side.

Just as the Communist Manifesto ends the era of professional conspirators, the Commune ends the phantasmagoria which dominates the first period of the proletariat. It dispels the illusion that the proletarian revolution must complete the work of 1789 hand in hand with the bourgeoisie. This illusion dominates the period from 1831 to 1871, from the insurrection of Lyon to the Commune. The bourgeoisie never shared this error. Its fight against the social rights of the proletariat begins right in the Great Revolution and coincides with the philanthropic movement. This movement hides it and undergoes its maximum expansion under Napoleon 3rd. (BENJAMIN, 2006, p.50).

This way of revolution, based not on liberty but on the class struggle, denouncing the impossible alliance between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is also present in Florestan Fernandes (2000). What separates both Benjamin and Fernandes from Arendt is the fact that the author does not leave aside the relation between revolution and structural class changes. Arendt believes the end of poverty does not occur through the political

spectrum and the revolution has freedom as the main focus. Fernandes (2000) associates revolution with a social and political power takeover.

[...] even in common sense language, it is known that the word designates drastic and violent changes in the structure of society. Hence the frequent contrast of “gradual change” and “revolutionary change” which underlines the content of revolution as a “structural change” that subverts the prevailing social order in society. (FERNANDES, 2000, p.55)

Starting from the idea that revolution is a rupture, Fernandes (2000) looks at the fact that the use of the term “translates relations of domination”, although he is not interested in the definition of the concept by itself. Fernandes affirms when a Putsch is defined as a revolution, this is not by mere chance. It is simulated that the democratic process has not been interrupted so that its occurrence serves the Nation. In other words, to confuse the meaning of keywords is strategic in the attempt to reverse the relations of domination, as the oppressed does not realize that he occupies this position. This legitimizes the abuses of power (FERNANDES, 2000). But the appropriation of the key words can also be done by the revolutionary people. According to Fernandes (2000), if the workers want to perform creative tasks, they have to seize certain words that cannot be shared with other classes and “calibrate them carefully” so that their meaning is confused

with the sense of collective actions related to the historical task of the revolution.

Thinking about the Brazilian reality of the 1980s, the author recalls that the meaning of revolution was not only linked to the desire of the working class. Some structural changes, called agrarian, urban, and demographic revolution, among others, point towards the approximations or deviations of the growth of the bourgeois order. This is because, if a capitalist society does not carry out any of these transformations, it will be in deficit with the national and democratic revolutions. “These transformations are concomitant and regulated by the degree of internal differentiation of the production system itself”. (FERNANDES, 2000, p.56). In societies where capitalism is less developed, the revolution should be carried out by the “dispossessed and working classes”. However, the model that emerges usually comes from places where such a system is more advanced and that the revolutionary processes are mostly position of upper or middle class members. (FERNANDES, 2000, p.56).

A “semi-democratic” capitalism is better than a capitalist society without any democracy, because in the first model there is a possibility of trade unions and some growth of the labor movement, for the author. In contrast, Fernandes (2000) recalls that revolutions made possible by the capitalist process end up bringing damage to the working class. For him, the revolution

should be guided by this class as opposed to the bourgeoisie, denouncing the end of the times of the current model of revolution. He points to the fact that its realization in the peripheral countries comes from “self-defense egoism of the bourgeoisie” (FERNANDES, 2000, p.57). This action is justified by a revolution by the proletariat, from the periphery to the center of capitalism. This fact fosters a movement of self-protection of the center bourgeoisies that “organize themselves as true bastilles and promote their ‘democratic pluralism’ or ‘democratic socialism’ as if they were political equivalent of revolutionary socialism and communism”. (FERNANDES, 2000, p.57).

The way in which capitalism relates to the development of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat-social classes as its basis for formation and consolidation – is exacerbated, and it aggravates the antagonism between capital and labor. Because of this, Fernandes (2000) shows the existence of a veiled permanent civil war, which leads to the opening of revolution. He believes this constant tension, sometimes unbalanced, is what generates the main transformations of society. Thus, the revolution in Fernandes (2000) only makes sense in the hands of the workers, but one must be aware of the existence of a “counter-revolution” related to the bourgeoisie that feeds this social tension. Revolution and counterrevolution appear as political and / or civil war and the victory of one or the other depends on the relation of the social forces that each class applies to the revolutionary trans-

formation or defense of the order.

Revolution and counter-revolution are, therefore, two sides of the same reality. Under the latent civil war, the self-defensive pressure of the bourgeoisie can be contained within the limits of “legality” “The proletarian counter-attack is limited to the defense of its class autonomy and its collective participation in the bourgeois power system. In other words, the bourgeoisie moves away from the historical tasks imposed by its class revolution, but the proletariat does not. It forces and violates the dynamics of capitalist society, forcing the strategic sectors of the bourgeois classes to return to be aware of the revolutionary transformation of the competitive social order. (FERNANDES, 2000, p.62)

Following the text *O que é Revolução* (What is revolution?), written in 1981, Fernandes (2000) based on Lenin stating that *The Collapse of the Second International* (1914-1915), the author suggests the impossibility of revolution if society is not immersed in a revolutionary situation, but, this is not enough for the outbreak of the revolution. Then, Fernandes (2000) lists three indications of what would be a revolutionary situation: (i) a crisis that generates the inability of the ruling class to maintain its power unchanged; (ii) a worsening of poverty and hardship; (iii) intensification, derived from previous situations, of the action of the masses. But these factors are not enough for a revolution to happen. It only occurs, according

to Fernandes (2000), if there is a subjective transformation: the capacity of the masses to lead the revolution towards total or partial destruction of the old government. Beyond, the author emphasizes the center of the revolution lies in the class struggle, placing it as the starting point of the “revolutionary situation”.

Thinking about the relation revolution counter-revolution, Fernandes (2000) mentions the bourgeoisie does not know how to deal with class struggle. Thus, the author presents a bourgeois co-optation of both socialism and capitalism. This sees centrality as democracy created by the bourgeoisie itself. This does not mean the end of revolution, but it shows the advance of the struggle towards the interests of the bourgeoisie, and a decline in the working class to attain power.

If a rigorous analysis is carried out, which takes into account developments in central capitalist societies, the bourgeoisie not only learned to live with the class struggle – it went further and bent the socialist movement itself. First, and the communist movement then forcing them to define the bourgeois form of democracy as its political axis (that is, it forced them to deny the class struggle and the violent, “undemocratic” means of conquering power). (FERNANDES, 2000, p. 66).

The situation tends to worsen even more when Fernandes (2000) states that the emergence of the “ultramodern” industry minimized the pow-

ers of the working class. The middle class grew and working class diminished, with the predominance of intellectual work, with a mass society where individuals are depoliticized. This fact can be related to Eric Hobsbawm (1995) when he affirms the 1960, mainly May 68, represents the last revolution, especially if it is affected in the sense of the universality of the word. Silva (2015) also states that the 1970s represent the downfall of the sense of revolution in the Western world. In this period the working class was not considered a potent revolutionary group anymore, mainly in countries of Western Europe and the USA, due to the social welfare and to the growth of the society of consumption. This society steals workers' energy, through a mass alienation, guided by the systematic use of strategic neoliberal words both in terms of production and consumption of products, information, lifestyle, mobility, flexibility, and productivity, the logic of the ephemeral. .

The chaos of the 1960s, the month of May 1968 in Paris is the most symbolic, the one that persisted with intensity in the minds and questions about the facts and the forces that led to it, in relation to urban upheavals.

France of the 1960s was experiencing a period of contradictions. With De Gaulle, the country underwent a rapid industrial and economic modernization that substantially altered the French social structure. This growth of industry increased investment in education, especially between 1962

and 1968. Alain Badiou (2012) argues that industry enables the establishment of mass universities, and that “a broad fraction of the progressive petty bourgeoisie (that is, tempted to join the proletariat because of its exclusion from power) had access to higher education, exerting ever stronger pressure on his servile academicism”. (BADIOU, 2012, p.28). This fact represented influenced the beginning of the French demonstrations together with the American failure in the Vietnam War and by the complex situation of the new universities.

In general terms, the country was in a favorable economic and social moment with significant advances over the previous ten years. Thus, for Alan Woods (2008), the intense flow of mobilization was a surprise not only to the right wing, but also to the left wing that no longer saw in the workers the revolutionary potential. However, 1968 had the greatest effervescence of the 20th century. It should be remembered that this process began a few years earlier, as early as 1966 with the first demonstration in Paris that denounced the opposition of French students to the Vietnam War. The following year student Benno Ohnesorg was killed in Berlin by the German police and German demonstrations echoed in France. A German student called Rudi Dutschke was wounded with two head shots fired by a far-right wing supporter.

In 1967, the global recession generated unemployment in France. Manufacturers, especially steel and textiles stagnated, and trade unions organized



demonstrations not to lose control of the situation, but they were harshly repressed by the police. Moreover, there was a wave of demonstrations in the countryside, where rural producers reported a significant drop in their production. This year was marked by several conflicts on the streets of the French countryside. The demonstrations of 1968 started in early January, at Nanterre University, founded in that decade, in favor of the youth minister François Missoffe, who was in the region to inaugurate a new swimming pool. The main claims at the time were free access to universities and improved teaching; release of arrested students and more political and personal freedom.

Some important events occurred in France in 1968: the occupation of the administration building of the University of Nanterre on March 22; the march in Paris to support Rudi Dutschke, on April 12; the fight between students and police officers after the order of the university's rector of campus vacancy, with more than one hundred students injured, May 3; and finally the Night of the Barricades, on May 10 and 11, in which the Latin Quarter, the former university district of Paris, was enveloped by tens of thousands of people.

According to João Bernardo (2008) it is common to consider that in France of 68 there were two main ideological currents followed by the students. The first, linked to the thinking of Marcuse, said that the working class was integrated with capitalism through consumption. This placed the

young people of different social background as responsible for the revolution, since they were oppressed victims. The second one was based on Marxist thoughts and supported the idea that the working class was more powerful to carry out revolution. There was then a question: how would the student and the workers struggle together? The idea was a refusal to the bourgeois university that propagated the exploitation, a radical transformation and education of intellectuals willing to fight alongside the workers and not against them. The "student and worker struggles convergence should be done not through negotiations between union leaders, but on the street in confrontations with the police". (BERNARDO, 2008, p. 26).

The initial demands of the workers were workers' rights, fairer wages and no dismissal, but the movement was grew unexpectedly and on May 20 France stood still. According to Woods (2008), the schools were closed and occupied by teachers and students who organized activities for the children of the strikers; there were women's committees and lawyers; the observatory was occupied by astronomers; and the claims came even from the church, where debates happened during masses. Even the police supported the students, issuing a note on May 13 rebuking General de Gaulle's lack of debate.

The government apparently no longer had control over the uprisings and many demanded the resignation of De Gaulle, who responded to the protests

on May 24 through a speech in which he promised a petition to give students and workers more rights.

In another address to union leaders and the Communist Party, De Gaulle on May 30 dissolved the National Assembly, new elections, and George Pompidou as Prime Minister. The trade unions and the Communist Party were offered offices. At the same time, demonstrators received a threat because the bourgeoisie would not surrender its power without fighting. Woods (2008) says the current situation was restructured and elections were scheduled for 23 and 30 June, with De Gaulle's attempt to gain support outside parliament. As a result, there was a march with tens of thousands of government supporters. These people wrapped in French flags were middle-class citizens, retired mayors, pensioners and others apparently outraged by the uprisings that were taking place.

For Woods (2008), the contrast between the demonstrations showed the power of the revolution, however, it was still a final blow to the seizure of power. But this was never given. The workers could not remain mobilized for much longer and returned to the factories, the attendance in the assemblies diminished, and the fatigue set in. In early June, strikes ended. With the fall of the movement, the state was strengthened and more aggressive. On 11 June, there was a massacre with many wounded and arrested, the next day, demonstrations were banned in

France. Journalists and students were arrested and police occupied universities.

Many hypotheses are put forward to understand the facts of May 68. Badiou (2012) divides it into four different ways: the student, the worker, the libertarian, and what did not end in 68.

The first is formed by university students and secondary students with two main forces: on the one hand the ideology and the Marxist symbol represented by the idea of revolution, on the other the acceptance of anti-repressive violence.

The second one was built by the working class that staged the largest general strike in the history of France. It also had radical and innovative elements, despite its classification as "classically left wing" by the author. Badiou (2012) cites three main elements of radicalism: the striking genesis, external to traditional workers' organizations; the strategy of occupation of factories; and the systematic peripheral and violent confrontations, such as kidnappings of the company owners.

Badiou (2012) calls the third May "May libertarian," which questioned the moral and social traditions in search of individual liberties, especially of bodies and feelings. This movement-forming bias of 68 occupied the cultural sphere, proposing new forms of collective action, especially in relation to the theater and the cinema. It is also "a particular component of May 1968, which we

may call ideological, snob and anarchical, but it is part of the general mood of the event”. (BADIOU, 2012, p.20). The ideological confrontation between the classical left and leftism was present in the whole movement, which was often contradictory and disruptive.

Despite the relevance of all these “Mays”, the most important and emblematic is the fourth once as it is related to the others. This May fourth lasted from 68 to 78 and so is known as the ‘68s. The main issue of this moment was the transformation of the conception of politics, believing the so-called “old politics” had ended, and desperately seeking the construction of a “new politics”. In the 1970s and 1980s .With this new conception, there was also the belief in the existence of a “historical agent that brings the possibility of emancipation”. (BADIOU, 2012, p.20). The proletariat would be responsible for this and its existence as a potential modification which is different from the current period. A complete emancipation was believed, marked naturally by history, it was not only a generalized nonconformity that gave rise to the joint of different groups.

For Badiou (2012), the existence of objective actors required a subjective force. To be powerful, organized subjects need to rebel, be understood as the parties. Therefore, much of the force of 68 was on the red flag. However, this process was responsible for the gradual disappearance of such a symbol. “May 1968 has a fundamental ambiguity

between a unanimously shared language and the beginning of the end of the use of this language”. (BADIOU, 2012, p.21). The gradual erasure of the communist banner started in 1968 and the question of the basic institutions of the left wing such as the unions, the parties and the known leaders. The 1968 movement was close to the anarchist lines and a profound critique of representative democracy. The most contradictory is that in the face of all this demonstration and indignation, the elections after May 1968 led to the most reactionary congress members ever seen. “It was clear the election is not only, and not even primarily, a device of representation: it is also a device for repressing movements, novelties, and ruptures”. (BADIOU, 2012, p.22).

Ahead of this revolutionary and contradictory movement, a strong move by the bourgeoisie to recover hostility to the proletariat and to scientific socialism, accompanied by distrust and rejection of the class struggle, in a profound process of individualism addicted to disappointment, frustration, and fatigue.

According to César Candiotta (2013), Foucault saw, at the end of the 20th century, what can be understood as the end of the processes of revolution? Or at least, the end of the way they were understood until then. After 1968, with the weakening of the Communist Party and the student struggle of daily life, freedom and autonomism, the new phase of revolutions would not occur in

the institutional sphere – within parties or unions –, but in the social field, with the emergence of other forms of social interaction.

It is on this new way of manifesting that Foucault works the concept of counter-conduct. When there is no class struggle, or significant social upheaval, one cannot speak of revolution, but it is quite possible to call the event of counter-conduct. This form of struggle is not tied to a party or a class and does not even have the intention of seizing power.

[...] collectively identifiable movements such as insurgency, uprising, insurrection, clandestinely and all anarchic struggles inscribed within an immediate history, just to remember the text *Le sujet et le pouvoir*. These modalities of counter-conduct impose limits to the conduct of life and individuality on the part of the rulers, whenever it involves abuse of power, oppression of a people, use of questionable means and excuses. (CANDIOTTO, 2013, p.228).

Foucault (1994) differentiates revolution from insurrection by stating that the former, as already stated by other authors, has an intimate relationship with time and therefore occupies a place in history, while the latter says of man and his humanity in a small cut of time. Insurrections are like interruptions of the thread of history that occur outside it. The insurrection can then be seen as an escape linked to the quest for freedom and rights.

Another fundamental difference between revolution and insurrection pointed out by Candiotto (2013) is the form of valuation and evaluation of the movements. In the case of revolution, it is fundamental to analyze whether it has been successful or unsuccessful so that a revolution can be considered or not, which also distinguishes it from a revolutionary process. The insurrection and the counter-conducts are not part of this method of analysis, since they do not intend the seizure of power. Therefore, any act that goes against servitude, any uprising, has significant value in these categories of struggle.

Another form of counter-conduct is revolt. It is marked as moments of contestation which do not directly aim at victory. However, they approach a little more than what is known as revolution. This is because an insurrection is not victorious; it does not apply to it. It is made up of small losses and gains, commonly established in the scale of the micro, but a revolt can be victorious and when this happens, it becomes a revolution. In addition, Luiz Arnaut (2017) says revolts are always related to a theoretical reference that not only accompanies, but also modifies the practice. This may happen for a shorter period of time than the reflections on the revolution (which was built more than a century ago), but greater than is generally the case in insurrections and uprisings.

The uprisings also do not have victory or defeat as a form of analysis and valuation. According to

Didi-Huberman (2016), the uprisings are always on the side of submissions, but can be understood as the survival of desire “in this space designed to neutralize it”. (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016, p.16). They can be seen as a gesture. The hand extended, the wrist closed, the movement of bodies, the inclination of the trunk, the desecration of the word. All this can be an uprising and there is no scale capable of measuring these actions. The uprisings “range from the tiniest gesture of retreat to the most gigantic protest movement.” (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016,p.16). For the author, it is an infinite sign, repeated several times and sovereign, as it can also be named the desire for freedom.

The uprising is a protest against others, against a form of power, is to show and to be heard in situations where, precisely, it is not allowed to stand up, show and make you heard. The uprising is not simply for the symbolic value of appearing in public when this act is forbidden. It is done with certain energy, strength, with a physical and visceral intent that is not only individual, but shared – the uprising occurs with a determination that will one day put an end to a common condition for too long supported. (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016, p. 25).

Didi-Huberman says it is impossible to make an uprising without using a certain force, but it does not explain where this force comes from. What it is known is that the uprising is the place that is reached when a limit has been exceeded and

is necessary to rise up and leave. These are two sides of a coin. The uprising is then the impulse that seeks the end to a condition that has lasted too long and has become unbearable.

A significant difference between uprising and revolution, apart from the assessment of victory or defeat, is that revolution is a singular-universal and collective, the uprising is individual. According to Didi-Huberman (2016), for example, a State is unable to make an uprising, even if it is at war with another State.

In an uprising, there are individuals who participate in the action that has a form and a sense of sociopolitical order, even though figures of the State are not engaged in it. In the context of this social action, no individual acts alone, but nevertheless does not emerge a collective subject capable of homogenizing individual differences. (DIDI-HUBERMAN, 2016, p.23 - 24).

It is not imagined that, in an uprising, all people agree with the same political objectives. What leads to the uprising, is not his final agenda, but a collective feeling of indignation, fueled by the desire to end a situation that is unbearable. The question of the uprising lies in denying the darkness and not in the light that is expected, it comes from the refusal and not from the proposal. The uprising is against certain things not in favor of another. There is a fundamental difference between uprisings and revolutions.

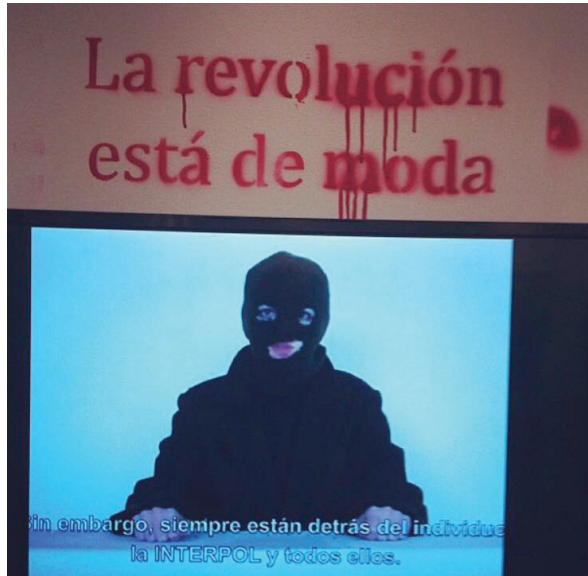


Figure 1. Photo of work exhibited by Maria Mercedes Salgado at the ARTBO Fair - International Art Fair of Bogota - 2012. Natacha Rena.

2. Gohn (2014a) relates the new social movements to the wave of movements between the 1970s and 1980s, characterized by more universal patterns, related primarily to the struggle of classes and institutional structures such as unions and political parties. The Brazilian strikes of the period, including the 1979 ABC Strike, are important examples. In general, they present vertical structure, or rather, tree structure, related to what is defined as militancy.

An uprising is not the same thing as a one-off manifestation, but for Didi-Huberman, when it comes to more intense and enduring manifestations, they may become uprisings.

### **Uprisings, insurrections and counter-councils and the urban question in times of post-Fordism capitalism**

Today, the main uprisings, insurrections and counter-rebels – what we can call resistance – are related to the urban issue. This is due not only to the fact that these movements have occupied the spaces of the city, which can be considered the “shop floor” of contemporary struggles, but also because they present issues affecting the cities as central debates. This is the case, for example, of rules related to the right to the city and to housing, the right to mobility, the occupation of public spaces, a dispute for what is common, and the questioning of private property.

A wave of resistance is observed in the 21st century with levels of intensity that resembles the 1960s. Uprisings occupied a significant part of the eastern and western worlds. Maria da Glória Gohn (2014a) relates these manifestations to what she calls brand new social movements.<sup>2</sup> These are different from the new social movements mainly because of its horizontal and hybrid character, rhizomatic, and for presenting guidelines different from class struggle, but with claims for rights, mostly related to identity, in general. These global

movements were mostly fueled by the effects of the crisis of 2008. As an example the so-called Arab Spring, covering several countries (Tunisia, Algeria, Jordan, Oman, Egypt, Sudan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, among others) and Occupy Movements, such as the Occupy Wall Street in New York, 15M in Spain, the June Days in Brazil, among others. As reported by the artist Maria Mercedes Salgado, in video exhibited at the Fair ARTBO (International Art Fair of Bogotá) in 2012 and registered by Natacha Rena (Figure 1), the revolutions or what they understood in their common sense were in vogue.

Manuel Castells (2013) questions the reasons for movements in such different economic, social and cultural contexts. According to him, the main similarity is the indignation with the perverse complicity between the financial and political elites. This description is close to what Didi-Huberman (2016) stated about the motivation that gave rise to uprisings. Then can someone think that the forms of revolt of the most recent social movements are closer to insurrections and uprisings than to revolution? If we adopt Foucault’s (1994) idea, we say yes as an answer. The author affirms the revolutions ended in the 20th century XX, indicating that from then on counter-conducts would take place. Then, it is necessary to present the difference between the new and the new social movements proposed by Gohn.

Nowadays, social movements are distinct from those that led to their emergence in the public

3. Pierre Dardot and Christian Laval (2016) define capital state as an association between the State institution and the companies in a logic in which the State becomes strong when associated with the business desires and increasingly is emptied when deals with social interests. In this context, there is no minimum state, on the contrary, it is a fundamental support to the proper functioning of capitalism, even with its internal functioning logics and business vocabulary.

4. The transference of what is called Fordist capitalism to the post-Fordist is fundamental for a general understanding of transformations in lifestyle and self-manifestation. The contemporary capitalism is immaterial and presents strong rhizomatic characteristics.

scene of the 19th century, and in the first decades of the 20th century; (the labor movement and revolutionary movements since the French Revolution) and the movements that emerged in the United States in the years of 1960 (civil rights, feminism, against Vietnam War, student, etc.). In Latin America, especially in Brazil, the current social movements are distinct from the movements in the populist political regime, just as they are also different from the movements of the late 1970s and early 1980s (popular movements claiming improvements, urban groups articulated with the church, political groups opposed to the military regime, etc.), even though although many of the current movements are connected to the 1980s. In that decade, the movements struggled to have “the right to have rights”. Since we can only speak of rights if we contemplate the universal, those movements were not self-centered, they did not look only at themselves. Nowadays, many of the new movements, or civil actions called movements, no longer have the universal as a horizon, but rather the particular, the immediate interests, the right of its category or social group. (GOHN, 2014a, p.11-12).

What can be understood from this new conformation of struggles designed by the newest social movements is the articulation of organized civil society (or not) stand against public policies and decisions by the Capital State<sup>3</sup>. This association of civil society occurs mostly through activism. According to Bernardo Neves et al. (2018, p.

230) the main characteristics of activism are in its form of rhizomatic organization that “has evanescent, diffuse, and fragmented structures, which alternate contingently, in a network, with a variable swarm logic, always creating new connections and new assemblages of patterns, actors, and ways of doing”. Rena (2015) classifies post-crisis of 2008 movements as activism and shows its heterogeneous character, linked with streets and networks, both in terms of action and dissemination, based on indignation with constant expropriations of what is public or common on the part of the Capital State, which is privatized.

The three changes which marked the worldwide resistance since the 1960s are interconnected. The first one is that revolutions are no longer present and have given rise to the strengthening of counter-conduct, such as uprisings and uprisings. The second one occurred in Brazil after the end of the 1980s and is the transfer of the new social movements to the newest. The third one relates to a weakening of activism – engaging, national and vertical – that gives way to activism – swarming, local / global and horizontal-. These changes are directly related to changes in the way capitalism operates<sup>4</sup> which tends to post-Fordism by raising other forms of organization, even in opposition. According to Pelbart (2003):

The ideal, today, is to be as lean as possible, as light as possible, to have the maximum possible mobility, maximum useful connections, ma-

ximum information, maximum seaworthiness. In order to be able to pay attention to the most pertinent projects with finite duration, which the right people are mobilized for, and after which they are all available again for other invitations, other proposals, and other connections. The very figure of the entrepreneur no longer coincides with that which accumulates everything, capital, property, family. On the contrary, it is the one that can move more, of city, country, universe, environment, language, and sector. The connectionist world is entirely rhizomatic, not finalist, not with identity, issues, favors hybridity, migration, multiple interfaces, metamorphoses, etc. Of course the ultimate goal of capitalism remains the same, it aims at profit (...) (PELBART, 2003, p.97).

The June 2013 Days were the Brazilian brand of participation in the movements of the aforementioned cycle of global struggles after the world economic crisis of 2008. Among the categories discussed here, it can be understood that it was a set of uprisings, composed of activists involved in processes called by Gohn (2014a) as brand-new social movements. Such analysis is only possible when thinking about the formation of the groups and the interests involved in that context. According to Gohn (2014b) in his book *Manifestações de junho de 2013 no Brasil e nas praças dos indignados no mundo*:

It should be noted, however, that the June 2013

Days in Brazil are not 'nationalist'; on the contrary, they are shown as modes and forms of collective action, especially acquired / constructed via social networks and mobile phones, and come from global, international waves. (...) June demonstrators in Brazil worked in non-hierarchical collectives, with decentralized management and demonstrations with aesthetics. The participants have more autonomy, do not act under the coordination of a central leadership. They are movements with values, principles and forms of organization distinct from other social movements, such as trade unions, popular (urban and rural), as well as different identity movements (women, quilombola community members, indigenous people, etc.) (GOHN, 2014b, p.11).

The June 2013 Days were a kind of very complex plot of movements that became present in the networks and streets, built by individuals that made up a collective, but not because they had common transversal objectives, such as a revolution. But because they shared diverse dissatisfactions. There was no struggle for power-taking in the revolutionary style, much less a homogeneous set of clearly designed outlines and proposals. The bodies in the streets were against big urban projects, against politics, against the vertical and institutionalized organizations. In many moments, they denied the party institutions and their banners. The uprisings spread in an apparently uncontrollable way. The groups that made



up the acts were as diverse (and sometimes opposite) as possible. There were liberals, Marxists, anarchists, and autonomous people, all together in indignation and separated in desires and ideas.

The June 2013 Days resemble 1960 due to the multiplicity of overlapping readings, strength and impact of the uprisings. The development of the national economy is both in the French and Brazilian uprisings. In this sense, the motivation for these gestures as described by Didi-Huberman (2016). In both cases one can cite what Badiou (2012) poses as the belief that there would be agents involved in the processes of resistance capable of changing history in an emancipating sense. These agents presented similar characteristics: a strong criticism to representative democracy. Furthermore, new movements for multiple rights (housing, transportation, urban nature, etc.) can be cited as well as the growth of far-right parties and a constant attack on traditional left parties, leading to the emergence of other current socialist ideas within the “new politics” spectrum.

The lack of space for party demonstrations and the participation of trade unions in the June 2013 Days is another element that must be taken into account when analyzing events in the period. In general, the struggles traced by these organizations are linked to what is meant by new social movements that traditionally guided the issue of class as the important basis of their dispute. Their demonstrations were generally marked by

the presence of a middle-class civil society concerned with individual and collective rights. The narrative of the class struggle was left aside and incorporated guidelines related to urban issues, and the right to the city, housing, transportation, and a discourse linked to non-partisanship and the new politics free from corruption.

Benjamin (2006) and Fernandes (2000) warned about the traps present in revolutionary compositions of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. The first one says that the revolution is in charge of the working class that should not be influenced by the bourgeoisie; while the second brings the bourgeois class as a group responsible for a counter-revolution, pointing to the existence of a constant civil war between the revolutionaries (workers) and the counter-revolutionaries (bourgeois).

Lastly, most contemporary struggles take place within the framework of rights rather than class struggle. This is a radical change. The concern with what is called transversality has slightly arisen to add the class question to the identity agenda. This typical formation of contemporary movements, away from a unity of patterns and objectives, has preoccupied several theorists such as David Harvey (2016), especially with regard to the centrality of the theme of freedom, which was stressed in relation to social justice issues.

Do we work, almost unknowingly, with partial, corrupted, and ultimately restrictive concepts of freedom

and autonomy, which only support the status quo and, in a deeper sense, represent the deformed view of capital over what rights are and social justice? Is the economic engine of capital so strongly bound up with certain fundamental but partial concepts of freedom and autonomy that it is no more than a worst-case, entrepreneurial and, at its best, liberal humanist approach to the crucial political question of freedom versus domination? (HARVEY, 2016, p.186).

### Final Considerations

Didi-Huberman (2016) considers uprising an individual action, but he mentions the presence of a “we” in the sharing of the action, which happens now, there is no future commitment. In this move of the present, uprisings have precise claims. In his view, uprisings are unthinkable without cyber militancy, a contemporary possibility of different spaces occupied by the bodies to perform the actions: physical and virtual. Manuel Castells (2013) says it would be the networks and streets acting synchronously.

In this way, the contemporary gestures of the uprisings reveal undeniable similarities regardless of temporal differences. But contemporaries are composed of a peculiar form of articulation that relies on the overlapping of physical and virtual spaces. This new characteristic is about the emergence of other ways of articulation and creation of networks, directly related to the activist strategies of action. The easing of the struggle is inserted in the neoliberal

logic of articulation of life, It is focused on the present and the way of compromising that differs greatly from militant actions, both in theoretical and time involvement. This easing points to a distance from the standards proposed by militants who have lost space for action somewhat.

Before the above-mentioned changes in forms of struggle, ranging from the “end” of revolutions to the emergence of activism within the context of the newest social movements, it is necessary to question the consequences that such changes bring to political organization and resistance as a whole. Moreover, it is important to think about the origin of such changes related to a post-Fordist society.

Where did these new demands for group formation and fighting strategies arise from? Who cares about these changes? Who funds the main Foundations and NGOs that finance the main lines of the new social activist movements? Why do they do it?

Since the popular classes in Brazil are much more evidently represented by the popular movements as MST and not by the broad middle-class entangled in the newest social movements also is it necessary to recover the model of militancy and new social movements in the contemporary process?

How can the militant and popular movements advance to urban activism without losing sight of a broader, more national and universal struggle, involving rights guidelines and broad guidelines

by real distribution of income and wealth, as is the case of agrarian reform? How to interweave the new social movements to the newest social movements gaining more speed and intensity when it is necessary to occupy the networks and the streets beyond the field of the militants organized in the popular field?

These questions are as fundamental as the need to understand the victorious or failed results of revolutions and the positive or negative reflections of the uprisings to understand the complexity of such occurrences towards an analysis composed by the overlapping of the numerous controversies revealed in investigations. It is necessary to understand the multiplicity of interests and actors related not only to each movement, but also to the connection between them in the sense of external and internal changes. When it comes to movements that participate in global waves or what some call #global revolution, the research on the struggles within a geopolitical context should be pursued.

Finally, these findings suggest concepts and theories that can clarify the processes of struggle in the contemporary world. More research is needed to understand these issues.

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