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Memories of life experiences in a teacher training institution during the revolution

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We evoke here events that took place in an ordinary school, the Teacher Training College in Coimbra (Portugal), during the on-going revolutionary process (*processo revolucionário em curso*; PREC), in an attempt to understand people's actions within the collective becoming of a certain time and place, and to grasp how memory works as a narrative of the recollection of events connected with the course of the individual and the society. We equate the issue of memory – as the essential dimension, when collecting information, of the construction of individual and collective identity, embodied by the relevant social frameworks – with the feeling, relevance and interpretation of such memory at the time of its recovery. We listened to the memories revived during the interviews and to the narratives reconstructed, either through our intervention fostering the active search for memories, or actively listening and participating in their stories, focusing on their personal experiences as teachers or students of that institution, and scrutinising the personal processes of reconstruction, the expression of a claimed and overt memory, which feeds, rhetorically, on an experienced ideology. Memory is particularly invoked here because it takes us on a journey to the past, while exploring the recollections of people who experienced unique events which cannot be captured or reproduced in any other way.

Keywords: Memory; history; ideology; teacher training college; PREC

Pretext and context

Memory – a scientifically validated personal ability – is regularly assumed within the scope of social and human sciences as a collective, national, professional or family faculty. In his studies, Joël Candau¹ describes three levels or forms of memory: (1) memory itself, which when exercised triggers the development of the art of memory and, sometimes, means a set of memorisation and rememorisation techniques, one of the domains of ancient rhetoric; (2) protomemory, which includes *ethos* and multiple learnings of early socialisation – Pierre Bourdieu's

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¹*Mémoire et identité* (Paris, PUF, 1998); Joël Candau, *Les processus de la mémoire partagée*, *Pour* no. 181 (2004): 118-123; idem, *Anthropologie de la mémoire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2005); Joël Candau, "Bases antropológicas e expressões mundanas da busca patrimonial: memória, tradição, identidade," *Revista Memória em Rede*, <http://www.ufpel.edu.br/ich/memoriaemrede/wp/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/revista-n1.pdf> (accessed May 25, 2011).

habitus; (3) metamemory, which is usually shared: the representations which the subject builds from his recollections and his verbalisation of what he recalls. Of all of these levels or forms of memory, protomemory, translating something passive, is similar to Aristotelian *mneme*,² while memory and metamemory, the active search for recollections, are affiliates of what the Greek philosopher called *anamnesis*. On the other hand, if memory itself seems to enhance a phenomenology of memory, proto and metamemory emerge in connection with a collective memory. In fact, memory arises from the combination and interconnection of the described forms of memory, and the latter form, the act of memorising or remembering, is socially oriented. Memory is particularly invoked here, because it takes us on a journey to the past, while exploring the recollections of people who experienced unique events which cannot be otherwise captured or reproduced. Our purpose is to try to understand how they got involved in educational practices and events in a teacher training college in a political context featuring significant ideological and social turmoil; we seek to interpret the different players, both teachers and students, in an attempt to clarify the pedagogical ideas and ideologies arising at the time. The present study provides valuable input for understanding the educational environment in Portugal in the mid-1970s and helps to understand how these players lend meaning to the dynamics experienced, either by getting involved in such dynamics or through their life path and the progress of their way of thinking. However, the time has come to describe the political context of such experience.

On 25 April 1974, a group of captains – independent of any political or social faction – conducted a coup in an attempt to democratize the Portuguese state and society. Apparently, immediately after the coup d'État, there was consensus among the members of the first provisional government, the military and some sectors of society that the rapid implementation of a democratic regime was needed. Between this time and 25 November 1975, however, Portugal underwent a transitional period, during which the nature of the regime was an open question.³ During the On-going Revolutionary Process (PREC), the State became a platform of multiple social and political uprisings, which caused its administrative paralysis. The events of 11 March 1975 sped up the revolutionary process and fostered a growing State-led economy through the nationalisation of banks, insurance companies and the largest industrial, transport and telecommunication companies. Until November of 1975, the other «achievements» of the revolution took place: agrarian reform and workers' control had occurred. Nevertheless, the neutralisation of capitalist power did not translate into enhanced power to the people; on the contrary, a *duality of impotence* and the genesis of a *dual State*⁴ developed from the strategy conducted to draw the State closer to the people's social movement. That social movement, in

²Paul Ricoeur, *La Mémoire, L'Histoire, L'Oubli* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2000).

³António Costa Pinto, "Enfrentando o legado autoritário na transição para a democracia." In *Revolução e Democracia – 2. O País em Revolução*. Direção de José Maria Brandão de Brito (Lisboa: Círculo de Leitores, 2001), 359–84.

⁴Boaventura Sousa Santos, *O Estado e a Sociedade em Portugal (1974-1988)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998).

spite of all of the political parties' attempts to take control, preserved spaces of autonomy and was neither confused nor merged with the political forces.⁵

These events caught the Ministry of Education right in the middle of its restructuring,⁶ in a country where the government played (and still plays) the lead role in educational policies⁷ and at a time when education was at the heart of the debate about the social development model. This political framework produced a mandate for the educational system: to drive the democratisation of success and the fight against social imbalances.⁸

During the ideological debate and actions, two trends of the revolutionary process competed: the *dynamics of bases* and *instrumentalisation*.⁹ The dynamics of bases focused on fostering the participation of stakeholders in the life of each school and in the local development of the democratic process, thus supporting direct democracy, as a democratically legitimated power and as an alternative to (and restricting) the more streamlined intervention of the Ministry of Education. Immediately after 25 April, this trend was connected with the occupation of schools, the wiping out of school masters, teachers and staff engaged in the New State and management committees which were appointed in the lyceums, thus creating forms of participatory control. The other trend, which followed a centralised logic founded on a set ideological model linked to the experiences and logics of centralising (State-led) socialist regimes, strived for a dynamic from the centre to the periphery based on the *instrumentalisation* of academic knowledge, ideological principles and societal organisation techniques, and asserting itself in areas where democratic legitimacy did not support the social movement of the people, as in the case of training colleges for primary school teachers.

The instrumentalisation trend, founded on the streamlining of State intervention in combination with some level of permeability of local circumstances, conducted a reform of the teacher training colleges (note that after 25 April the elected management committees in Leiria and Lamego were dissolved and replaced by headmasters appointed by the primary education board).¹⁰ The reform sought to train teachers prepared for the new reality of Portuguese society¹¹ and tried to create a “antifascist

⁵Ricardo Petrella, Portugal – *os próximos 20 anos. Reflexões sobre o futuro de Portugal (e da Europa)* (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1990).

⁶Teresa Ambrósio, “O sistema educativo: ruptura, desestabilização e desafios europeus.” In *Portugal Contemporâneo*. Volume III. Direção de António Reis (Lisboa: Alfa/Seleções Reader's Digest, 1996), 665–74.

⁷Stephen R. Stoer, “O Estado e as Políticas Educativas: Uma proposta de mandato renovado para a *Escola Democrática*,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 41 (1994): 3–33.

⁸Stephen R. Stoer, Alan D. Stoleroff, and José Alberto Correia, “O Novo Vocacionalismo na Política Educativa em Portugal e a Reconstrução da Lógica da Acumulação,” *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais*, no. 29 (1990): 11–53.

⁹António Gomes Ferreira and Luís Mota, “A formação de professores do ensino primário durante a crise revolucionária (1974-1976)” (paper presented at II Colóquio Internacional 1909–2009: Crise e Criatividade através da Imprensa, Coimbra, Portugal, October 7–9, 2009).

¹⁰Rogério Fernandes, *Educação: Uma Frente de Luta* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1977).

¹¹“Educar em Portugal. Mesa Redonda,” *Raiz & Utopia. Críticas e alternativas para uma civilização diferente*, no. 9/10 (1979): 55–133.

and democratic” school.¹² The headmasters appointed were “idoneous people”¹³ who would ensure the delivery of “suitable pedagogical and academic education for the construction of a socialist society”.¹⁴ With the view of creating a *new teacher*,¹⁵ teacher training colleges should follow a *liberating philosophy* founded on a *progressive pedagogy in which theory and practice fertilised each other*, thus fostering the end of the *wedge between intellectual and manual work*¹⁶ and embracing intervention in the communities to drive change.

The reform of ordinary primary education risked not progressing due to the absence of a legal framework that could sustain it, since, as Manuel Matos states, some staff at the Ministry of Education and of the Primary Education Directorate-General (DGEB) turned out to be “so legalistic [...] that the lack of a revolutionary legal framework prevented them from also joining the Revolution, which they visibly regretted”.¹⁷ A solution was found in the Decree-law of 1967, i.e. of the dictatorial regime, regarding the “Pedagogical Experiences”¹⁸ which enabled the “progressive adjustment of study plans”¹⁹ and allowed the Minister “to order the collaboration in these experiences of teaching and non-teaching staff from other institutions in the Ministry [...] regardless of how it was upheld, and dismissing them totally or partially from their own functions”.²⁰ During the revolutionary crisis, primary teacher training colleges functioned on the basis of these pedagogical experiences.

The intention of resorting to Decree-law 1967 was to ensure that the members of the faculty were committed to the new educational goals and to setting the pedagogical and scientific grounding of the new teacher training schools. The study plans and programmes were progressively adjusted to local experiences throughout the school year and in each school. The focus on the scientific and professional training of teachers for social and cultural intervention on the one hand, and career enhancement on the other, resulted in the extension of the duration of studies from two to three years.

In October 1974 a new study plan was developed which included new subjects, redesigned existing goals and programmes, renamed some of the existing subjects and adopted a new methodology, all with the aim of extending personal experience and solving issues of the local communities: “acting on the environment is acting on the school”.²¹ As far as scientific psychological and pedagogical education was concerned, for example, Psychology focused on Piaget’s developmental psychology, while the curricula of Pedagogy focused on issues like group dynamics, school freedom, non-directivity, de-schooling, projecting the school in the community and so on.

¹²F. Cabral Pinto, *Escolas do Magistério, reforma e contra-reforma* (Lisboa: Edições O Professor, 1977), 7.

¹³“Law no. 348/75, of 12 September,” *Diário do Governo*, II Série, no. 211 (1975).

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵F. Cabral Pinto, “A formação dos professores nas Escolas do Magistério,” *O Professor*, no.11/12 (1976): 14–15.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Manuel Matos, “Escolas do Magistério Primário – uma experiência apunhalada I,” *O Professor*, no. 5 (1978): 39–44.

¹⁸“Decree-law no. 47 587,” *Diário do Governo*, I Série, N.º 59, (March 10, 1967).

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹Manuel Matos, “Escolas do Magistério Primário,” 42.

The following school year, in view of the new role that teachers were expected to play as full citizens aware of their civic duty, the social reality of their country and the need for their transformative action, the new curricula established the Contact Activities – stemming from an experience in the Teacher Training College of Coimbra and later extended to other schools – which included Social Science studies such as sociology and history theory and dialectics, and opened up teacher training colleges to the community and its issues, including the primary school teachers.

The Contact Activities envisaged essentially guiding student-teachers in their *role as educators and drivers of change*,²² while leading them through the critical contact with reality. Based on observation, the first stage concerned the problematisation of reality observed from the viewpoint of each subject, involving on the one hand teacher and student commitment and on the other the exercise of interdisciplinarity, which would lead to the development of observation grids/survey models, and the planning thereof.²³ The second stage required observation, whereby the student-teacher would discover the child and come in contact with them, their family and the population in general, which would provide “partly a material basis for their work during the year”.²⁴ The third stage was the return to school: the students organised themselves in groups and, with the help of teachers, developed “a set of reports summarising their observations and analyses”.²⁴ The process ended with the Seminars on Elective Topics. The naturally active and leading part that teachers played, particularly in the development of the observation grids/survey models, enabled incorporation of the energy arising from the base dynamics while adjusting it to the objectives envisaged by the instrumentalisation trend.

In addition to the Elective Disciplines, which the student-teachers considered useful for their education, the School Intervention activities were another dimension of the curricula which fostered student creativity, as long as it involved organisational, maintenance and management principles to be developed in the context of the student association, the bar, the canteen, the library or the paper and stationery section. They required the availability of all stakeholders during the joint schedule to create an activities committee, coordinated by a teacher who would be in charge of issues such as attendance, commitment and accountability, and were in turn assisted by a committee coordinating student elected by the group. The suggestion that this be included in the schedule, in 1975–1976, illustrates the strong focus on a versatile and creative education that responded to professional requirements.

The pedagogical dynamics which fostered and guided activities, such as contact and interaction, were part of an ideological and political framework that fostered ties between training and practice, combining education with work and promoting the mindful performance of individual and collective emancipation tasks based on a pedagogical reading that linked ideas of non-directivity to institutional pedagogy, thus driven by the Romantic ideal of an emancipatory popular pedagogy.

²²See Plano de Estudos das Escolas do Magistério; Magistério Primário e Magistério Infantil (The Studies Plan of the Teacher Training Colleges), signed by the Minister of Education and Culture, José Emídio da Silva, on May 31 [or March, illegible] 1975.

²³Pinto, *Escolas do Magistério*, 26–31 and 50–1.

²⁴Plano de Estudos das Escolas do Magistério; Magistério Primário e Magistério Infantil (The Studies Plan of the Teacher Training Colleges), signed by the Minister of Education and Culture, José Emídio da Silva, on May 31 [or March, illegible]. In *Programas (1º/2º Anos) 1975-1976*.

Memory and understanding experiences in the context of teacher training

Our study focuses on experiences in the Teacher Training College of Coimbra from 1974 – after the fall of the New State on 25 April of that year – to 1976, during the PREC (at the time of the Pedagogical Experiences). However, we considered that the study should also cover the beginning of the normalisation period, which involved the subjects who intended to pursue a political line based on the Rule of Law founded on a parliamentary democracy, since this would help us understand better much of what was at stake during that revolutionary period. Given the lack of documentary sources, the use of interview allowed us to conduct a group of stakeholders through an *anamnesic* process. Teachers and students from the Teacher Training College of Coimbra made up our group of interviewees. They were selected on the basis of the fact that they had taught or otherwise worked at that school between October 1974 and August 1976. Among the teachers we have selected the director, Red, and Grey. The teaching staff, which had been chosen by the new political powers, followed the lines of State socialism and consequently positioned themselves within the framework of the instrumentalisation proposals. Ever since, while Red has preserved his ideological integrity and has stood on several occasions as a candidate to the Portuguese Parliament for the Portuguese Communist Party, Grey has turned to Democratic Socialism and occupied management positions in education at the regional level. The students were selected on the basis of our knowledge of their social, political, cultural and professional actions and intervention at the local and/or national level, and their ideological and political stance both at the time and today. As far as the students are concerned, it was also possible to combine this dimension with that of gender. In the end two male students, Black and Brown, and two female students, White and Green, were chosen. In the sphere of the so-called instrumentalisation trend is Black, who has since been a union leader at the regional level, and is currently a national union leader. Student White followed in the same ideological path. Brown and Green identified themselves with the normalisation trend and are ideologically close to social democracy. While the former has worked as a reporter and director of periodicals, Green has been a high school director and is the leader of a local development association in the region of Coimbra.²⁵ Oral witness turned out to be crucial for understanding the educational dynamics of an institution that trained primary school teachers in Portugal during the revolutionary crisis. We equate the issue of memory – as the essential dimension, when collecting information, of the construction of individual and collective identity, embodied by the relevant social frameworks – with the feeling, relevance and interpretation of such memory at the time of its recovery. Focusing on the memories shared, we assessed the personal processes of reconstruction, the certainties preserved, the resources, the metaphors and images, a narrative which is

²⁵In this study, the proposals of the extended case-study method (Michael Burawoy et al., *Ethnography Unbound. Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991).) are eclectically combined with that of grounded theory (Anselm Strauss, and Juliette Corbin, “Grounded Theory Methodology. An Overview,” in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin, and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994), 273–85), and the interview is used as the data generating (and not collecting) technique, seeking to obtain a relevant and fluent dialogue, while conducting a complex social construction (Peter Collins, “Negotiating Selves: Reflections on Unstructured Interviewing,” *Sociological Research Online* 3, no. 3 (1998), <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/socresonline/3/3/2.html> (accessed May 26, 2005)).

the expression of claimed and overt memory²⁶ and that lives on – rhetorically speaking, an ideology.²⁷

The two years between the fall of the dictatorial regime and the appointment of the first constitutional government were one of those rare founding political moments in Portugal which aroused significant literary production in the press at the time, but for which, in some areas, it is now extremely difficult to find meaningful records of this experience, particularly in some domains and institutions, such as the teacher training colleges. So, interviews provided an interesting form of collecting information. Although we pursued some topics that had been previously developed, we also provided room for interesting conversations that arose, while seeking to preserve the phenomenon's integrity and the interviewees' views in their own language.²⁸ To ensure the anonymity of interviewees, we have given them the names of colours.

When analysing each interview we realise that we are before a reconstructed narrative, primarily because by intervening we drive an active search for recollections, through participative and proactive listening²⁹ to their stories about their personal experiences as teachers or students, about the period or periods they spent in an institution such as the Teacher Training College of Coimbra. Naturally these are their own memories and nobody else's, and are invariably perceived as personal. Although from this perspective we find ourselves in the theoretical tradition of a phenomenology of personal memory,³⁰ we still understand that each subject's memory is not detached from a framework of reference. Maurice Halbwachs' work,³¹ which is the foundation of collective memory sociology³² in the Durkheimian tradition, highlighted the collective and social nature of memory, perceived in the first instance as a phenomenon of solely collective construction; as it progressed,³³ it acknowledged the active role that the subject – through his own memory – plays in the process of socialisation and in changing what he inherits.³⁴ Therefore, individual memory depends on the part which the subject plays inside the group that he is a member of,³⁵ and results in an individual memory where multiple memories, whether personal, family, group, regional, national or other, come together and are combined in a more or less peaceful or conflicting manner.³⁶

The memory arising from the interviews forms on the one hand an organised narrative, ready for public delivery, resulting from a previous inner dialogue which

²⁶Candau, "Processus de la mémoire partagée," 118–23.

²⁷Michael Billig et al., *Ideological Dilemmas. A Social Psychology of Everyday Thinking* (London: SAGE Publications, 1989).

²⁸Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey, "Interviewing. The Art of Science," in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 1994), 361–76.

²⁹Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet, "Reflections on a Voice-centred Relational Method," in *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research. Public Knowledge and Private Lives*, ed. Rosalind Edwards and Jane Ribbens (London: SAGE Publications, 1998) 119–45.

³⁰Ricoeur, *Mémoire, L'Histoire*, 112–63.

³¹Maurice Halbwachs, *La Mémoire collective* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997).

³²Ricoeur, *Mémoire, L'Histoire*, 112–63.

³³Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994).

³⁴Fernando Catroga, *Memória, História e Historiografia* (Coimbra: Quarteto, 2001).

³⁵Gérard Namer, *Mémoire et Société* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksieck, 1987).

³⁶Fernando Catroga, *Memória, História*, 15–35.

is framed in the subject's cultural models and groups and, on the other, displaced recollections of isolated and unusual memories of more or less forbidden topics that have never been discussed,³⁷ which the interviewees are sharing for the first time.

The contradictions, conflicts and discrepancies arising from these narratives draw our attention to the conflicting memories. In effect, the official memory results from the effort put into the forming and formalising these memories – a task that was performed by the *entrepreneurs of memory* – in contrast with underground memories which remain within informal communication structures, creating room in the recollections for grey areas of silence and things unsaid, thus separating official from underground memories, what is utterable from what is not, what can be confessed from what may not.³⁸

Therefore, memory is selective, because not everything can be recorded. When structuring memory a link is drawn between two times: that of the dynamics in the moment of the event and that of the relevance awarded when it is retrieved and interpreted. The work put into organising personal memory, what is preserved, the capacity to retrieve the information stored and its reproduction depend, also, on the subject's input into the event, his role and commitment, his stance and his intellectual capacity. During the interviews, one of the interviewees – student White – reports the virtual absence of memories of that period, which she attributes to several factors, for example the fact that she was mostly focused on dating while at the Teacher Training College and missed school. However, it is when we start analysing the participation of students in school life that she tells us why she did not get involved; she explains that she had not lived through that period intensely due to her family. They had returned from a former colony and her father did not take well to the new political environment of the country, which he blamed for having to leave his former life and adoptive country, the former Portuguese colony of Angola. Family relations, which she describes as tense and conflictive at the time of the events, definitely influenced the nature of her memories:

[...] at home we couldn't speak, [...] so I also avoided [...] some things to avoid having problems at home and [...] I didn't get involved [...] So, I shied away from some things at the time, [...] in the end [my father] had lived in one of the colonies, and was troubled by all of this [...]

Quite the opposite, another of our interviewees – student Black – was the only interviewee to recall an event in which he participated and was actively involved. This was an initiative of the Central Student Commission of the Teacher Training College of Coimbra, which, considering the delay to the start of classes, decided to hold Pre-class Activities against the policy of the Ministry of Education of the First Constitutional Government, supporting the work carried out during the time of the Pedagogical Experiences and the teachers who had taught at Coimbra Teacher Training College and were now being eliminated. The interviewee's recollections reflect the voluntary nature of many of the activities that were being conducted during that political period:

³⁷Namer, *Mémoire et Société*.

³⁸Michael Pollak, "Memória, Esquecimento, Silêncio," *Estudos Históricos* 2, no. 3 (1989), <http://www.cpdoc.fgv.br/revista/arq/43.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2011).

[...] I even recall that my first year was so rich in this type of work and projects, and assessment depended on the work delivered, etc., that, for example, when the first year ended [...] during the Summer holidays these teachers were sent away [...] and classes resumed very late. I think classes in my second year began in January, [...] so late that we were already sick of holidays [...], because we did not have classes and everything was so uncertain, [...] and our first year had been so rich in work, projects and the practical activities we had done with teachers, the learning material developed [...], we decided, as a way of showing the city of Coimbra, but also as a form of protest against the late start of classes, to hold in the lobby of Coimbra Town Hall what at the time we called Pre-class Activities [...].

Memory works like the recognition of something in which the interviewee, Black, engaged and felt valued in their time of training for primary school teacher. This is an entirely different invocation of memory from that of student White, who neither felt attracted to nor was involved in the social dynamics of the so-called Pre-class Activities. These are two distinct attitudes towards a single moment, which result from different insertions and are influenced by external aspects. In other words, while the memory is linked with engagement in the event, it arises indirectly from the conditions imposed upon the individual and how the situation is managed. Memory, either personal or collective, is built in reference to other individuals or groups; it is subject to negotiation and change in relation to others, in reference to criteria of acceptability, admissibility and credibility. The recollections of families, for example, can cause conflict among their members.³⁹ As we saw in White's interview, memory can be strongly influenced by the ways in which ties with essential components of the household develop. In this particular case, the interviewee played safe and refused any engagement, which prevented her from living the moment in a way that would have enabled her to draw relevant information about the cultural and political dynamics of the institution she attended. Unlike White, the other interviewee turned out to be quite engaged, which is a sign of clear ideological convictions and matching readings between the moment of the event and the moment of its recollection. The one saw what the other did not see, the one felt what the other did not feel; memory changes a lot according to the ideological framework shared by the players in question and the importance that they award to their engagement – in other words, the subjects' current readings of events.

Ideology provides resources for the production of memories.⁴⁰ Ideologies, as a society's ways of life, are producers of common sense and bearers of contradictions and conflicting topics which help individuals solve social issues and experience dilemmas. It is these conflicting topics of common sense that allow individuals to rethink their lives and enable them to discuss and resolve daily life issues. Such dilemmas depend on the individual – the dilemmas of one are not the same as those of another. However, they are social dilemmas, since they concern social messages. Conflicting topics sow the seeds of argument, enabling individuals to weigh pros and cons, to justify themselves and, by criticising other people's views, to draft or rewrite the argumentation rhetoric. The elements of dilemma can be either explicit

³⁹Pollak, "Memória, Esquecimento."

⁴⁰José Manuel Mendes, *Do ressentimento ao reconhecimento. Vozes, identidades e processos políticos nos Açores* (1974-1996) (Porto: Edições Afrontamento/Centro de Estudos Sociais, 2003).

or implicit, partly depending on the social processes and the discourse types existing in the community which the individual belongs to⁴¹ or has joined.

Throughout our study, the conflict and dispute between recollections of the PREC and the actions of the Minister of Education (Mário de Sottomayor Cardia) in the subsequent normalisation are manifest, particularly in recollections of the Pedagogical Experiences. The issues of the elimination of teachers and the Pre-class Activities mentioned in Black's interview are a good example of this. The interviewees with positive recollections of the Pedagogical Experiences tend to believe that teachers were eliminated and that the Minister's actions did lead to an "early cleaning up of the Teacher Training Colleges", a counter-reform within the framework of ordinary primary education. The supporters of a normalisation policy find, akin to the official government discourse delivered by the Minister, that these teachers were unfit for their job as they were not qualified for teaching at this level. For the supporters of the normalisation trend led by a minister of a legitimately elected government, memory focuses on the refusal of the teachers – who had been teaching until then at the Teacher Training College – to submit their applications to the tenders held by the Ministry of Education, and on students' unwillingness to be taught by these teachers. This caused the new academic year to start a few months late. This is what Brown, a student at the time, tells us:

[...] what I remember from when I was a student [...] is that one day, [...] the Ministry decided that teachers had to apply for their jobs, and teachers at our College, who had been my teachers since the first year, refused to participate in the tender. I even found out later that some of them were not qualified [...] to teach at that level. [...] Those who applied and stayed, our relations with them did not change. There was however a time, I don't recall exactly for how long, for three or four months, during which students closed down the College, [...] because they refused to attend classes delivered by teachers who did not have the qualifications that the Ministry of Education required [...] at the time [...]. If teachers did not want to accept this, there was clearly something wrong and it was not the students' problem. Therefore, students refused to attend classes with these teachers and so the College was shut down for a few months [...], students set out picket at the College entrance, and held general meetings on Heróis do Ultramar square, etc., etc., etc., until around January or February of the following year, when normal, democratic academic conditions so to speak were resumed and so were classes [...]

The intention of each subject is to have his interpretation of the past acknowledged. In the case in point, memory has a political dimension, which still stands out very clearly here, thus legitimising either one's engagement in the event or one's views of the event at the time of its recollection. However, in this particular case, as in many others, there is a tendency to romanticise or soften the political tension experienced through oblivion and silence, which generates discomfort and to some extent remakes "realities" – although the dialectic between recollection and forgetfulness is not confined to memory, since historiography is also built on silence and repression,⁴² on interpretations and reinterpretations which entail conscious and unconscious ideological sympathies.

The selective nature of memory translates the reconciling negotiation between personal and collective memories, and between an experience at the time of the

⁴¹Billig et al., *Ideological Dilemmas*.

⁴²Fernando Catroga, *Memória, História*, 39–51.

event and the interpretation thereof when it is recalled. When teacher Grey recalled the appointment of the Director and the establishment of his role at the Teacher Training College, he started by evoking what Joel Candau⁴³ calls the shared memory of the school boards:

The appointment [...] of the directors of the teacher training colleges is contemporaneous to people's claims to the democratic management of schools, and for some [...] it might seem confusing how the same ideological group which claims the democratic management of their colleges should support and appoint to the college boards members of their own group.

Grey's recollection opacifies the tension and the verbal and, sometimes, physical conflict, pitting the claims of those who defended the dynamics of bases against the supporters of instrumentalisation – clashes which continued throughout the PREC. One can even argue whether the *unsaid*, the silence, arises from the refusal to expose oneself to misunderstandings, whether or not linked with the moment at which the memory is uttered. The border between what is utterable and what is not separates an underground collective memory of a specific group from that which summarises the image of majority that society or the State wants to convey. We know there are contexts that are more propitious than others for the dissemination of marginalised collective memories,⁴⁴ which is the case of the collective memories of the groups most involved in the PREC. Occasionally certain personal recollections and the expression of collective memory occur, because tension disappeared and there is the need to produce catharsis or assuming a recollection which integrates itself into the different perspectives that do not threaten the present political order.

Memory comes from an experience but develops into another reality, rebuilt by the senses and cognitive processes which so often involve affections that are seldom understood. Although it arises from a more or less impressive snapshot, memory tries to fill in all of the gaps by transforming them into a *continuum* that unifies *times*. Memory expresses itself through narratives and narratives mobilise past and present as one. Recollections of significant internal turmoil can arouse the mobilisation of the present, while also lending untimely coherence to personal standpoints. Linked to the effort to develop a legal framework through the instrumentalisation of the instruments of power available and/or legitimised by central power, the conflict underlying the method of choosing the Teacher Training College's director also arose. Alongside the change in regime and the significant ideological changes which occurred in the months following 25 April 1974, there was a need to appoint a Director of the College who would represent the strong democratic engagement that the Portuguese society aspired to at the time. The consensus, however, did not go any further. Ideological tensions were manifest and each party tried in a more or less organised manner to impose the method of appointing a director that was most favourable to itself – as Grey recalls on the following grounds:

I think and I've been saying this (actually the new management model, the one that is currently in place in primary and secondary schools) [and] I still [say] the same thing. The [...] democratic management of the school cannot be assessed by the number of members of the Board, but by the performance of such members; because there can

⁴³Candau, "Processus de la mémoire partagée", 118–23.

⁴⁴Pollak, "Memória, Esquecimento."

be an “executive committee” – as it is now called – composed of three members who have nothing to do with democratic management, but rather exercise autocratic governance, right.

Following this reasoning, which the interviewee used to support and lend coherence to his past views, we find ourselves between what is said and what is not, between the attempt to explain conflict between forms of control of teacher training institutions and the legitimisation of one’s views of the current national and international political framework. In the opinion of teacher Grey:

What happened then was that the teacher training colleges did [...] actually have democratic management, in which everyone was involved. So, it is not [...] a paradox to demand democratic management and then to say that a director is good. First, Colleges needed directors, as this was the only way of solving what had existed before [...]. Therefore, [...] to switch paradigms, from a corporate and fascist State to a democratic State, there had to be somebody in charge of also ideologically changing them and, in my view, this was not possible if there were three or five people fighting daily.

This testimony discussing the choice between managing schools with a single-person board or a collective body takes us to the realm of the unsaid, which was in fact at the core of the conflict of views between the dynamics of bases trend and the instrumentalisation trend – the nature of the body. The real discussion was not so much related to the individual or collective nature of the management body, although this issue was also not irrelevant, but rather to whether the board was elected by local stakeholders in education or appointed by the central administration. Clearly, those who defended a process that followed the path of instrumentalisation controlled the instruments of central power and sought, through them, to consolidate a political order founded on strongly centralised socialism. While this position is not as easily defensible today, some interpreters of the instrumentalisation dynamics may furbish the argument that it was necessary to break away from the previous pedagogical model and fascist culture, and to implant an organisation that would guarantee democratic order. This management of the memory resorts once again to the unsaid, because it avoids all discussion about a democracy type, which was one of the issues that caused the most ideological tension among the Portuguese people.

It is precisely in this environment of ideological effervescence and of great generosity and pedagogical goodwill that students engaged in activities with the populations, which is why – unsurprisingly – Contact Activities are mentioned in every interview. All interviewees, in the case of the teachers, refer to the place where they performed the Contact Activities, tasks and activities which they engaged in and outline the work performed with the “kids” and the “community’s sociological knowledge”, as well as their living conditions, where they lived and how they ate. They point to what was learned, in particular about the real country, as their relevant contribution as teachers, as well as the level of satisfaction. In one particular case, the satisfaction is closely connected with the important part that these learnings played in the subject’s later life. Here, memory also ties the moment’s experience with the professional status of the interviewee at the time of the interview. One of them carried out two functions – initially a primary school teacher, she later enrolled on a university course and became a high school teacher. It was as a high school teacher that she arrived at the position of director of a high

school, simultaneously completing postgraduate studies in school management and administration. This underscores the importance and meaning of the chronology of the anamnesis in the particular case, and the fact that it happened thirty years later is not insignificant. Would the recollections of then-student Green – a strong supporter of the normalisation trend and extremely critical of her first year of Pedagogical Experiences – have conveyed the same positive views of the experience had she followed another path? This is what she has to say:

[...] I enjoyed it very much and I realised the wealth that we [...] did not have at that age and at that time in our life. [...] Or I didn't have [...] [the] enriching [...] experience of contacting and relating with the community, my involvement with the community; [...]. Today still [...] I speak to some of the people I met at the time and we have always kept [...] in touch [...]. It was, certainly, a very rich period [...] and it taught me [...] a lesson in terms of when I later needed to open up the school to the community and for the school's involvement in its surrounding environment. [...] I enjoyed it, but at the time I did not [...] realise [...] the possible value of it; it was just one moment more [...], different for the students of the Teacher Training College, but it turned out to be extremely useful for me and [...] I learnt some lessons. [...]

There is clearly a before and after, and the latter is paramount for the importance awarded to the period in analysis. In the testimonies of students Black and Brown, although diametrically opposite readings of reality, the moment of the recollection is in tune and even enhances their views at the time of the event. On the other hand student Green, without revisiting her critical views of the events experienced, manages to see the bright side of things in the anamnesis due to her original life course, which allowed her to re-construe her training experiences from a more reflexive standpoint.

As mentioned before, personal memories, albeit socially constructed, depend on the individual's capacity at the time of the event and at the time of its recollection. A more detailed description is provided by teachers who were consciously involved, namely Grey, who describes the upstream and downstream process of implementation of the Contact Activities and, through his narrative, conveys the intensity and enthusiasm of some of the participants in the Pedagogical Experiences. Grey even tells us how the second academic year went:

[...] later the so-called Contact Activities fell [...] under an umbrella called *À Descoberta da Criança* (Discovering the child)[...]. Students went out for a week, to the towns and villages, and also, preferably, the schools[...] [in those] towns, they went to work with first cycle students⁴⁵ and so, for many weeks they prepared their scripts for these field trips. The students had scripts for everything, observational scripts for music, language, [...] teaching practices, in brief each and every subject that made up [...] the school curriculum had a script for analysis and observation. So, essentially, the students went out [...] and watched. [...] One of the tasks that students were required to perform was to watch, to talk to the locals, to talk to the parish priest, to talk to the chairman of the parish council, etc., to try to understand how these people saw the world, their views of our country, of our new reality [...] [and] what we used to be. [...] So the script was drafted, with a lot of effort but also with much enthusiasm, and total commitment [...].

⁴⁵In primary schools.

Contrary to the other interviewees, student White, who had conducted the Contact Activities in São João do Campo but had not watched nor intervened in any school or with children, only had contact with the local population and did not understand “why all of this mattered for [her] training”. If we try to contextualise the lack of motivation and the environment surrounding the interviewee during this period of her academic life, we must admit that the experience and its impact are linked with conditions which are not intrinsically connected with the subject, and that similar conditions can influence how one participates in and interprets the dynamics described. Therefore, we see that participation in an activity or an educational organisation does not imply identical experiences and learnings.

The memory of this period is also built by the interviewees on the basis of how they perceive the normalisation trend, which terminated the revolutionary process. When faced with what had changed at the Teacher Training College of Coimbra, in the aftermath of the revolutionary crisis and the Pedagogical Experiences, student Black underlined the fact that the College had gone back to being “a traditional school”, where there was no room for politics. The episode he recalled to illustrate his views was apparently only mentioned by him. As we will see, there is, in this episode too, a conflict between memories and the gaps of forgotten and unuttered experiences.

A widespread practice in Portuguese schools in all levels of education during the revolutionary crisis, but which also remained for some time after 1976, was that of wall painting, a phenomenon that was transversal to Portuguese urban space and was mostly carried out by well-identified political groups such as the revolutionary left. These paintings were often readings of daily developments, of moments in the revolutionary process; otherwise, they represented projections and radical social aspirations of the authors.

The episode narrated by Black once again highlights the level of subjectiveness of the anamnesis, to the extent that the subject points out change and seeks to reveal it through an event involving a mural which he affectionately calls a *naïf* work of art.

The wall was covered in the typical children’s paintings of post-25 April, i.e. soldiers in tanks and carnations and other things, the type of things that were normally painted [...] it was an enormous and beautiful panel, and I believe that it was something that [...] [had it been] preserved, [...] would have been almost like an historical document [...]. And I remember that in the second year, one of the [first] things that Dr. Falcão⁴⁶ decided to do [...] was to consider it a thing of the past [...] and perhaps what he lacked was a vision of the future; he found that it didn’t make any sense and he had the wall [...] everything [...] painted by the school’s staff with grey paint, and it left a horrible patch.

Black highlights the dividing meaning and symbolism of the act of wiping out the painting, and considers this a way of showing that the wall was now “the property [of] a traditional school”. For this student, who was ideologically close to the instrumentalisation path and shared a view loaded with Marxist ideology, the Director’s actions were a way of showing the school community that “things like these, paintings like these, politics like this” had nothing to do with school normalisation,

⁴⁶The Director of the Teacher Training College of Coimbra from 1977 to 1989. Elected by the school faculty, he replaced Fernando Cabral Pinto, who had been appointed by the Ministry of Education in September 1974.

so they were not *called for*. However, notice how Black supports his views and legitimises his memory through a less ideological and more aesthetic reasoning. Rather than contrasting subjectiveness and objectiveness, one should underscore that the act of recollection involves the reconstructing of facts mediated by reactions and personal feelings; it is through anamnesis that the players in events tend to reconstruct themselves, by tracing their views, identifying adversaries and allies and their social places and relations with others. In the process of the student's recollection, part of the painting's content is silenced and only the icons of the imagery of the Portuguese revolution are identified, namely the soldiers, the armoured vehicles and the carnations.

The episode of the painting comes up, albeit in an even less explicit manner, in the memories of another of our interviewees, in a completely different context. The painting's content and message are again consigned to oblivion, which explains the silence. It was during the long interview with teacher Bleu that a recollection of this painting came up again. Bleu was a student in the 1940s and later became a teacher at the Teacher Training College of Coimbra, under the New State. From 1977 to 1989 he was the director of the college, and the only one to have been elected by his peers. He was, after all, the face of the Teacher Training College of Coimbra during the normalisation period and for the entire parliamentary democracy until the extinction of this college.⁴⁷ When he considers the difficulties he encountered in 1977, when he took office as Director of the school, he outlines the issue of the dispute against religion, which he put a stop to. At one point, he comments:

Besides, I mean, I also faced problems. One of the first [...] was the status of religion in the school; it was a problem, there were things that were offensive to religion, in that stairway to the cafeteria, that was torn down [...] well, there were some offensive things there [...]

Thanks to our knowledge of the school and by comparing testimonies, we are able to conclude that Bleu is referring to the paintings which the student also mentioned. By analysing this testimony and the former's, we wish to simultaneously outline the tension experienced in the Teacher Training College of Coimbra and how players use the act of recollection to build an individual and collective identity, by describing their views of the topics and groups. In both cases, the "real" content of the painting has been forgotten and, in line with the moment in which the recollection is placed, both interviewees recall a specific element – the one political and the other religious. The elements are symbolic expressions of the source of tension in education in Portugal – ideology. Student Black, a supporter of the instrumentalisation path during the revolutionary crisis, recalls, with the help of the painting, the progressive and left-wing dynamics of the school's politics. To express this he highlights consensual symbols, such as the carnation or the soldier, while silencing the tension caused by the attempt to ideologically engage the school and teacher training in the development of a society which was intended to be socialist but was strongly State-driven in character, similar to the State socialism which existed at the time in Eastern European countries. Teacher Bleu, on the other hand, focuses on the issue of the attacks on religion, while leaving unsaid the historical mark of the

⁴⁷The Teacher Training College of Coimbra (*Escola do Magistério Primário de Coimbra*) was extinguished in 1989 and gave way to the College of Education (*Escola Superior de Educação*), which opened in 1986.

painting and the government's reviewed attitude towards religion after 25 April 1974. Religion was both instrument and instrumentalised by the New State as ideological content, of education at large and ordinary primary education in particular. The Teacher Training College of Coimbra apparently reached a high degree of consensus with regard to this ideological view. After 25 April, during the revolutionary crisis, religion and the Church became, to some extent, the focus of conflict and tension. Some felt that the Church had supported the dictatorial regime and the Catholic religion had provided the pillar of a traditional and conservative society; others believed that since Catholics made up a large part of the population, democracy had to develop through them and with respect for their beliefs.

The defence of religion and its assertion in educational values were, for some groups during the normalisation period, an important ideological element. Due to his strong religious background, teacher Bleu continued to focus his attention on this issue. In the interview that he granted us, while self-assessing his conduct as the director of the Teacher Training College, Bleu claims to have been a lead player in the normalisation route; he put back the crosses which, during the revolutionary period, had been removed:

[...] They had actually removed the crosses, just as they had removed them in the annex schools,⁴⁸ right? So, and [...], as the Director, one of the things [I did] was to have them returned to their places, [...] both in the annex schools and in the Teacher Training College [...]. I wasn't offending anybody, [...] [nobody] was against this [...], I didn't have any problems with this [...]. And up there, in the pre-primary school [...], this wasn't even an issue, when I was the Director of the Ordinary Pre-primary Teacher Training School.

The words of Blue present us with a memory that wishes to imply two ideas, first, that the ideological tension came from the attitudes of the people who were involved in the revolutionary left-wing, and second, that the path of normalisation, being a democracy, was supported by most population. Please note that the Director supported a party that was affiliated with parliamentary socialism and social-democratic practice. However, this is someone who finds that there is a deeper religious feeling embedded in the Portuguese society that must be respected. His story is not a mere recollection, nor the reconstruction of facts. He brings feelings and seeks to legitimise an action; he intends to take part in the construction of the memory as a key player and shares his views on a central matter of Portuguese education that, naturally, arouses group readings and interpretations. The story also translates both the refusal to be silenced and made invisible, and the suitability of his action in connection with political developments in Portugal.

For the meaning of memory

The events evoked here reflect the need to understand people's actions within the collective becoming of a certain time and place, and to understand how memory works as a narrative of the retrieval of events connected with the course of the individual and of the society. Memory is made up of recollections which exist because they are valued, and the value is drawn from the meaning that is awarded to them.

⁴⁸Schools where trainee teachers trained, at the end of their studies, to become primary school teachers.

It is not so much the fact itself that matters. What is important in a recollection is the meaning given to the event, which cannot be detached from the individual's experience and course, nor from the circumstances or the context of the event and of the person's narrative. On the other hand, the value of its retrieval underpins a more sociological and collective focus on understanding the actions of individuals subject to group logics defined in the light of ideological sensitivities.

The Pedagogical Experiences, for example, are important because they lend meaning to an experience and are associated with a life path, but also because they help build a collective memory; they help to remake and reassess a unique period in the life of an institution and even of a country. They are evoked because of the need to legitimise a life path and a view of the world. Their uniqueness also refers us to ways of understanding the dilemmas of the developments and their historical context. Some see in the Pedagogical Experiences an example of active and democratic training; others consider them inconsequential activities of a voluntary nature, driven by the revolutionary context. But there is also the relevance of the pedagogical meaning, since our idea of what teacher training should be today is not irrelevant. For example, do we want teachers who are bearers and deliverers of information and teaching, or who are interactive and engaged in their cultural and social context? Therefore, education is linked with an ideological stance which is not absent today, as it could never have been absent in the PREC.

The problem on the mural confronts us with an ideological conflict that requires an effort of interpretation contextualised. Despite the political and radical elements of their own time, the problem is dictated by the relevance it raises. Even today, the importance of the analysis of aspects concerning religion and how to tackle them in a public (State-owned) school, which is supposed to be neutral, open and tolerant. One cannot forget that this is a school that trains primary school teachers and there is the, certainly exaggerated, conviction that this is where the educational conceptions of the subjects who will deliver primary education are formed.

In brief, what we mean is that memory is not neutral, that all it needs is the opportunity to express itself, and this is the message here. A recollection is conducted to sustain a view and to give it the intelligibility that will make it understandable and, if possible, grant it general acceptance. Each interviewee knows there are other readings of the period and developments in it. They know that a memory is not established only on their individual versions and that it will derive from the dialectics of stable narratives. However, memory is also the link between two more or less distant moments and depends on the context and the sense of the calling. Therefore, the event will always be reinterpreted. Memory is not merely the past, is a condition for learning and a foundation for the future. In this case, for example, the relevance of drawing lessons from real-life pedagogical dynamics is manifest, particularly when they are the object of reflection. In effect, some players – especially the more motivated student-teachers, who were more embedded in the spirit that drove the experiences – seemed to have enjoyed greater advantages. One student-teacher was not very attuned to her experiences at the time they were happening, but later read into them and confirmed the value of the learning stemming from the activities in which she took part. However, teacher training is clearly not detached from society's political design and organisation, which is why State power does not accept being absented or overtaken by local or institutional dynamics. While, as in this period, stakeholders play an enhanced political part, the government, as outlined previously, rushes to obtain normalisation regardless of the

generosity of players' actions and the relevance of side initiatives. A cross-cutting reading of the interviews helps us realise how memory is managed according to personal experiences and how the latter tie in with legitimization and consensus. Although people do not reject their past, memory supports a narrative that ties in with the events of the past mirrored in the present. However, without it we cannot capture the diversity of experiences, and even less learn through reflection on the positions adopted. Memory does not necessarily translate the event, but without it, as shown here, we may be incapable of reconstructing it and understanding it suitably.

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