

The politics of cooperative movements in three continents: Mesopotamia Coop in Rojava, Mondragon in Basque Country and Ascoop in Colombia

Short Commemoration Note: We owe a lot to David Graeber for his political struggle that liberated minds . By reading and adapting his works, we keep him alive in the commons that he has always supported, and we commemorate him with respect .

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How does realizing social peace go through a transformation? If so many vertical , violent experiences take us away from the truth of peace , where should we be headed? To be able to talk about the transition period, we must highlight the inevitability of flexible geographical boundaries , the right of movement and cultural exchange. This brings along uncanny thinking about “today as future of the past”. That's exactly why, instead of talking about the future of the past and preventing the way to dialogue, we reflect on the reality of today through the concept of "radical dissent " . Let`s think together on this.

Arguing that radical dissent is a way of talking about reality, Graeber pointed to the theory of cultural relativity and added new political formations as well as popular movements to the talk on reality. He argued that it should be assessed in context, that this will trigger the political imagination and produce original analogies . His familial ties to the Spanish Civil War are not coincidental, and the freedom movements and economic experiences he faces in the geographies where he does fieldwork are far from colonial prejudice . *The Mesopotamia Cooperative*, which is a part of the Rojava Commune, was also settled in the last years of his short life as an important element that triggered Graeber 's political imagination. He had the chance to stay in Rojava for a week and witness the establishment of the cooperative.

This cooperative model, which he sees as the reality of communal life and consensus culture, is not only an example of radical solidarity . At the same time , it is indispensable for social peace. This view, which considers common well-being as a prerequisite, protects all political and material rights, including land ownership, equity and property relations . It is essential that economic system change be made by considering common interests .

At the same time, the basic principle is to create a partnership based on horizontal, equal and need -oriented production processes. In order to achieve social transformation and

create a world of meaning in accordance with the philosophy of radical opposition, it is necessary to prioritize the political independence of women. It is important to learn from personal differences and to see varying value judgments as part of the dialogue . Understanding the communal model, which includes self- defence principles in addition to this mental transformation, requires questioning the patterns left over from the past and living under the yoke of capitalism for a long time. In this chapter, I will defend the leading role of the communal cooperative model in maintaining social peace.

Cooperative Model for Social Peace

Achieving social peace is undoubtedly a long, labor - intensive process. Common prosperity and peaceful living spaces as the building blocks of this process form the basis of this article . Libertarian socialist and ecologist Murray Bookchin defines the ideal economy as a moral economy managed by a municipality that is under democratic control. He argues that the communes' control over the economy represents the most advanced form of confederalism . The same principles are applied in the economy in Rojava, which is the autonomous region of Northern Syria. Of course, it is also timely to examine similar models in the world and to ensure the transfer of experience and social capital between diverse communities. In this sense, I hope that the examples in Brazil, Bolivia, Spain and Brasil will guide commons and cooperatives in creating a roadmap .

In the chapter, I first examine the history, structure, principles of the cooperatives in Rojava and their role in the axis of radical democracy, radical opposition and democratic confederalism . After that, I briefly conveyed the social economy model in Bolivia and the cooperative experience in Spain dating back to the 1950s, and share the points and possible cooperation opportunities with the Mesopotamian cooperative. Then, by referring to the experimental learning studies in Brazil as in Freire pedagogy, the most important model that is organized from the grassroots in Rojava, which embraces local and universal values, I explain how it overlaps with the freedom model for small communities. In the following section, I touch upon the importance of creating peaceful and ecological living spaces within all this autonomous living setup; I focus on case studies to understand the mechanics. At the end, by referring to Graeber's experience and fieldwork in Rojava on democratic confederalism, women 's freedom, cooperative farming, education and ecological movement, I focus on the episteme of peaceful living spaces.

Remembering Hope While Defending the Right to a Free Life

Democratic confederalism in Rojava (the umbrella term given to the three cantons in the Northeast Syrian region) where the Kurdish Freedom Movement has reached its end through a process of ideological and political transformation . is being built. As an alternative to dominant capitalist modernity, the Rojava revolution attracted worldwide attention by emphasizing women 's freedom , grassroots democracy, coexistence of different identities

and social ecology. In the ideological mentality of the revolution , supporting women's knowledge and freedom movement is seen as a value for humanity. This approach not only represents an idea specific to its place and time , but also includes all communities in Rojava, regardless of their ethnic origins. As a radical democracy, it remains viable for any society in the world .

The structure of cooperatives in the region is compatible with the principles of radical democracy. The general assembly of any cooperative convenes at least once every three months. In addition to the monitoring committee, which monitors compliance with the principles of the cooperative, other responsibilities such as administration, finance and archives committee are also elected at the board . The income of a cooperation is distributed as follows : 5 % will go to the cooperatives association , 25% will go to cooperative funds to expand and develop cooperative activities, and the remaining 70 % is distributed among the assembly and cooperative members . Shares, like most of these guides, are not fixed in a dogmatic way and can be adjusted after discussion according to different situations . But what can not be changed is the rule that no more than 5 % should go to the regional structure (cooperative union) : To guarantee autonomy , it can be less, but not more.

Graeber defines the Rojava economy as three layers : an international economy dependent on capitalist markets but hindered by the embargo , a market economy regulated by the controlled prices of the councils, and communal economy between the councils. He explains the link between economic autonomy and ¹political autonomy as follows :

Capitalism prioritizes exchange value , producing something for the market . It is entirely based on profit motive ; Production is for the market , not for the society . But a society that can not determine its economic activities is helpless even to develop most of its workforce . We have to work for poor wages , for small compensation , but we do it anyway . We work in the informal sector without job security , without unionisation , but we work no matter what ... Economic autonomy is very important for democratic autonomy ; it is indeed a precondition for democratic autonomy . A region that cannot decide on its own economy can not be autonomous .

This radical democracy constructed in Rojava is based on the principles of democratic confederalism, which opens the door to democratic autonomy. Democratic confederalism is based on the recognition , protection and freedom of expression of all cultural entities . On this basis, we can not ensure a democratic solution to the Kurdish problem , the acceptance of the Kurdish identity at all levels , the development of the Kurdish language and culture . knows the basic duty . At the same time , it adopts the ecological society model. It is based on multi - faceted opposition to gender oppression and overcoming this with the women 's

¹See. Flach, Ayboga and Knapp 2015.

liberation struggle. These principles are based on the understanding of democratic modernity, which opposes the capitalist modernity that has caused the exploitation of societies for many years . Within the scope of this understanding, it targets a communal economy based on ecological industries and cooperatives .

So how was the process based on these objectives operated in Rojava ? In addition to supporting the project of establishing a cooperative with financial means, the Autonomous Administration of Northern and Eastern Syria visited different neighborhoods, villages and families every day to actively discuss the principles. Discussions were held about the communal economy and how a local cooperative could be established . In the light of these meetings, feasibility studies were carried out and reports were written. In the reports of the volunteers working in the economy committee of the Mesopotamian cooperative, the arrangements foreseen² by the relevant committees and public assemblies were included . Within the scope of these regulations, “ Meeting the basic needs of the society and harmonization with the environment in all the activities the cooperatives are based on. In daily life, the need to effectively combat gender conflict is highlighted. It is a division of labor that removes the burdens placed on the woman and supports the will of the woman. While cooperatives pave the way for women's more active inclusion in social and economic life, gender equality policies are taken as basis in their collaborative work.

The aim of the cooperatives in the region is “ to build a spirit of social responsibility for the development of a moral and political society and to produce the basic needs of the society according to the conditions of the war economy”. The society is capable of reinventing the common and collaborative way to meet its needs ; however, it is necessary to seek and find ways to do so. This is where the radical change process comes into play. In today 's current system, trying to implement socialism, which aims at peaceful living and the autonomous, self-sufficient existence of communities and provides different opportunities independent of demographic profile, may not be a realistic endeavor.

However, when we think in terms of micro scale, gaining experience in all different aspects of the formation of the cooperative economy, transforming a capitalist company into a cooperative can give useful hints for the near future. Equally significant is to learn from the Rojava experience regarding the transformation of the capitalist company into a cooperative. In the first years of the revolution, the formation of cooperatives was done according to different principles compared to today`s approach. It can be said that the first cooperatives included some of the shortcomings of most western 'capitalist' cooperatives today . For example, it was possible for individuals outside of the cooperative to invest in them and thus profit from the labor of the cooperative members . DIY economic frameworks made it possible to recognize this shortcoming, and soon new principles were introduced, linking the cooperatives to the local commune and allowing them to be managed for themselves by the

²See. <https://mesopotamia.coop/revolution-and-cooperatives-part-1/>

people. Errors and difficulties experienced in practice continue to strengthen local experience and horizontal structure.

In this context, while determining the cooperative economy as a model, it is important to see how much a say the society has in decision-making and management. We are not just talking about self-governing, equality, ecologically-conscious communities. We are, at the same time, starting off with a new setup in which each production contributes to the social economy and all components of the community, on the basis of coexistence, far from profit maximization. Thus, in this context where there is no state element and the employer approach is excluded, we see that the control is undertaken by the cooperative compounds and autonomous people's councils within the principles of self-management.

On a different note, it is not sufficient to have an initial understanding on the elements that ensure social peace. The cooperative model, which was unanimously established within the scope of democratic autonomy, without the element of the state, shows the applicability of *radical opposition*. It is only with this type of "challenge to the post-capitalist industrial complex" that it is possible to yearn for peace and to create a discourse on peace parallel to it. As a case in point, we should add that the achievement of hope is possible with a communal economy and people's councils, which do not have a state element and operate within the principles of self-government.

Exo-systems: New Power Foci and Common Future

Graeber met the PYD (Kurdish socialist party in the region) members, who argued that patriarchal relations would be extinguished only with the abolition of the state, during the one-week period he was in Rojava. He stated that the weakness of the Kurdish movement must also be taken into account³. What was unique to him was the dual power system that provides radical opposition. In the thinking path extending from Deleuze to Baudrillard, the concept of *radical alterity*, which replaces *the other* that has disappeared, brings all unique differences and imaginations. It also attracts attention to the toxicity of the State. It refers to „the emptiness that replaces the emptiness created by the rejection of the other“. Instead of placing the "other state" against the classical understanding of the state, feminist and ecological public assemblies and cooperatives organized from below within the scope of democratic confederalism, are introduced. In this context, radical opposition proposes a new philosophical basis in achieving social peace. It brings along a political and socio-economic structure based on the principle of autonomy. On the one hand, what appears to be the government; is a democratic self-government made up of ministries and the parliament. Even if you read the official constitution of the Rojava cantons, you would liken it to a social democratic state. For example, there are many micro-political parties founded by the PYD.

³Graeber, D. (2016) *Foreword* in Knapp, M. et al. *Revolution in Rojava: Democratic Autonomy and Women's Liberation in Syrian Kurdistan*. pp. XII-XXII. Pluto Press: London

On the other hand, as in the example of popular assemblies made up of movement members, the bottom - up structures organized by TEV - DEM attract attention . A balance is achieved between these two institutional structures through the strength of fluid and constant renegotiation.

This revolutionary dual power situation also exists in Bolivia. The relationship between the MAS and the socialist party in Bolivia can be compared to the popular assemblies of Rojava. What is unique is that unlike Bolivia, the bilateral structure in Rojava is not in alliance; because the members of the two structures belong to the same movement , and in some cases even the same individuals .

Democratic autonomy is a structure outside the existing nation-state, which operates through the repressive devices of the bureaucracy, police, military, and other government institutions . It refers to the creation of an important social framework consisting of local and regional people's councils, cooperatives, academies and self-defense forces . With these grassroots democracy structures, the society can develop its own socio -economic policies and education system and meet the needs of the people without being dependent on the state . This means that the function of the state decreases or even disappears over time (Nudem , 2021). As a result , the ability of the state to exert power over the lives of individuals and society – including structural and militaristic violence – is significantly diminished under this new framework. In the following parts of the article , I will be explaining how the Mesopotamian cooperative gained cooperation within the scope of people's councils, autonomous academy and self-defense powers , and how it became social through the creation of new living spaces. We will try to understand the ideal of reaching peace .

Women 's Democratic Rights and Political Independence

The Rojava System has shown its best efforts for the emancipation of women . The emphasis is so strong that TEV - DEM uses it as the main measure of the emancipation of the society . Articles⁴ 27 and 28 of the social contract promote equality between men and women in the eyes of the public, the law and social, political, cultural emancipation of women, and agrees to grant equal rights for participation in economic life . Articles 47, 65 and 87 go further and define 40% as the minimum acceptable presence of each gender in all institutions, communities and assemblies in Rojava. In addition, the law now prohibits child marriage, forced marriage, dowry and polygamy, and includes punishment for violence, honor killings and discriminatory practices against women. The dual leadership and equal presence of women and men in leadership positions in Rojava is part of the Rojava System's efforts to liberate women (Baher, 2014; Biehl, 2016; Gupta, 2016). Some societies and organizations have been formed to enforce the rules and principles on paper .

⁴social contract can be viewed here: https://www.wikipedla.com/wiki/constitution_of_the_autonomous_administration_of_north_and_east_syria

Kongira Star or Star Congress is among the most important organizations . It is an umbrella organization that aims to organize activities aimed at empowering women in society . It aims to bring women with different ideas and backgrounds to the public sphere through its networks in the society (Gupta , 2016). Another organization to empower women *is* the Women 's *Academy* . This academy consists of women who assume responsibility in a parliament, committee, government or other community in Rojava. In the women 's academy, women teach the ideas of democratic confederalism (Üstündağ, 2016). The Rojava System provides equal military power to women and men , as well as preventing access to the public sphere and rights guaranteed by law .

YPJ Yek î ney ê n Parastina Jin or Women 's Protection Units is one of the most well-known features of Rojava. It is an all - female unit alongside the YPG. For sure , the Parastina Jel or Human Protection Units defend Rojava against external attacks . In addition to the YPJ, women are also organized in a structure called *Public Security* , which functions like the police (Caves, 2012; Üstündağ , 2016) .

By establishing a shared economy this way, the focus shifts from the exchange value to the product 's use value . According to Öcalan (2015), this mentality change has the potential to solve the unemployment problems that define the capitalist system. It also looks at unfair invisible labor practices with high use value that can not be measured in terms of exchange and tries to depict it as productive work. In this context, production and exchange relations under the management and control of cooperatives and people 's councils constitute the building blocks of social economy. They remove the dependency to the outside. In fact , instead of the colonialist, imposing economy of the corporatist powers that hold the financial power in the "post - industrial complex" we mentioned before, we can observe independent, democratic provinces. The reality of a social economy that is based on relationships and does not consume own resources and provides economic peace in this sense emerges.

This condition, which can be called “ radical dissent ” today, is actually the vision of life that local peoples organized from the grassroots have woven for hundreds of years . It is possible to break free from the yoke of the war economy created by capitalism by remembering, relearning and adapting this vision experienced by ancient communities. As in the example of Rojava, communities have lived for long years by being displaced, killed by political and economic pressure. Despite the conditions, they continue their search for peaceful living spaces . Undoubtedly , the search for democratic autonomy in Rojava is not the first endeavor if we look at the global picture. Social economy in Bolivia and Spain, and cooperative models in the field of autonomous education in Sao Paolo, Brazil, both shed light on autonomy in Rojava and give hope for establishing a peace economy in different localities .

Designing Peaceful Living Spaces in the Light of Different Cooperative Models

If people of Rojava had switched to the cooperative economy long before the autonomous administration was established, the cooperatives would have been more mature today and would have become the backbone of the entire economy. After the revolution, albeit with a delay, the Kurdish communities in this region have claimed their own fields, homes, shops and establish new living spaces instead of the destroyed ones. We should not forget that any attempt to establish a serious cooperative structure will face conflict between the states and various individuals and institutions that benefit from the current system . Therefore , “ Should we establish cooperatives all over the world? Under what conditions can we do it?”

When we evaluate production-oriented, most of the cooperatives in Rojava are agricultural cooperatives that grow food; vegetables and fruits. However, there are also those dealing with animal husbandry (cows and chickens) and bakeries , restaurants , fabric shops , tailoring , hairdressing , sewing, cooperatives engaged in various low - intensity production and services, such as salt production and electricity. For production cooperatives outside the agricultural sector , which includes more complex and technology - intensive processes , there are two limiting factors : Time: time is the lack of knowledge about the concrete production process , but more importantly , the lack of necessary equipment. This is a direct result of the state 's internal colonial economic policies against this region from the regime in the past and the embargo today. Cooperatives are usually directly affiliated with the neighborhood or sheep commune or even a few other communes. This ensures that its activities are in the interest of the local community. Today , hundreds of cooperatives with a democratic, autonomous structure are active in the Rojava region and its surroundings, depending on the principles determined by the people 's assemblies; the relevant map is on their website⁵ if you`d like to get an idea.

The social-economic model in Bolivia , which operates more in the form of associations , included below, Spain's long experience of cooperatives with categorical diversity, and the autonomous community in Brazil with its educational work present a comprehensive picture . In this sense, the shift of capital accumulation with the examples of communal economy in Rojava and other geographies is important.

Bolivia as a Case of Social Economy

In general, social economy (SE) organizations emerge and thrive in times of economic social crisis (Defourny and Develtere, 1999), especially among populations who are excluded or marginalized for ethnic, geographical, or historical reasons . One of the key features is that these activities are generated from the grassroots by groups of people seeking a solution to economic exclusion, trying to meet a social need that is not being met by the state or the market (Borza ğ a et al., 2016). Similarly, Hillenkamp and Wanderley (2015) suggest that SE

⁵See. <https://mesopotamia.coop/>

startups in Bolivia are related to workforce insecurity and are made up of self - employed people. Thus, supported work employment initiatives in Bolivia include individual, family-run association activities that provide products or services and are often informal or unregistered. In addition, it provides a source of income for people who will be unemployed (Hillenkamp & Wanderley, 2015) .

The case of Bolivia is different and unique from other examples of social economy in Latin America. Since 2009, new laws have been passed to establish the constitutional principle of plural economy in the country. These laws reflect the government's political commitment to social movements, harmony with nature and indigenous peoples to strengthen the various forms of socio-economic organizations on the territory of Bolivia. It was provided within the scope of principles that overlap with the collective values of the company (Wanderley , 2016 : 7).

SE is described in these laws as follows :

- Linked to indigenous identity and universal integration ,
- Based on traditional communal / economic forms of organization that have existed in Bolivia since pre - colonial times ,
- Based on small - scale , rural economic productive activities, also commercial.

Thus, Bolivia 's legal framework links the strengthening of the SE with the larger political goals of overcoming neoliberal and colonial models . Taking such a step especially after the neoliberal administrations that prevailed until 2006 in the country reveals the importance of the aforementioned original economic model and communal organization. Bolivia is of interest to explore different understandings of SE , given its current importance in public discourse, its unique position linked to decolonization and indigenous identity . It offers three contexts enlisted above. At the same time, some aspects of Bolivia 's understanding of the SE are linked to expansion processes in other parts of Latin America and beyond .

There are interesting similarities between the economic model of Rojava and Bolivia. First, both cases are based on rural economic productive activities that rely on self- organization from the grassroots. In addition, the organization called “ solidarity economy ”(Ferguson, 2018) in Bolivia allows local women to self - regulate within the scope of associations and to support their own livelihoods and means to provide . Similarly, both the economic production and political participation of women in Rojava are guaranteed .

It is only possible to see differences in the naming of the structures and the determination of their principles accordingly : Social solidarity from the Latin American school in Bolivia and the SE from the North American school. While structural structures exist, socio - economic organization in Rojava runs through cooperatives and cantonal structure. Both models are

noteworthy in terms of creating an ecological but respectful alternative to capitalism, adopting the economic freedom and political autonomy of local peoples as a principle . In this context, we are talking about two communities that took care of their lands and cultural heritage in times of war and crisis .

The Spanish Case

In the Spanish Civil War, even Franco 's soldiers were invaded, and the republican communists gained more power in their own order and even conducted utopian experiments (Mintz , 1977: 222). This period was not considered to be completely devoid of industrial democracy. Some reformist options were made possible, such as the new regime, nationalist economic policy, and cooperative farming in the agricultural sector. This context encouraged industrial workers to form cooperatives . Mondragon is one of the best examples of this .

There are different economic models in Spain, which can be called a cooperative paradise with the initiatives that have been taking place since the civil war . *Ecos* is a cooperative of cooperatives in Barcelona working to support the growth of cooperatives and to promote inter-cooperative projects ; it is also referred to as “ second degree cooperative ” in the literature⁶.

There are also different cooperative arrangements in Europe, some at the level of the European Union, followed by every European country; others are special regulations that apply in each country or region. Cooperatives in Catalonia can be divided into five categories:

- labor cooperatives : a labor enterprise that produces and distributes products ,
- consumption cooperative: the consumer collectively organizes a consumption process,
- service cooperative: the cooperative provides a service to its members, but the activity is private - for example, a taxi cooperative is a service cooperative and every worker owns taxi cars, has customers but the cooperative gives them radio, provides taxi services and marketing campaigns ,
- the type of cooperative that is a mixture of the other three.
- also cooperative of cooperatives (as mentioned above in the example of *Ecos*)

Economic activities are not shared in *Ecos* , but they work collectively to reach common goals . They work together , share resources to increase their visibility as service providers and social and solidarity economy providers. As of 2021, *Ecos* offers two co-working spaces,

⁶See. <https://cooperativecity.org/2019/04/25/social-solidarity-economy-in-barcelona-the-ecos-cooperative/>

one large and the other small, to 18 cooperatives in the region. At the same time , they rent office space for associations that are not members of Ecos .

Another model in Spain is the *Mondragon corporation or company* in the Basque region . It can be seen as the result of a cooperative business project initiated in 1956. Its mission is summarized in its corporate values as follows: Mutual cooperation, grassroots management, corporate social responsibility, innovation, democratic organization, education and social transformation. Structurally speaking, Mondragon is divided into four areas : finance, industry, retail and information. Currently, there are 96 separate, self-managed cooperatives, more than 81,000 people and 14 R&D centers, which are the leader in the Basque region and the tenth business group in Spain. This profit-oriented cooperative model, operated by Kamala principles , stands out as the most popular financial model of the Basque region . Kamala principles are based on development cooperation . Therefore, "aiming to openly support national or international development priorities, not driven by profit, discriminating in favor of developing countries. This can be seen as an endeavor based on " collaborative relations " aiming to increase the state ownership in the developing country. In the understanding of finance, uncompromising finance, cooperation between global southern countries and tripartite cooperation, climate finance, non - aid policies between governments exist. Collaboration takes place between businesses and non - governmental actors . It can be portrayed as a business model based on effective cooperation, and with its sales network spread to 150 countries, it is adapted to today's development understanding, but not capitalist. It can be seen as a model that is sensitive to the labor cycle of local cooperatives in the production chain and in the sales chain, respectful to nature, which is an unique characteristic.

In this context, the Mondragon model can be worked on as one of the external channels of Rojava cooperatives, and the model can be adapted in certain aspects. In addition , cooperatives in the Rojava region are included in the production, sales and distribution of Mondragon. A new development model has emerged that will work in favor of the peoples of the region. This can work. Of course , it may not be possible to catch the momentum⁷in Mondragon's deep-rooted and stable inheritance that has continued since 1956, but it is still a possibility. In the case of Mondragon , while it has a large-scale production chain with its corporate infrastructure, the cooperatives in Rojava, alternatively, are on the scale that makes the region autonomous and self-sufficient. They can produce. To counter the ongoing embargo, it may be wise to be included in the aforementioned local development network .

Radical Democracy , Experimental Learning Models and Peaceful Living Spaces

⁷<https://www.mondragon-corporation.com/en/history>

In this section, we aim to understand how the cooperative cases in point protect the autonomy and most importantly, survive during the design, adoption, implementation of life-work models as well as manage the sustenance of peaceful living spaces . We will focus on learning models that were developed as pedagogical approach both during and after the liberation movement in Rojava, and its potential to inspire the process and experience in Sao Paulo, Brasil.

The Rojava Case

People in the autonomous lands of Rojava, after the Kurdish liberation movement, instead of relying on someone else's line of production for them, they rather relied on self-defense and autonomous freedom. They began their experiments to create the conditions for that. Even so, their political activity can be seen as two complementary processes: Autonomous organization as well as institutions operating for all . It is a kind of pragmatic, hybrid form that can be seen in approaches to political institutions, in the creation of collectively governed alternatives that, over time, undermine the need for the state and resolve political issues over time (Oak, 2016).

In Rojava 's education sector, these processes of dual power are clear: the Syrian state education system still exists, but it is dependent on the pedagogies of fear, compulsory patriotism and manipulative histories. It is being challenged from within and from the wider democratic society. Meanwhile, “to meet the basic needs of population at large” (Knapp et al ., 2016:181) and “ involvement for the formation of social life, individuals are encouraged to think independently through the “revolutionary academies ” that provide support . Leader individuals are raised for social change, transformation and social institutions (Akif & Aydın , 2014) .

Covering a wide range of subjects with regional decentralization, the academies focus specifically on learning the Kurdish language, history and literature, which were repressed under successive state regimes. Women 's history and experiences are intertwined with 'general' topics and are also the focus of private courses (Knapp et al., 2016, p .182). Struggling to transfer liberating values, these individuals “teach everything from local languages to philosophy, history and science . Even European philosophy is included in the curriculum” (Knapp , et al., 2016, p. 182). Content, therefore, helps people to “ take care of themselves, their society, and understand social reality, improving people 's lives in ways that are contextually relevant “. It includes everything that allows them to grow (Akif & Ayd in , 2014) .

The education system and the radical democratic political system mutually feed off each other . While searching for meaning and thinking for themselves, students consider practical issues in order to become the subject of their own lives and participate in democratic autonomy (Biehl, 2006 & 2014). This emphasizes knowledge based on understanding,

explanation and shared life experiences according to the principles of "democratic, ecological economy and gender liberating paradigm" (Akif & Aydin , 2014). The system develops knowledge based on local social dynamics rather than being designed for status, qualifications or job prospects; basically „ how does society want to live ? As a teacher in the town of Rimelan drew its frame: "Now we want to think freely, without borders and question everything ... Our aim is to expand limited school education and make people conscious of themselves, to enable them to perceive them as individuals " (Akif & Ayd in , 2014) .

This is not limited to certain institutions: Political education means women who have taken part in women 's military forces, where women can live as long as they want and take part in free education in homes they build on their own. Moreover, educational institutions produce their own materials and people are encouraged to teach what they have learned to others (Knapp et al. , 2016 : 180-182). This demonstrates the principle that education is for everyone, regardless of age or position in society. The emphasis on caring for the most vulnerable is significant: The city of Kobanê, even among scarce resources, is "teaching students with disabilities and special needs" led by an expert on visually impaired teaching. The teacher himself reallocated sources to build a primary school for students in 2016 (Knapp , et al, 2016: 184). This horizontal model also forms the basis of the University of Rojava, which we will talk about in the last part of the article.

The São Paolo Case

In November 2015, high schools in São Paulo were occupied by students who sought to save a series of schools threatened by closure due to the harsh, bureaucratic policy of the state (Campos, et al., 2016). By March 2016, schools in Rio de Janeiro and other cities were in charge of the community on a variety of issues, including the financing of education, with alleged sector abandonment by the government. Teachers and support staff were not paid or actually faced pay cuts ; meanwhile, strike actions had little effect. These problems were linked to wider neoliberalization processes : The state tried to slow down public education so that privatization could be more easily justified .

Many of the problems faced by workers were related to outsourcing . Thus, throughout 2015 and 2016, these education - centered forms of protest were linked to other socio-political issues, among other tactics. At the end of August 2016, there was a controversial change in the federal *government* (labeled as a parliamentary coup d'état), followed by national cuts, including deep and prolonged cuts in public education. Then belt tightening measures arrived. In October 2016, students from more than 1,000 schools and 200 universities responded to the protests and occupied institutions across the country. Professions were part of the struggle for a better, more meaningful education – *current* education defined as shallow and *stupid*. It was intended to be the opposite of what is defined as the education of cheap, alienated workers .

In fact, the professionals were well-educated and influenced students' perceptions, values, and understanding of the world. Under the mentorship of their teachers, students introduced alternative courses to the formal curriculum, including their rights under Brazilian law. Here, the peer learning method came to the fore; students also developed their teaching skills. Indigenous, African and Afro-Brazilian history, movements, feminism and gender issues can be counted as those that carry a decolonial context among these courses.

Formal lessons were carried out in parallel with cultural activities and life skills. During vocational training, courses were focused on gaining different perspectives. These and similar approaches enabled students to take the relationship between the teachers and the teachers out of the traditional structure and to interact as equals. Students who established empathetic social relations with each other and with their environment during their vocational education became familiar with the forms of autonomous structures. Therefore, the "learning by doing" method was applied in new vocational education setting. It has become the micro model of everyday life ever since then. This model can be counted as one of the most important achievements of the decolonial social movement in Brazil (Campos, et al., 2016: 12), also carrying principles of Freire's critical pedagogy.

Recognizing the Marginal and Liberating Model

In both examples, there is an explicit refusal to commodify education or use it to reinforce structures of domination. Moreover, both go beyond rejection and make students' worlds real. They emphasize that students are their main actors, drawing on their own forward, making their own destinies, especially by focusing on marginalized and liberating histories. This approach at times included the political rejection of certain forms of representation, while seeing representatives responsible for decentralized, deliberative, directly democratic structures as strategic.

Most of these practices rely on creating spaces collectively for people to feel at home, understood by those around them, and thus being able to draw collective pathways that include everyone rather than a chosen group. Interestingly, approaches to solidarity in every context start from the necessity of knowing what is going on, sharing the story, being inspired by their actions, and most importantly, to care about their own policies (Dirik, 2015b). Following this, an emphasis was placed on "construction of a strong revolutionary movement in the current country", where various movements can learn from and support each other (Knapp, et al., 2016, p. 257). This production process itself is a form of liberating pedagogy that opposes the model of "knowledge production in the global north, consumption in the global south". In addition, the success of such movements requires challenging the blocks of the system that caused this situation to start in the first place (Dirik, 2015b).

The politico-educational struggles outlined above do not only focus on school closures, language rights, or any single issue. The intersectional line of thinking between education

and society, of establishing a relationship with the world, of relating with each other, of thinking and being become the norm; they want a reimagination of collectively building a more humane society. *Seizing the avenues of self - education* is a critical action in itself and lays the groundwork for subsequent efforts. At the same time, it provides continuity in sharing , questioning and updating the acquired knowledge . It carries the ideal of building life together, with its gender - free approach, independent of farming policies . Protecting one 's own lands, heritage and culture also requires an insistence on establishing their own living spaces . That is when the value of your labor, the integrity and rights of all living things in nature, all peoples who share common living spaces becomes a common concern.

At this point, it is necessary to mention the University of Rojava (Zanîngeha Rojava - ZR) , which was founded and survived despite all the embargoes and the war economy that has been going on for many years. Rojava University , founded in Qamishlo in 2016, is a result of the Rojava Revolution ⁸. Since its inception, ZR has been offering an opportunity to students who had to suspend their education programs due to the conflict and geographic disconnect in Syria. The forced migration, which emerged as the inevitable result of the natural conflict, caused difficulties in finding professional and scientific personnel. ZR has been a solution to overcome these difficulties and to support students to continue their education programs .

The establishment process of the university, on the one hand, takes the universal experiences in higher education as a model. On the other hand, it adopts the history, social values and philosophy of Mesopotamia. ZR adopts modern techniques in scientific and academic studies and believes that the concept of education in the Middle East needs to be redefined. Since the education model that imposes authoritarianism on the society will prevent students from developing their abilities and capacities, it is necessary to focus on a learning model that encourages critical thinking and creativity. It can be easily said that authoritarian education models, combined with capitalist and nationalist motives, have become one of the main causes of conflicts in the Middle East.

ZR claims on its introductory page that it plays a historical role in correcting this conflict-forming mistake, and is a creative, freedom-seeking structure for people who believe in collective work and seek freedom. It aims to create a *Learning Hub* with a bottom-up approach: To see the connection between science and life, respecting nature, society and women, communicating with all cultures, beliefs and races. It, further, aims at a society that is pro-active rather than reactionary. The theoretical background that students acquire from social sciences and natural sciences programs and their applied knowledge are also emphasized.

Impartiality, experience development, social memory, ecological sensitivity and social justice awareness, peace-loving are counted among the fundamental values of this higher education

⁸See. <https://www.greenleft.org.au/content/rojavas-revolutionary-university>

institution. They can be considered as the framework concepts of radical opposition on the way to forming the nation. Radical opposition means protecting one's own values and culture despite authority, oppression and plunder, keeping local democracy and production alive, and at the same time maintaining universal values. It prioritizes not ignoring people. In this context, it is necessary for the individual to understand and convey the connection of different disciplines with the society and the value of the air one breathes with all living things in unity and establishes relations in harmony. The universal view provides such a framework.

Weaving Ecologically Sensitive Living Spaces

The autonomous administration does not have the means to quickly resolve the main problems affecting the entire region, the experience and support of the transnational commons have begun to make new progress. The unavoidable consequence of the Islamic gangs in the region, their war policies, and the huge dam construction that cuts off these channels, create the drive for transnational networks. Likewise, the impact of ecological destruction on living life has recently attracted the attention of the internationalist commune movement, which is the basis of the Mesopotamian Cooperative, and the "Water for Rojava" Campaign. The necessary funds were collected in a short time with a solid crowd-sourced campaign. The donation campaign carried out by the Solidarity Economics Association, registered in England and set out to provide international economic solidarity, is also important⁹ - the good news of the commons (transitional) economy that has developed as an alternative to the capitalist economy. However, the management of water, which is one of the most fundamental resources, is an important issue and its place in ecological policy must be revised. It should be updated depending on the needs of the people. The following example is interesting in that it is linked to policies related to natural resources.

I would like to depict some of the views shared by researchers working in the field on the Academia.edu platform during the previous discussions on this subject. Among the comments received there, on a short blog form of this chapter was Andreu Ginestet's striking statements on creating peace-oriented, ecologically sensitive living spaces. Undoubtedly, one of the most important elements that makes it possible for communities with different identities to live together is living spaces. This alternative, which emerged with the name of *Solinterra*, by adapting the natural systems used in the Roman period to our day, offers heating with geothermal and solar energy, insulation and the commissioning of the entire installation. At the same time, it is durable and makes sense in a societal perspective. It can be built by communes and requires little technical skill. Use of conventional concrete blocks, as they withstand brittle elements such as pipes in sidewalls, roofs, ceilings, and floor plates that carry a salt solution (water and salt). He is faced with the criticism and obstacles of the dominating and power-holding corporate powers. In this context, it should be evaluated as a technology that requires trust, peace and continuity. In a conflict zone, any weapon

⁹See. <https://www.solidarityeconomy.coop/projects/coops-mesopotamia>

penetrating a wall risks destroying the construction. Like most ecological solutions, Solinterra is a technology that requires peace .

Peace - based ecological technologies need to be significantly differentiated from technologies based on war mentality, such as insulating buildings with a petroleum derivative, polystyrene . You can pierce a polystyrene wall with a bullet, with almost no effect. It is also interesting that each technology leads to different risks and opportunities. Having a piping system at home means being able to stop the fire with a sprinkler system in the event of a fire. However, like most examples today, a building insulated with polystyrene can burn very easily . Insulating a building with polystyrene creates a dependency on petroleum - based polluting industries . Of course, its construction is fast, but this is its only advantage .

When a building is installed with the labor of local people, it creates social bonds and supports a cooperative, autonomous cooperative economy. A building insulated with polystyrene degrades ecological material such as brick and stone with chemicals released from polystyrene. Insulated buildings have shorter - term durability . Polystyrene , the insulation itself, is supposed to last 25 years, but no one knows how to recycle materials. Instead, it is used as a very polluting fuel in the operation of power plants . In this sense, a positive development is : Evaluation of the steps and past experiences related to the design and ecological sustainability of living spaces. They are made by today 's commons and the accumulation is quickly transferred to different geographies . In this context, instead of the concrete blocks imposed by the post-industrial complex, the living spaces that emerged with the Solinterra principle, the self - devotion of the local people and the cooperative consciousness give hope for future generations. Especially in the case of Rojava, as we mentioned at the beginning of the article (Akif and Aydın , 2014), it can be instrumental in the construction of structures that are sensitive to ecology from the start. Planning this within the scope of the relevant cooperative production and operation processes will also ensure the continuity of the work cycle .

Conclusive Commentary

In Graeber 's Rojava experience; he approaches the geography from another angle, emphasizing that the alternative grassroots organization in the canton of Rojava excludes the reality of social class and that direct democracy takes a lot of time. He also draws attention to the fact that the formal government and the grassroots confederalist structure can not be balanced from time to time. He proposes a two-dimensional plan as a way out : First, a minimal state-like organizational structure that will meet the standards of the " international community " and thus interact with it; that might refer to some kind of original state. And second, to create a kind of purgatory to convey information and move resources *back and forth* between these formal structures and the bottom - up structures . Of course, this purgatory should be created in the spirit of democratic confederalism and the bottom - up structures should not be jeopardized.

According to Barkhoda (2016), Rojava is to establish, for the first time in the Middle East, a sustainable grassroots participatory democracy system that puts people at the pinnacle of policy making . It wants to be the pioneer ; it shows this by providing equal opportunities for men and women and protecting the ecosystem . Efforts to change life with all its social , political , cultural and economic dimensions make Rojava a unique laboratory for social scientists . Many ideas that have long been considered topical or philosophical concerns are currently being tested in practice in Rojava. Thus , we are talking about an invaluable cultural experience that social as well as natural scientists should pay attention to and work from different perspectives .

To these pillars, the above-mentioned , ecologically sensitive, grassroots, autonomous social economy models can be articulated with their adaptive foci. In the light of the principles of democratic confederalism, it protects women's rights, promotes cooperative work, economic autonomy, focuses on ecology, cultural values and the coexistence of different identities. It is necessary to construct it in a scope that allows pluriversity. In order for all this local sensitivity to evolve into a world view that will also carry the local to the universal, the understanding of education must be supported. We have stated that this will be possible only by *capturing the ways of one's own education with a decolonial approach , and by learning about life , throughout life .*

Undoubtedly , the focus of creating peaceful living spaces should be to give up the war economy and profit-oriented, extractive overproduction that harms living things. The mentality of life, which is sustained without harming the ecology and the vital integrity of living things, brings with it the upper and lower infrastructures created with this slogan. Therefore, the cooperatives, which are the subject of the article, are the flagship not only of the solidarity social economy, but also of the policies of autonomous education, environment and architecture.

The problem, the obstacle, and the gap that arises from it have taken too much time and energy in that geography. On the one hand, in order to remove systemic obstacles, it is necessary to risk peace, to accelerate the peace discourse, and to continue the search for justice tirelessly. On the other hand, participatory practices sprouting in the local area should not be underestimated: Despite the ongoing state repression, embargo, war economy and social exclusion, Rojava and many more peace-seeking micro-models continue to emerge. We should not only observe the commons in this geography unheard of for such endeavors, but also be a part of it. We must strive to multiply these micro-models of radical opposition. So would Graeber, who devoted his life to social peace...

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