

## ***Student Movement in Portugal Throughout the '60s: Actors' Representations of a Period of Social and Cultural Experimentation'***

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**Abstract:** The Portuguese university student movement was very active during the so-called «long '60s» (also the final phase of *Estado Novo*) and took on a major role in the opposition to the regime. While the wide range of events and international mobilizations resulting from a large increment in youth activism was an important source of inspiration to the Portuguese students, it is equally certain that specific elements in the national context contributed to the characteristics that the movement came to assume. Specifically, we are referring to the regime's authoritarianism and to the intense repression it unleashed, as well as to the resistance to the colonial war. At the same time, the strong moral, cultural, and artistic conservatism of that period is questioned, which led to the development of alternative behaviours and cultural practices, echoing those of the «May 1968» (Bebiano, 2003). The research underlying this work aims to capture the representations constructed by some of the actors who lived this moment of experimentation, who were then young university students; and to reflect on the contribution of these forms of social participation for the construction of a democratic society in the '70s. In addition to the necessary literature review, we resort to a set of interviews with people who attended the University of Lisbon in the transition from the '60s to the '70s. Therefore, we will take as an example the Lisbon university setting.

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<sup>1</sup> Article published within the project INOVAR - *Itineraries of pedagogical innovation: reference schools and experiences in Portugal in the twentieth century*, funded by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia - PTDC/MHC-CED/0893/2014.

**Keywords:** Student movements; «Long '60s»; «Academic crisis»; social participation; totalitarianism; colonial war.

Received: 20/11/2018

Accepted: 19/12/2018

## 1. Introduction

The expression «long '60s» is adequate to delimit a phenomenon not restricted to that decade; on the contrary, this period needs to be understood by looking back at the mid '50s and forward to the mid '70s. This is both true for the international context and for the Portuguese case. Although it is possible to find earlier instances of activism, there is some consensus in considering the protest against the government's attempt to strictly control student's associative activities and to reduce the autonomy of their representative organizations (Decree-law 40.900 of December 1956) as the first important demonstration of a new type of university students' activism. The protests thus initiated went through several stages, with periods of greater conflict and moments of apparent reflux, until a final acceleration that started in 1968/69 and culminated in the democratic revolution in 25 April 1974. The revolutionary period that ensued will then continue to exhibit strong student activity, which will only subside after the political «normalization» initiated in 1976.

Certainly, the background of an extremely rich and dynamic international context in the «long '60s» cannot be ignored, as it found undeniable echo in Portugal. We are not only thinking of «May 1968», but also of processes and phenomena like the XX Congress of CPSU, the crisis in Hungary, the Sino-Soviet conflict, the war in Vietnam, the Second Vatican Council, the Chinese «cultural revolution», and the «Prague spring», amongst others.

Nevertheless, Portuguese student movements were also considerably shaped by the national context. Above all, it is important to stress that Portuguese people lived since the early '30s under an authoritarian regime, the so-called *Estado Novo*, led by António de Oliveira Salazar. Formed in the context of the rise of a set of modern dictatorships (in which fascism and Nazism stood out), the *Estado Novo* regime was able to survive the post-Second World War and remained in place until the '70s. Student movements would have to face not only strong control of their organizational activities, but also intense political and ideological repression of many of student's actions, often resulting in the imprisonment of their leaders.

However, the opposition to the regime by university students did have connections to the opposition unleashed by other social sectors and generally followed the specific political context of the two final decades of *Estado Novo*. The electoral campaign of General Humberto Delgado, which mobilized large sectors of the population in 1958 against the official candidate, opened a new phase in the relationship between the regime and the opposition. The '60s were rich in events with strong political implications, particularly the colonial war, which began in 1961 in Angola, extended in 1963 and 1964 to Guinea and Mozambique, and would only be over after the 1974 revolution. The final phase of student movements coincides with the decline of the regime. The replacement of Salazar by Marcelo Caetano in September 1968 gave rise to some hope for political openness, which indeed never

happened and was actually followed by hardened repressive politics. As we shall see in what follows, those years witnessed increased politicization and radicalization of the student movement. The non-resolution of the colonial problem would be the main factor in building resistance to the regime and the struggle against the colonial war would become a major focus of student opposition.

## **2. The student movement and its protest cycles in «the long '60s» in Portugal**

We agree with authors, such as Guya Accornero, who have warned against reducing student movements to the notion of «academic crisis». Traditionally, two large «academic crisis» are described: one in 1962, centred in Lisbon, and a second one in 1969 originated in Coimbra. But recent research has shown the pertinence of a complex view on the movement's trajectory, as we are facing a plural and composite object (Accornero, 2009; 2016). The idea that there were various protest cycles, each with its own characteristics, must be considered. Some of these moments showed stronger dynamics, while in others a strategic retreat was adopted. Also, along this period there were transformations on both students' claims and forms of organization and struggle. In the very beginning, the struggle was concentrated on the claim for autonomy for the student movement against the efforts to frame and control it by the authoritarian state. By the time of the protests of 1956, the dominant perspective was «corporatist» and had associative autonomy as the main goal. At that time, the students' associations had as one of their main purposes the provision of a set of services to students.

The 1962 movements started when the government banned the «Students' Day» (24 March). Some innovative forms of struggle were adopted, such as the occupation of university facilities like the canteen, and the «hunger strike». Large student meetings were also held and «academic mourning» (a euphemism for student strike) was announced. The mobilization of a larger number of students was facilitated by the recent opening of the first «University Campus» in Lisbon, in the Campo Grande area. Students were met with violent repression, leading to mass arrests. If put in perspective, the forms of struggle were rather moderate and students' claims remained mostly within the «academic» sphere.

According to Nuno Caiado (1990), the period after 1962, in which there was a mobilization and repression «peak» in January 1965, was characterized by the transition from «associative corporatism» to «student unionism». Miguel Cardina (2008, pp. 41-42) states that «replacing issues like initiation rites and service provision, the emphasis was placed on sociocultural concerns, awareness of students about their own problems, democratization of decision-making and convergence with other academies». Naturally, the struggle against the restriction of university autonomy, for the celebration of the Students' Day, and for the release of the imprisoned students is ongoing. The means were still rather moderate: petitions, contacts with deputies and student gatherings. Openly political issues were still not at the centre of the student agenda. As several authors have noted, the student movement of the '60s was fairly plural, although unitary perspectives prevailed. Nuno Caiado (1990, p.

20), for example, states that it is impossible to «consider the student movement as a cohesive and united entity». Young militants of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) and catholic militants of the Catholic University Youth (JUC) took part in the struggles, as did others who generically adhered to democratic and socialist views. In the '60s, the Communist Party was the main organized force opposing the regime, while operating underground. This was equally the period in which wider sectors of Catholicism became increasingly critical of Salazar. A new moment of strong mobilization occurred in 1967, following the terrible floods in the Tagus valley region that destroyed the popular neighbourhoods in the periphery of Lisbon. These events caused a high number of victims and exposed the misery in which these communities lived, as well as the regime's inability to respond to both the tragedy and to the social circumstances that aggravated it. The action and support of young volunteers, outside of the regime, confronted many with an unknown reality and raised further political awareness.

The years 1968/69 embodied an important turning point. According to Guya Accornero (2009, p. 112), from then on there was «a whole renewal of the repertoires of action and issues in dispute». In February 1968, there was an important event that accounts for the growing politicization of the student movement: a demonstration against the Vietnam War in front of the US embassy. This brought the struggle against colonial war closer to student movements and in the final six years of the regime it would become a central issue in the student agenda, in contrast to what had happened so far. The idea that the colonized people had the right to independence spread in the various organizations opposed to the regime, at the same time that the process of decolonization advanced in other regions. As a consequence, another form of protest began to be adopted: the refusal to join the military forces, leading many young men to flee to other European countries (Estanque & Bebian, 2007).

As pointed out, despite the so-called «academic crisis» of Coimbra in 1969 becoming the most symbolic moment of the student movement at the end of *Estado Novo*, it was at the Lisbon academy that new forms of struggle were tried out, breaking with both «corporatist» and «unionist» traditions. This is the phase of «politicization» and «radicalization» of the student movement. In the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s, issues like the social function of the university, the advocacy for the democratisation of education, the challenging of university pedagogy (and search for alternatives), and the critique of the «bourgeois» and «capitalist» society, as well as of «colonialism» and «imperialism» became more and more present in student discourse.

An important change in the period after 1969 was the emergence of a «new left» of Maoist (and in some cases Trotskyist) inspiration. It was primarily under the echoes of the «Prague spring» that the split of the international communist movement was felt in Portugal. The USSR was no longer seen as a beacon for communism and the Chinese «cultural revolution» became the great source of inspiration. As a consequence, the Portuguese Communist Party was no longer seen as the true interpreter of Marxism by diverse sectors of student opposition and was criticized as reformist. The somewhat unitary character of the earlier phases was replaced by an intense fragmentation. In addition to the struggle against «fascism», the various groups then formed also fought each other for their influence on the student

movement. The students' associations, at the centre of the movement until that time, lost some of their prominence, although they carried on providing invaluable back-up support to the movement through the spaces and equipment they maintained. A larger set of recently created organizations came to the forefront of the struggle; these had a more flexible character and took on an increasingly politicized, radicalised and conflicting posture. The political repression also became increasingly violent in the death throes of the authoritarian regime, targeting students in particular.

### **3. The student movement in the memory of its protagonists**

As stated earlier, we interviewed four people who were then university students in Lisbon: Eugénia Silva, Fernando Rosas, Maria Emília Brederode Santos e Maria Odete Valente; all of whom carried on through an academic path and, in some cases, are until today public figures who maintain an important civic participation. We looked for some diversity in terms of gender, of the faculties they attended, and also of the moments in which they participated the most.

We conducted semi-directed interviews with each of the deponents, throughout 2018. Once transcribed, these were reviewed and validated by the respondents, and then analysed. We sought to get to know the interviewees' university trajectory, the atmosphere in their faculties, what was their participation in the movements and at what moments, which organizations they connected with, what student demands and forms of struggle were adopted, the nature of the role played by women, the character of the cultural and psychological environment at the time, and how the international context influenced people and events.

For several decades, the reliance on oral sources by historiographical research has been highly controversial, namely in what relates to the possibility of admitting an «oral history». Although the matter is now more consensual, we must be aware that the use of actor's oral and written memories for a research strategy, such as the one we resort to in our analysis, is promising but also risky. On the one hand, it should be highlighted that oral testimonies allow access to dimensions hardly found in other types of sources, notably those that refer to everyday life and emotional aspects, as well as to what is silenced in public speeches. In this way, individuals and their subjectivities are valued, as the way they attribute meaning to those experiences is appreciated. On the other hand, we cannot forget the fact that any actor's view is always partial and localized. From a particular standpoint, it accounts for created and recreated representations of experiences lived at a given moment of their trajectories. Additionally, a certain idealization of these moments may set in as time passes or, on the contrary, an erasure or oblivion of those memories may occur. These facts demand of the researcher a critical and vigilant observation of these memories (Prins, 1992; Suárez Pazos, 2002; Viñao Frago, 2002).

Let us first refer to some traces of the biographies of our interviewees, as university students. Eugénia Silva was a student of the Physical and Chemical Sciences course at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon, from 1959/60 to 1962/63. She became secretary of the magazine *O Mochó*, published by the student association.

Fernando Rosas participated in the «crisis» of 62, while he was a high school finalist. He was then a member of the *Pró-Associação dos Liceus* (a high school student association) and was recruited that same year to the Portuguese Communist Party. He was 15 years old. He entered the Faculty of Law in the school year of 1963/64. He was arrested in January 1965 and remained imprisoned for 15 months. He was an associative leader and volunteer in support of the victims of the floods of 1967. He actively participated in the student movements of 1969, the year he finished the course. He had abandoned the Communist Party in 1968. He participated in the creation of radical left-wing and Maoism-inspired organizations. He was arrested again for 14 months in 1971. He maintained an intense political activity even after finishing the course and starting his professional activity.

Maria Odete Valente attended the course of Physical and Chemical Sciences at the Faculty of Sciences between 1960/61 and 1963/64. She had to conclude the course in Coimbra in the following year (1964/65), after being expelled from the University of Lisbon in the sequence of the ban of the Students' Day and the repression that followed the attempt to celebrate it. Although she attended the events of the so-called «crisis» of 1962, she participated more actively in the years that followed, until 1964, as an associative leader in the Faculty of Sciences (in 1962/63 and 1963/64). She was a member of the Catholic University Youth (JUC).

Maria Emília Brederode Santos began by attending the Faculty of Law (in the school year of 1960/61), and switched to the Faculty of Arts and Humanities the following year, where she attended Anglo-American Literary studies. She was student leader in 1963/64 and for that reason she was suspended, not being allowed to enrol in any university for a whole year. Meanwhile, she started working in an advertising agency and, later, in a school. After the defence of her final dissertation, she moved to England in 1968, and then to Geneva.

We now turn to the analysis of how our interviewees evoke their experiences of the Portuguese «long '60s» and what representations and feelings they built and express in that regard. Let's start with the «crisis» of 62. Eugénia Silva still has a vivid recollection of the events following the ban of the Students' Day, such as the hunger strike in the university canteen, the mass arrest of students, the plenary meetings, the unleashing of a strike, the occupation of some faculties by students, the parades and the street demonstrations. In the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s, the first university campus in Lisbon was created. The opening in this campus of new buildings for the Rectory, the Faculties of Law and of Arts and Humanities, the *Santa Maria* Hospital with the Faculty of Medicine, and the university canteen, concentrated students and favoured the mobilization of larger numbers of students. This fact is evoked by Maria Emília Brederode Santos:

On the one hand, the university campus was new, it gathered Medicine, Law, Arts and Humanities, and the Rectory in the same space. The canteen was also a very important meeting point. So there was a place where there were people from various faculties who were in a common space and this also created greater union (M. Santos, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Regarding the themes discussed in the plenary sessions, Eugénia Silva states the following: «Academic issues [were debated], there was not so much criticism towards the regime» (E. Silva, personal communication, June 6, 2018). Maria Emília Brederode Santos expresses the same opinion: «In 62 [the questions] were very academic, apparently very academic» (M. Santos, personal communication, July 2, 2018), a statement that is in line with the previously mentioned «corporate» character of the student movement in this phase. The speeches were still moderately politicized, and the colonial war, which had just begun, was not yet visible in the student agenda. This does not mean that there was no political consciousness amongst student leaders; rather than a real apolitical attitude, this was more like a strategic choice.

Both Eugénia Silva and Maria Odete Valente recall the central role assumed by student associations in both the early and mid-1960s movements in Lisbon, in particular with regard to the Faculty of Sciences, which both attended:

The Association, for it already had a cafeteria, [...] the only canteen there was in the whole University was here in the University Campus. And the association had a canteen, where we were all the time. The Association sometimes had meetings; had a magazine called *O Mochó*. [...] There were elections for the association (E. Silva, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

At that time there was already intense activity. The Student Association was the only way for students to meet and discuss openly. It was within the student associations that they could express their positions. [...] I think there was freedom in student associations. The associations were modern. [...] It was the Student Association, and the one at Sciences was highly regarded. And it had many activities. There were cultural activities (M. Valente, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

Maria Emília Brederode Santos adds another point – the importance of the newly created structure of the Inter-Association Meetings (RIA):

The RIA was something new, right? Because in Coimbra there was the Academic Association, which aggregated the faculties. But here in Lisbon there were several associations and pro-associations and this structure of the RIA – Inter-Association Meetings – was created to coordinate common actions (M. Santos, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

As to the political or social forces that had some presence in student associations during the movements of the beginning and the mid-1960s, Maria Odete Valente is clear in identifying both Communist and Catholic militancy:

So those who governed the associations were students who somehow did not like the regime, Communists, but some not even identified as such, and were active, independent, and a few were Catholic students, which was my case. Many people were already part of a certain Catholic left that was present in the university youth (M. Valente, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

Given that the Portuguese Communist Party was one of the great protagonists of the political opposition to the *Estado Novo*, it was only natural that the university students who militated in its ranks should seek to assume, even if discreetly, similar prominence in the university youth organizations, which at the time were the student associations. All testimonies highlight this role. Regarding the positioning of certain sectors within Catholicism, it should be kept in mind that this happened in the midst of the Second Vatican Council, and that Church figures had already criticized the regime, namely the bishop of Oporto, D. António Ferreira Gomes, and Father Abel Varzim. In the 1960s, the Catholic University Youth developed intense activity, in addition to participation in associative life, and it opened up to new times, as Maria Odete Valente points out:

The JUC hosted the students, held meetings, organized events at Christmas and Easter, and the folder blessing which at that time was only organized by the Catholic University Youth, and developed studies, not only of the Bible but also on philosophical and political thinking. Most of us read Marx within JUC's activities. [...] Most of us had encounters that were more for philosophical study; others were for the in-depth study of the Bible, this is where I learned to read the Bible in another way. Because those in charge were all really cultivated people (M. Valente, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

Another interesting aspect addressed in the interviews is women's participation in student movements. Taking into account, on the one hand, the traditional role reserved for women by Salazar's ideology and, on the other hand, their growing presence in university courses, particularly in some areas such as humanities and sciences, it became important for us to understand how young women who attended university positioned themselves in the face of events. The testimonies we gathered all emphasize the importance of women's participation. Eugénia Silva and Maria Emília Brederode Santos recount this presence:

Yes, yes, yes, [the girls] participated as the boys. I mean people think that we, that we were raised with many things and that we were all silly. We were not! It was not quite like that. No, the [female] students participated, that is, there were [female] students in the association. The Faculty of Sciences had plenty of girls. Therefore, we participated [...]. The boys were in charge, [...] but, anyway, the girls were also very involved, there was no discrimination. But at home it was different; because my brother could return late and I could not, right? (E. Silva, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

The women were very active; they were as active as the boys. [...] But they did not speak. That is to say, they did not have large public visibility in 62. [...] So, they were there, went to the rallies, went on strike, did everything, but did not lead or speak in public (M. Santos, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

Here we find a somewhat paradoxical situation. That is, there are still some traits that account for a greater dependence, for example on the family, or for a lesser role as leaders of the movement or as speakers in plenary meetings; but

it is also clear that many of these young women feared neither involvement nor presence in public demonstrations. A curious fact, also shown in photographs of the time, is that at the beginning of the '60s their clothing was still quite traditional, with relatively long skirts and the use of scarves covering the head. Eugenia Silva justifies this option: «People used to put a headscarf, but that was custom. It was customary and fashionable. It was not exactly because they were forced, it was because it was in» (E. Silva, personal communication, June 6, 2018). In any case, this was still a long way from the most striking transformations that would occur in the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s. In 1962 the signs of great cultural change that would be the trademark of the 1960s and of «May 1968» were still not very visible in Portugal. As Eugénia Silva states: «No, I do not remember, I do not remember anything that was changing» (E. Silva, personal communication, June 6, 2018); and Maria Odete Valente adds: «No! We were completely enclosed here» (M. Valente, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

The floods in Lisbon and the Tagus Valley in 1967 ended up having unexpected political repercussions and are quite present in the testimonies we collected. The regime maintained its usual position in similar situations, minimizing the tragedy and censoring the news that referred to the event. This did not prevent the development of a broad network of student volunteers, both in the associative movement and in Catholic militancy. Fernando Rosas was part of the brigades of volunteers and describes the shock felt by students as they came into contact with a misery unknown to them.

The floods... it was the waterproofing of the urban soil, which took the swirl of mud to the peripheral Lisbon. The peripheral Lisbon was the greatest misery you can imagine. There were no houses, there were shanties, [...] there were absolutely primitive living conditions; entire villages [...] and that was the real Portugal. 500 people died; Salazar banned the release of the death toll in the country. And we went there to help, to remove the mud from peoples' houses, to dig up the corpses in the mud; to try to organize people a little too, right? Help those massively illiterate people. [...] What we did [...] was to disclose and spread [what was going on], right? We made information bulletins about it. That's why the government started banning students from going to the floods (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

According to the interviewee, this was the time many young people, mostly of bourgeois origin, awoke to the social reality of the country, coming into contact with experiences of total misery and death. That was the contribution of the floods to the increasing politicization of university youth.

The cycle initiated in the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s would already be qualitatively different from the cycles we have been referring to (early and mid-1960s). Of our interviewees, it was Fernando Rosas who witnessed it more closely. The others had already finished their university courses or, in some cases, lived abroad.

For this interviewee, the repressive character of the regime was felt in a very particular way in the faculty he attended, the Faculty of Law, where teachers were

former and future leaders of the *Estado Novo*. His statement that «the Faculty of Law was an undercover military academy» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018) is categorical. The gender division was explicit, the girls sitting in the front rows and the boys in the others. The traditional character of the teaching was evident: «The professor was speaking on the subject in absolute silence, interrupting the teacher was forbidden. [...] It was a thoroughly traditionalist, conservative and erratic, highly hierarchical teaching. [...] And there was strict discipline» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

In contrast, it was also one of the most politicized faculties with the most radical student activism – «the prudent associative discourse was often replaced by open political confrontation» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018) –, along with two other schools: «[Faculty of] Economics, Technical [Institute], [Faculty of] Law were exemplary schools in the protests, with a lot of street struggle. And it all ended with the police invading the faculty, banning and closing the association» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018). The academic environment clearly deteriorated in the last years of the regime. The student opposition became more radical and political repression became more violent and penetrated the university spaces: «The University became ungovernable. And then they put ‘gorillas’ inside, who attacked and beat people, it turned into a state of siege environment» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

According to Fernando Rosas, the contribution of student movements to political degradation and future fall of the regime was unquestionable, as students were often at the forefront of contestation and exploring innovative forms of struggle:

Because one of the characteristics of the student movement of the early 1960s, and one that is dramatic for the regime, is that the regime loses student youth. [...] From 62 until the end of the regime, the student movement constitutes a permanent political force of opposition to the regime. And often avant-garde, that is, often in the forefront of this struggle of opposition to the regime (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

But from 1969 on, in a curious and paradoxical coincidence with the initial period of Marcelo Caetano’s governance, in which the regime seemed to be opening, there was clear political radicalization. In fact, May 1968 arrived in Portugal in 1969, according to Fernando Rosas: «when it gets here in 69 things also burst in the university». Despite its impact, the «crisis of 1969» in Coimbra was still very much in line with student syndicalism: «the Coimbra surge was a traditional struggle; it was a struggle for freedom and university autonomy». In Lisbon the paradigm was beginning to shift: «here [in Lisbon] there were localized protest outbursts, which took on a radical character» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

Unlike previous cycles in which demands dealt with academic matters, and even though explicit criticism of the authoritarian regime was already visible, in the phase beginning in 1969 student discourse was much more clearly and radically politicized. The colonial war was amongst the themes that then entered the student agenda. It had begun in the early 1960s and had important consequences for university students, who were constantly under the threat of military recruiting and deployment

to colonial territories at war. Their alternative was disobedience, the clandestine flight to other European countries, which intensified in the final years of the regime. Eugénia Silva recalls the fear of recruitment and death in distant lands already in the mid-1960s, all for a cause whose legitimacy was being called into question:

People were starting to talk about the colonial war. And then there were boys [who] had to go to the army. [...] I think that afterwards people began to be very marked by the war; I was still in the Faculty [...] there was a mass here in the Rectory, five or six students had already died, and so it really hurt (E. Silva, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

The risk of being mobilized for war had strong implications for many student protestors, abruptly interrupting studies or postponing entry into the profession. Equally dramatic were the consequences to family and sentimental lives of students forcefully incorporated into the army. As Fernando Rosas points out, «the colonial war was something that forced us to change our lives at the age of 20. Because it was four years of war» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018). Moreover, there was a growing sense that «the war had no way out» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018). As Maria Emília Brederode Santos adds, young people were thus faced with a terrible dilemma at the end or even in the middle of their studies:

Yes! Above all I think the boys were in a terrible dilemma of deciding either to leave the country or to go to the army and to Africa. And that was a very, very heavy dilemma, a very difficult ethical dilemma and a very weighty decision, with consequences for life (M. Santos, personal communication, July 2, 2018).

According to Fernando Rosas, the theme of the colonial war was placed on the student agenda in the transition from the 1960s to the 1970s mainly through the action of the so-called «far left» organizations of Maoist inspiration: «War against war! Right? That's the slogan that burst around 70, 69-70, War against war!» – «Peoples' war against the colonial war» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018). These slogans became prominent in the street demonstrations organized by students. The Progressive Catholics also contributed strongly to this struggle, especially through the publications they had influence over, such as *O Tempo e o Modo*. «The Progressive Catholics are also very important in making the colonial war a central issue, from 1970 on» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018), states our interviewee. Indeed, the dead-end the colonial war arrived at, adding to the regime's inability to negotiate a political solution to the situation, is one of the most important factors that will lead to the revolution of April 25 in 1974, which has precisely the military as foreground protagonists.

As stated previously, one of the distinguishing characteristics of this final cycle of the student movements that preceded the revolution was political radicalization. Many of the small organizations that came to light in this period were inspired by Maoism, although there were other groups with different sources of inspiration (Trotskyism and others). In a context of a divided international communist movement and in the

aftermath of the shock waves provoked by the 1968 crackdown on the «Prague Spring» by the Moscow army, many young Portuguese people became disillusioned with the Soviet model and the Portuguese Communist Party that defended it. They were therefore attracted by the Chinese experience and Mao Tse-tung's «teachings» and fascinated by the energy of the Cultural Revolution. Fernando Rosas, who had been a member of the Communist Party since 1961, is one of those who lived this rupture in 1968, making a decisive contribution to the formation of the Maoist camp. He went on to participate in the founding of the Student Democratic Left (EDE) and later in the Movement for the Reorganization of the Party of the Proletariat (MRPP), the most emblematic organization of the radical left. The student movement was therefore also at the forefront of the formation of a new radical left in Portugal in the transition from the '60s to the '70s, namely the fraction inspired by Maoism.

At that time, we saw Maoism as a challenge to the Soviet system, a challenge from the bottom up, which nevertheless wanted to preserve socialism and return it to its non-bureaucratic, non-administrative purity. So, Maoism was ultimately the solution to save the socialist idea from Stalinist or post-Stalinist bureaucracy. [...] And that was very popular. [...] This kind of imaginary of the Cultural Revolution was very popular (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

This context also gave rise to a more radical critique of university pedagogy and to the search for alternatives, with students as central protagonists. Also, it sought to give visibility to authors and texts whose circulation in Portugal was prohibited. Some of the most interesting and radical actions occurred in the Faculty of Economics and led to the creation of free courses open to the population:

In Economics, where I think there was the most interesting fight, the students occupied the school, banned exams, adopted voting to decide grades, and created free courses running after working hours, so that workers could attend. And these were free courses on the history of the labour movement, on the issue of imperialism, on Marx's texts, on Bettelheim, and on Marxist writers who were banished from teaching. And they occupied the school and lectured the courses themselves (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

The Technical Institute (IST), the major engineering school in Lisbon, is also highlighted by Fernando Rosas as a place where both the students' search for alternatives to traditional teaching and the propaganda against the regime were wide and radical:

Another very important school was the Technical [Institute], at the time of Mariano Gago and its newspaper *O Binómio*. [...] The Technical [Institute] had something else, a very strong infrastructure for printing and therefore it became a very strong propaganda centre; in there the radical challenge to the educational system went very far (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

But this attempt to spread an alternative political culture was also going on outside the walls of schools, aiming to reach out to the people, as «the radical students would give classes and courses and lectures, and organize libraries in recreation and culture societies around [Lisbon]» (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018). Beyond this presence in popular and working circles, radical university students also contributed to spread the ideas of the new left among the military and in some sectors of trade unionism.

During the final years of the authoritarian regime, there were important transformations in customs and mentalities. Although the echoes of these changes reached Portugal, appropriation by the university youth was moderate, partly because the main effort in the political struggle was to overthrow the regime. This is the hypothesis advanced by Fernando Rosas:

Now, there is no radical sexual revolution in the Portuguese May 69. And I have an explanation for that: because the priorities were very different, you see? People had the war, had the PIDE [the regime's political police], the tortures, the prisons [...]. This took a lot of people's minds. The urgency, the necessity was to overthrow fascism, to fight against fascism, to fight against war (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

In any case, the cultural environment was clearly changing. A new kind of poetry and a protest-oriented theatre emerged, the protest music and the cinema clubs boomed, and an important set of newspapers appeared or were renewed and became relatively critical of the regime (as much as censorship permitted), such as *O Diário de Lisboa*, *Republica* and *A Capital*, among others. Maria Emília Brederode Santos describes the environment at the time: «deep down, all this created a certain effervescent atmosphere of freedom» (M. Santos, personal communication, July 2, 2018). Maria Odete Valente highlights the role played by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in the cultural opening up: «Then we had the Gulbenkian Foundation. It was very important at this stage because, as it was a private foundation, the state did not interfere directly. We owe the cultural opening to the Gulbenkian Foundation» (M. Valente, personal communication, June 6, 2018).

The background of the 1960s is an extremely intense, dynamic and conflicting international context, and we have already recalled some of its most important episodes. Fernando Rosas acknowledges this and presents an example from the year of the «May 1968»:

The year of 1968 had a very strong influence from the international context, right? It is characterized by a deterioration of the great traditional hegemonies, right? The Vietnam War for the United States, the anti-imperialist guerrilla in Latin America, Che had died in Bolivia the year before, the [national] independences in Africa. (F. Rosas, personal communication, June 25, 2018).

These events had clear repercussions in Portugal and should not be devalued. However, it was also very clear that the specific characteristics of the Portuguese student movement, in its various cycles, were particularly marked by the national

context, in particular by the existence of an authoritarian regime with its political and intellectual repressive apparatus. Also, the decisive event of the colonial war, for which the regime found no political solution and which affected directly the lives of university students, was very significant for the radicalization and politicization of the movement.

#### 4. Final remarks

In Portugal, the 1960s may be described as a long cycle of permanent conflict associated with the university student movement, although there were shorter phases with diverse contents and intensities. Throughout this period, students increasingly affirmed themselves as an autonomous social category, aware of their «condition» (Estanque & Bebiano, 2007). According to Miguel Cardina (2008, p. 98): «Youth ceases to be seen – and to see itself – as an amalgam of subjects in an unfinished process of social integration, to act, think and feel according to their own ways, disseminated through the various spheres of politics and culture». The notion of «student movement» appears, in general, as more adequate to define these dynamics, given that it is not reducible to the component of «associative movement» and that the students' associations even lost some relevance in the final years of the regime. The processes of politicization and radicalization that characterized the movement's final years under the authoritarian regime turned students into the main actors of the contentious activity of the time. According to Guya Accornero (2009, p. 252), «students were the most active social category in the final years of the regime».

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