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## **Between tactics and dominant strategies. Market resistance in alternative socio-economic circuits**

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# BETWEEN TACTICS AND DOMINANT STRATEGIES. MARKET RESISTANCE IN ALTERNATIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CIRCUITS

## 1. Introduction

Markets are social terrains built by a sociohistorical process of disputes and contestations (Polanyi, 1957). The non-linearity present in market formation is associated with the interplay of different social actors over time, as well as the recurring revolutions and crises of the capitalist system. Despite the complexity and intense dueling of inherent market forces, a dominant economic order stands out over other social orders. For De Certeau (1984), the economic order would be responsible not only for establishing mass forms of consumption but, more broadly, for establishing specific ways of being in the world. Operating through dominant strategies, the economic order makes available the material and symbolic resources by which consumers develop their practices.

Strategies, especially marketing strategies, according to De Certeau (1984), have as their main characteristic the dominance of time over place. This superiority allows them to capitalize on conquered advantages and no longer depend on the variability of social circumstances, preparing, thus, for future expansions. Resistance tactics, on the other hand, are characterized as everyday practices that, although they flourish on all sides, are not capitalized; that is, they do not dominate time. In this sense, they have a provisional and limited performance at a certain time or place, residing only in the present – therefore, impossible to capitalize on.

Despite the apparent immanence of market relations, resistance tactics are notable for escaping the hegemony of their dogmatic structures and principles. They emerge spontaneously from everyday life, which is the reason why De Certeau (1984) recognizes it as the place of resistance *par excellence* (Giard, 1994). Everyday life is the space where different spheres and social forces are merged, providing ordinary people with the resources with which they construct their deviations and resistance tactics. It is precisely in everyday spaces that deviations from market strategies are developed, denying the consumption pattern established by the traditional marketing system (De Certeau, 1984).

Several economic models have become popular as alternatives to traditional market relations. Since they present characteristics that to some extent subvert the old market standards, such models have been identified under the sign of resistance. In this context, collaborative consumption, for example, has stood out as another possibility of operating socio-economic relations (Ozanne & Ballantine 2010; Molz, 2013; Belk, 2014; Ertz, Durif, & Arcand, 2016; Pottinger, 2018). Among the myriad of models understood by collaborative consumption, some of them have become globally popular. This is the case of Couchsurfing, which is characterized as one of its main prototypes (Molz, 2013; Ertz, Durif, & Arcand, 2016). Unlike Airbnb, an example of a platform with an overt utilitarian character, relations in Couchsurfing platform are based on the concepts of reciprocity and sharing (Belk, 2014).

Principles and logics that escape the theoretical place of markets also guide the formation of other economic models. This would be the case for solidarity in initiatives based on self-management (Singer, 2002; Lisboa, 2005), the attenuation of individual property in the access-based economy (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012), the flexibility and relational gains in the sharing economy (Belk, 2010; Ertz, Durif, & Arcand, 2017). In common, all the mentioned models are based on practices that subvert the mass forms of consumption encouraged in the traditional markets. However, all these models also rely on traditional market practices and dispositions to develop their practices, such as private property, exchange relations, scarcity, interdependency, etc.

De Certeau's (1984) thesis proposes the 'triumph' of resistance tactics (i.e., non-capitalizable or mass reproducible actions that do not submit to the dominant strategies) in the

everyday context of the common people over the market strategies. Specifically, the author delimits this triumph in contexts not affected by market relations, such as the everyday context. Nevertheless, the hybrid and dynamic character of recent market models raises questions about the delimitation of this thesis. Can emerging market models prompt new consumer resistance practices and tactics? Can resistance tactics be able to transcend the dominant economic order in contexts marked by economic practices and dispositions? This question is even more relevant due to the scarcity of research aimed at understanding consumers' interpretations and actions against the structures of market domination (Valor, Díaz, & Merino, 2017).

Based on these questions, this research aims to analyze how resistance tactics and market strategies are organized in a collaborative consumption model. To this end, we seek to: i) examine the formation of resistance tactics; ii) identify attributes and aspects shared by them; iii) drawing parallels and differences between the resistance tactics and dominant strategies present in collaborative consumption and other alternative socio-economic models. For the qualitative analysis, Michel De Certeau's (1994) theoretical repertoire of strategies and resistance tactics will be used, as well the subsequent theoretical translations into the marketing area (Peñaloza & Price, 1993).

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### *2.1 Dominant Strategies and Resistance Tactics*

Among the various resistance foci of common people, De Certeau (1994) recognizes the insubordination to the techniques of socio-cultural production as its most basic form. Among the main domination drivers of such techniques in today's societies, the author is mostly concerned with the figure of what he called the Dominant Economic Order, that is, the market and its structures for mass distribution and reproduction of uniform practices. The interest of the markets in massifying collective production and consumption and, consequently, giving a uniform character to social practices lies in the task of extracting some economic capital from it (Giard, 1994).

De Certeau (1984, p. 19) calls a "strategy the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an environment". To this end, strategies postulate a place (physical and abstract) for the production of something specific (i.e., a belief system that regulates social practices) to govern social relations. Strategies, therefore, are actions that, legitimized by places of power, elaborate theoretical places (totalizing systems or discourses), hiding "beneath objective calculations their connection with the power that sustains them" (De Certeau, 1994, p. 20).

By creating its own 'proper', the dominant order develops an even more fundamental form of domination, linked to the formation of intersubjective relations. This occurs when the market specifies ways of being in the world (De Cearteu, 1984). In general, profit and social labor relations have been identified as the key factors that differentiate capitalism from other socio-economic systems. However, capitalism advances in relation to other systems by inaugurating a new social relation model. Expanding the look beyond the productive system, Sombart (2014) identifies the existence of a fundamental socio-cognitive component in the process of building market economies. Based on economic rationalism and acquisitive impulses, the driving force of modern economic life, this component is responsible for influencing not only the material production of society but any social relationship between its members.

After postulating a 'proper', strategies create a place, that is "the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. [...] The law

of the ‘proper’ rules in the place [...] A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 117). The place is different from the space because “in contradistinction to the place, it has thus none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper’ [...] There are as many spaces as there are distinct spatial experiences” (p. 117-118). Space would thus be characterized as a practiced place. No longer called strategies, once they are intended to oppose them, De Certeau (1994) attributes to the practices of space a different concept. Such practices would be characterized as resistance tactics.

De Certeau (1984, p. 19) calls a tactic “a calculus which cannot count on a ‘proper’ (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a border-line distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other”. What distinguishes strategies from tactics are the types of operations they perform in the places. While the former is capable of producing, mapping, and imposing, the latter can only use these places to manipulate and alter the operations performed on them – creating spaces. Strategies perform by actions that unfold over time, while tactics operate by moves, blows that are not projected over time because they have limited validity at specific moments. Besides being produced without capitalizing, the tactics do not have a ‘proper’, as they operate with the material and abstract resources made available by the dominant forces. Thus, resistance tactics differ from strategies by two central elements: first, because they cannot count on anything of their own, as they rely only on what others (dominant order and its structures) have at their disposal. Second, precisely because they have nothing of their own, they do not advance over time.

Resistance has its meaning linked to facing, reflective or pre-reflectively, the homogenization strategies imposed by a dominant order, in an opposition process against the traditional capitalization devices present in market relations (Peñaloza & Price 1993; Brownlie & Hewer, 2011). This is because a tactic “has at its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. [...] Whatever it wins, it does not keep” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 19). Having as synthesis, not a discourse but the decisions and the way to take advantage of an occasion, the resistance tactics present an eminently practical focus (Thompson & Zeynep, 2004). Thus, combining heterogeneous elements, the practices “trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 18).

De Certeau (1984) draws a parallel between the resistance tactics directed at the dominant economic order, called as economic diversion practices, and the systems of voluntary benefits (*prestations* and *counter-prestations*) based on the obligation to give, receive and repay. Although the liberalism of modern societies has the individual as a basic unit and money as a generalized equivalence code, models such as *potlatch* or *kula* still (Mauss, 2002) seem to be alive in modern societies as a sign of an alternative economy. In this sense, “the politics of the ‘gift’ also becomes a diversionary tactic” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 27).

The gift economy is closely related to deviations, cunning, and resistance tactics because it is based on a symbolic construction perspective of social relations. The gift differs from the dominant strategies, which are based on a utilitarian construction of relations, mainly because they do not focus on capitalizing advantages (Mauss, 2002). This is because “the loss that was voluntary in a gift economy is transformed into a transgression in a profit economy: it appears as an excess (a waste), a challenge (a rejection of profit), or a crime (an attack on property)” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 27). At this point, the Maussian anti-utilitarian approach is intertwined with the Certeauian theory by denying the essence of utilitarian rationalism. Although the utilitarian logic may represent the theoretical place of the dominant economic order, it is not configured as the only logic through which social practices perform their maneuvers. In gift-based economies, that is, in generosity as a rematch (De Certeau, 1984), different styles of social exchange, technical inventions, and moral resistance are suggested, reconciling the

economic dimension with the political, legal, ceremonial, religious and aesthetic spheres (Mauss, 2002).

Although the mechanisms of resistance remain the same over time, since the same unequal distribution of forces continues to exist (Giard, 1994), the practices of resistance that make up such mechanisms need to be constantly renewed. The reason is based on the markets' need to feed on the production of cultural differences provided by the consumers themselves, as a way to consecrate the offer of new products or services (Holt, 2002). Thus, not only the marketing strategies are modified over time but also the resistance tactics, updating the repertoires of previous tactics. As individuals or collectivities, to resist is to fight for the possibility of giving meaning, materially and symbolically, to a world historically constructed without their suggestion (Highmore, 2002).

## *2.2 Collaborative Consumption and Resistances*

Consumer resistance activities have manifested themselves in many different ways (Peñaloza & Price, 1993; Fournier 1998), ranging from cases linked to ethical consumption and voluntary frugality (Shaw & Newholm, 2002; Craig-Lees & Hill, 2002; Huneke, 2005; Pottinger, 2018), the rejection of brands and boycotts (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Hoffmann & Muller, 2009), and anti-consumption (Chatzidakis & Lee 2013; Cherrier & Gurrieri, 2013). However, specific cases of resistance that go away from this continuum are exemplified by the models circumscribed by the sharing economy. Although there is no consensus on the potential for restructuring the traditional market through the sharing economy, it stands out as resistance for offering an alternative to consumerism or to impersonal market relations (Ozanne & Ballantine, 2010; Pottinger, 2018).

On the other hand, it is necessary to avoid the dichotomy that defines the sharing economy either as a panacea, capable of overcome all the problems of capitalism, or even as a cynical strategy of the market to further boost the system (Pottinger, 2018). In contrast, sharing economy is characterized as a transversal economic form, which can use both elements of traditional capitalism and new ways of organizing social relations to create original economic structures capable of operating, in a stable way, the interdependence between its agents (Richardson, 2015; Davies et al., 2017).

The resistance is even more intense in the models called collaborative consumption, a prototype of the sharing economy. Unlike commodity exchanges, collaborative consumption may not involve central elements to traditional market relations, such as property transfer and pricing (Laamanen, Wahlen, & Lorek, 2018). This is because collaborative consumption models are based on alternative forms of organization of socio-economic relations, such as collaboration, reciprocity, and sharing (Laamanen, Wahlen, & Lorek, 2018; Pottinger, 2018). These forms are characterized, therefore, as agents of decommodification of relationships, calling different types of social interactions for the operation of economic interdependencies.

By decommodifying social relations, collaborative consumption organizes distinct economic structures, not based on those principles presented in the traditional market. Firstly, when turning to everyday practices, activities performed through collaborative consumption have as a general characteristic the opening of the private sphere to new social relationships (Felson & Spaeth, 1978). More than extracting an economical potential, "the everyday materialities and emotionalities of sharing practice have capacity to generate commitments, lingering responsibilities and networked connections between individuals" (Pottinger, 2018, p. 109). This collective, but localized, character of collaborative consumption practices is closely related to De Certeau's (1994) idea of resistance tactics.

Second, as a consequence of the decommodification of social relations, other objectives, besides those of a purely utilitarian order, seem to manifest themselves in the collaborative

consumption interactions. This is because economic relations start to share space with a wide domain of other social relations, promoting mobilizations towards social, political, and environmental objectives (Martin, Hanson, & Fontaine, 2007). Not by chance, collaborative consumption has been associated with sustainability (Hamari, Sjöklint, & Ukkonen, 2015; Martin, 2016), morality in consumption (Laamanen, Wahlen, & Lorek, 2018) and political activism (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004; Ertz, Durif, & Arcand, 2016). Assigning these aspects to collaborative consumption practices, however, does not mean that utilitarian aspects must be discarded. On the contrary, they can be deeply presented in these relationships, because, as evidenced by De Certeau (1994), resistance tactics have nothing of their own. Regardless of the presence of reciprocity or sharing in their relationships, the theoretical place on which collaborative consumption practices carry out their movements continues to be formed by utilitarian principles.

### 3. Methodology

Guided by the research objectives, a multi-site ethnographic research was performed. Regarding the methods of collecting information, in addition to systematic observation (Marcus, 1995; Wittel, 2000), relational interviews were carried out (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013), in which the interlocutor is invited to participate in a non-structured dialogue, in the manner of a common everyday conversation. Since it was sought to understand the meanings of subjective experiences lived by the subject himself, inviting him to narrate and interpret such experiences, the interviews were characterized as phenomenological (Van Manen, 1990). Altogether, about 16 hours of audio were recorded, which represents only a portion of the dialogues conducted with the interviewees and other actors present in the research field. Recognizing the central importance not only of formal interviews but of informal conversations for gathering information and substantiating interpretations, the research sought to understand the everyday life of common people through their own language. As described by De Certeau (1994 p. 50), the “conversation is a provisional and collective effect of competence in the art of manipulating ‘commonplaces’ and the inevitability of events in such a way as to make them ‘habitable’”. The research *corpus* consisted of 175 single-spaced pages of transcripts and field notes.

The empirical contexts were visited for six months, from September 2019 to March 2020. The interviews took place during the same period of insertion in the field, both in the research *locus* itself and outside the empirical context. To this end, researchers actively joined the Couchsurfing platform in February 2018, participating in forums, offering information to city visitors, and collaborating with the activities offered to members. After seven months of getting used to the dynamics of the platform and the network, a researcher opened his account to receive surfers. Three people were received on two occasions and two stays provided by the Couchsurfing platform.

The other experiences in the field sought to understand different initiatives and socio-economic models that, to some extent, could be characterized as alternative prototypes to traditional market relations. Thus, we identified and analyzed models under the sign of solidarity economy, e.g., permaculture (Singer, 2002; Lisboa, 2005), cooperativism (Wellen, 2012), and the sharing economy, e.g., WWOOF and Workway (cf. Belk, 2014; Ertz, Durif, & Arcand 2016).

The interviewees were engaged in or had some relationship with the socio-economic initiatives and models investigated in the research. Whether as a user of a platform, a cooperative member or a practitioner of a team sport, the interviewees had in common the performance of activities that linked them to some collective practices (Table 1).

**Table 1** – Interviewees’ information and research *loci*

Denomination	Genre	Age	Platform or Social Movement	In/Out Locus	Profession
Interviewee 1	Female	33	Couchsurfing	In <i>locus</i>	Teacher
Interviewee 2	Male	31	Orienteering – Couchsurfing	Out of <i>locus</i>	Sports Manager
Interviewee 3	Female	42	Permaculture – WWOOF	In <i>locus</i>	Nurse - Farmer
Interviewee 4	Male	45	Couchsurfing	In <i>locus</i>	Teacher
Interviewee 5	Female	32	Couchsurfing	Out of <i>locus</i>	Architect
Interviewee 6	Female	23	Earthship - WWOOF	Out of <i>locus</i>	Architect
Interviewee 7	Male	33	Couchsurfing	In <i>locus</i>	Entrepreneur
Interviewee 8	Male	35	Couchsurfing	Out of <i>locus</i>	Radio host
Interviewee 9	Female	52	Agricultural Cooperative	In <i>locus</i>	Cooperative - Merchant
Interviewee 10	Male	48	Agricultural Cooperative	In <i>locus</i>	Cooperative - Merchant
Interviewee 11	Female	30	Couchsurfing – Workaway	Out of <i>locus</i>	Teacher
Interviewee 12	Male	46	Agricultural Cooperative	Out of <i>locus</i>	Manager

## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1 Pragmatic Cunning

Resistance tactics maintain an inventive element that plays with the manipulation of socially produced signs, especially those of the dominant strategies. Opposed to strategies, tactics do not intend to guide individuals’ ways of being in the world. Although much of his criticism has returned to the dominant economic order, De Certeau (1994) recognizes that tactics also rival powers with other hegemonic social institutions, such as governments, cities, and armies. Regardless of the focus or the end, practicing resistance may involve simultaneous opposition to more than one dominant order.

In the first formal interview, which took place in a cohabitation experience provided by Couchsurfing, interviewee 1 (Teacher, 33), commented on her experiences on the platform and how different logics of use were intermingled. As the hostess explains: “I had already used Couchsurfing in England and Switzerland, but only to meet people and sights in the city. [...] But the first time I went to Turkey, I had to use Couchsurfing a lot, because I had no place to stay”. After revealing how she went through a series of misfortunes abroad, she found herself totally helpless in Turkey. With no financial resources to return to Brazil, she resorted to Couchsurfing as a real possibility of finding a place to stay, at least for a few days.

My experience with Couchsurfing, the first time [as a guest], was out of necessity. I experienced something that is not exactly Couchsurfing. That was in 2015. When I returned to Brazil, I had already lived in Turkey, with those people who welcomed me, who didn’t even know who I was, who adopted me, who helped me in a time of need. [...] When I came back in 2016, it was in the meantime that I opened my house for Couchsurfing because I was so grateful that I had to make any sacrifice to receive people.

She spent four months in the residence of two local families until she obtained financial stability to rent a house for herself – a practice associated with the traditional market strategy. Despite the fact that interviewee 1 understands renting as standard practice since she relegated

shared accommodation to the last option, she was unable to resort to conventional market practices.

A similar situation also led interviewee 11 (Teacher, 30) to choose a stay at Couchsurfing. After deciding to learn Spanish in an immersive manner, the interviewee contacted a small inn in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina, through the Workaway platform. According to her, the main objective was to work temporarily and, in exchange, receive accommodation and food aid. However, “after a week of hard work, I saw that it was not the situation I had planned. I was working hard and didn’t have time to study the language or get to know the city”. In the search for an alternative and without money to pay for a hotel, the interviewee reactivated her account at Couchsurfing and requested accommodation. After a few weeks as a couchsurfer, she got a better-paying job in the city, which allowed her to rent her own house. In the meantime, two hosts hosted her on the platform at no cost. “I offered to pay for some household expenses. I usually went to the supermarket to buy food or some product that was missing”.

The dominant strategy in the case of the two interviewees would be established as the search for a proper place that, through a formal payment, would allow them to have a property relationship with the consumption object. In contrast, the interviewees were forced to resort to other logics, opting to engage in relationships based on reciprocity and sharing. It is clear, therefore, that the dramatic incidents of everyday life can assume a leading role over formal patterns. Although these patterns are used as the main norm of performance under usual conditions, they can be readily isolated in specific situations.

Not all respondents, however, used Couchsurfing just to overcome moments of difficulty. This is the case of interviewee 2 (Sports Manager, 31) who uses Couchsurfing based on the binomial exotic experience and cost reduction, which does not seem to be different from current mass consumption strategies. “Because we were students at the time, I wanted everything cheaper. [...] Couchsurfing appeared as the last option. We had already looked for everything, several forms of accommodation. [...] We also agreed to use the ‘couch’ for adventure. It was a castle in England!”. In the case of interviewee 5 (Architect, 32), the platform also emerged as an adventure. After a year of restless work in Europe, she decided to travel across the continent without spending a lot of money, staying at the residence of local people. The experience, however, was not positive: “Right at the first residence I stayed in (Italy), the host harassed me. [...] I denounced on the platform and immediately left for another city. I still used the program other times but after that trip I kind of abandoned my account”.

Although the dialogues with the last interviewees revealed some contradictions of the platform, in the speeches of interviewees 1 and 11 it is possible to highlight some common elements that permeated their experiences with Couchsurfing, especially the “ruse, deception, in the way one uses or cheats with the terms of social contracts. [...] In these combatants’ stratagems, there is a certain art of placing one’s blows, a pleasure in getting around the rules of a constraining space” (De Certeau, 1984, p. 18). In the cases presented, there is evidence of the supremacy of subsistence over their choices and, consequently, over market relations.

To designate operations in which individuals somehow subvert the dominant economic order, but with the aim of reversing other orders, we use a concept that De Certeau (1984) took from the concepts of practical intelligence (*mètis*, from the Greeks) and practical sense (of the *kibilas* and *bearnesas*): the pragmatic cunning. Such forms of resistance have both the inventiveness inherent in tactics and the objectivity of meeting needs in a pragmatic way. Despite being formed by individual decisions, such cunning uses a community of practices aimed at sharing accommodation – hence their inventiveness. At the collective level, they begin to develop a space, that is, a place formed by practices, in which the inventiveness of the actors transforms the univocity and stability of the market order.

## 4.2 Dominant Power Places and Resistance

One of the fundamental aspects that distinguishes the dominant strategies from the resistance tactics is the presence of what De Certeau (1984) called a ‘proper’ – an element capable of building places that aim to maintain and disseminate its power. For the author, economic strategies present a set of characteristics that decisively guide the way of being in the world of the common people. Therefore, they create a place of power, responsible for offering abstract and concrete resources from which derives the construction of the resistance practices.

However, it is not only through cunning, as evidenced earlier, that places of power can be questioned. More elaborate forms can insinuate against domination strategies, directly questioning not only capitalizable practices but utilitarian rationality itself. The 165 experiences of interviewee 4 (Professor, 45) in Couchsurfing, all as a host, substantiate these insinuations. In a sharing experience at his home, the interviewee commented a little about his story and how he joined the platform without many pretensions: “I entered to understand a little more about the world, to understand the thoughts of others. Because you have your political conception, your critical sense. But what does the other think, related to you, your community, and your local culture?”.

Gradually he began to engage deeply in the platform, earning the official title of ambassador of Couchsurfing in his city. As the interviewee comments:

I was the ambassador of my city in the Couchsurfing project. In this role, I was careful about letting into the community only people, whether travelers or new members in the city, who reached the minimum necessary security requirements. [...] To avoid fakes or bad-natured profiles who wanted to take advantage of the occasion to do the wrong thing, like stealing. [...] People who enter the community with another spirit (Interviewee 4).

The engagement on the platform and the interest in receiving and helping tourists in his city led the interviewee to gain importance both in the formal Couchsurfing network and in the local community. As he comments, “in addition to the platform there is a local community, which is as strong as the platform itself. [...] There is a network outside the platform that is voluntary and spontaneous”. This attempt to develop even more cohesive groups outside the platform itself indicates a need to reinforce a sense of community and reduce the perception of risk in relationships. These ways to standardize and increase trust between members can be characterized as an additional resistance layer, or the resistance of resistance. A blow that is established only after the movement of previous resistance tactics, renewing them whereas they reconfigure the dominant strategies.

Although he indicates that users of the platform have different orientations, depending on the member’s relationship with the network, the interviewee 4 reveals the existence of what he calls the spirit of Couchsurfing, that is, a logic shared by an expressive portion of the members and which differs to a large extent from conventional marketing relations.

The spirit of Couchsurfing is not just hosting. On the contrary, the member has the intention of knowing more about the culture, the local customs where he is staying. [...] The spirit of Couchsurfing is not to receive payment in kind. But the person can help you in several ways. [...] Nothing is charged, everything is spontaneous. [...] The biggest gain, I would say is the exchange of experiences of the world. This is priceless.

Spontaneity in times of social relations marked by calculus can represent a sharp departure from the dominant practices. Utilitarian rationality and its effects, therefore, may have been replaced by other forms of organizing social relations. This idea is explored by interviewee 7 (Entrepreneur, 33). The interviewee commented, in a Couchsurfing experience at a

researcher's home, that the traditional experiences of accommodation, in hotels and inns, are generally the first alternative because of the maintenance of old customs and fear of the new. In Couchsurfing, on the other hand, other possibilities are open. As the interviewee comments:

It's an experience thing, from what I understand. [...] For me, the proposed idea is that you get to know the world, meet people, at low cost, and that you can exchange that with other people. [...] And I see this as a cultural opportunity because you know people from all over the world.

The cultural opportunity, which Interviewee 7 refers to, is not related to the purchase of a mass product or service on a shelf, but a personal and unrepeatable interaction between host and guest. Initiatives such as Couchsurfing promote the emergence of new economies, which deal with the scarcity and interdependence among their agents through their own models. Coincidentally or not, these relationships cannot be capitalizable. Although the sharing of accommodations is still characterized as a form of economy, the market in this case is no longer the central operator of relations between its agents.

This is not the case, for example, with the Brazilian orienteering association, which struggles to get market sponsorship to develop the sport. As interviewee 2 reveals, there is a long and expensive equipment list for practicing the sport, such as appropriate shoes, GPS watches, location chips, track equipment, etc. "We try to gather more people, seek sponsorships, convince companies to bet on sports. We have been running since last year, with the public and private sectors".

The attempt to organize the sport at the local level, in the search to participate in national and international competitions, comes up against the little articulation of the organizers with the market agents. Being part of market circuits represents the only guarantee of continuity for the orienteering community. Although the search for profit is not the focus of the organization, its members seek to use formal market practices and structures to develop their community, such as sponsorship, financial planning, and formalization of the federation. Gaining access to the market, in this specific case, would represent a form of resistance to the dominant forces, since they are responsible for selecting the practices that are or are not relevant to society. Acting in a decisive and undemocratic way, the market would be the institution charged with indicating which practices should be perpetuated, promoting, or liquidating entire communities of practices.

In this study, the Couchsurfing members have used a wide repertoire of deviations to build relationships and communities that question the place of power of markets. Lacking central elements present in such economic strategies, such as profit, calculus-based relations, utilitarian interests, and the reproduction of consolidated social structures, they have helped in the de commodification of social relations. The interaction between host and guest is based on resistance tactics not only for opening the private sphere to new social relations but also for promoting mobilizations towards non-commercial objectives (De Certeau, 1994; Martin, Hanson & Fontaine 2007; Folden, 2015; Pottinger, 2018). Consequently, they established the enactment of a collective statute, characteristic of the gift economy (De Certeau, 1994; Mauss 2002).

#### *4.3 Counterstrategies – Building a 'Proper'*

Some initiatives may represent forms of resistance to market strategies, even presenting some characteristics of the dominant orders. Such initiatives begin to postulate theoretical places of resistance, that is, systems and discourses shared by the community (De Certeau, 1994). However, although they begin to build a set of beliefs that, to a lesser or greater degree, differ from the market discourses, they can only be articulated through it. This is the case of

permaculture and agricultural cooperatives, which stand out as forms of both practical and discursive resistance. Thus, they seek to build alternative economic models based on collectivism, which can be called counterstrategies.

Opening her house to the researchers, Interviewee 3 (Farmer, 42) presented the activities she develops related to permaculture. Since 2014, when she left her job as a nurse in the capital city to dedicate herself to a lifestyle more connected to nature, she has been dedicated to maintaining a lifestyle entirely connected to the nature. According to her, “we try to imitate the way nature works. Different from what man has been doing”. Following the precepts of permaculture both in the production of their own food and in the relationship with the community, she seeks to establish ways that differ from traditional market relations. Recalling the reasons that led her to radically change her life, opting for life in the countryside, she comments:

What made us [my husband and I] come to live here was the neighborhood. Everyone here works or is connected in some way to the concept of permaculture. The bigger the community, the more we get stronger. The idea for us here is to have a dynamic of sharing surpluses or even exchanging. The important thing is to be nothing calculated. Because one of the ideas we have here is that of exchanges. [...] Exchange would not be the correct term, but to share surpluses. [...] Because it is nothing calculated.

The concerns with natural resources and social relations indicate the presence of a critical reflection by the community with the traditional dominant reference system. As a result, they seek to construct a lifestyle that is interconnected: the culture of the land complements the culture of social relations. Thus, they form a community of practices that are organized around the denial of dominant places of power. The concern with the natural and social environment, however, does not exempt the community from developing activities with a commercial destination. As the interviewee explains:

We develop courses and workshops related to permaculture. Phytotherapy, phytocosmetics, bread making workshop, slow fermentation bread. Everything connected to natural life. [...] We have an opening for free activities. But we have to be realistic as well because we have expenses here. We take some inputs from here for our own consumption, and others to sell. We go to biweekly fairs and sell our products as we can.

The sale of her products at street fairs, for example, does not provoke dissonance because, according to her, it is not intended for accumulation or profit but subsistence and the development of community activities. As part of this development, her community is enrolled in the WWOOF initiative, through which voluntary workers around the world seek to learn a little more about agricultural techniques. In addition to the dissemination of permaculture, another reason for engaging in the WWOOF initiative was the shared values. “WWOOF is for diversity, there should be no lifestyle restrictions. [...] Farms must not discriminate, choose who goes, according to sexual orientation, ethnicity or skin color” (Interviewee 3).

Like permaculture, the agricultural cooperatives investigated in this research (*Movimento Sem Terra* – MST) also seek to build differentiated economic relations among their members, following a reference system that questions the individualism and the traditional capitalist trade circuit. Throughout the conversations with Interviewee 10 (Cooperative member, 48), one of those responsible for the grocery store in the settlement, the importance of a collective organization of commerce and local production is emphasized. According to the interviewee, the grocery store is not intended to accumulate profit, like a traditional company,

but to improve the life quality of the cooperative members. To this end, the grocery store must operate on three fronts.

The [grocery store] market here works in partnership with the settlement's producers. [...] It has the function of buying production by the cooperative members, which are agricultural products, sheep farming, and products with greater added value, such as handicrafts. All this at favorable prices. [...] The commerce [grocery store] here also has the function of a community bank, because we pay for the producers before the harvest or the sheep slaughter. [...] The payment is made sometimes two or three months later the harvest or slaughter periods. [...] And we also act as a distributor, because in addition to buying products from other settlements and cities to sell here, we sell the products of our settlement in other locations.

Although it is not possible to classify this economic system as a gift economy (cf. Mauss 2002), its members subvert the social relations forms based on individualism – common in traditional trade circuits. According to the interviewee, everything they do in the cooperative is linked to a larger project, which aims to build a society free of inequalities and that promotes human dignity through work. This project, he adds, has some common characteristics, also shared by the other cooperatives: i. central objective related to the improvement of life quality of the cooperative producers; ii. profit is not the main element to guide cooperative efforts; iii. it has a collective nature, respecting individualities (religious, political, ideological, etc.) without encouraging individualism.

In the neighboring cooperative, about 10 km away, Interviewee 9 (Cooperative member, 52) emphasized the importance of collective values for the community. For her, the cooperative foundation (started on September 7, 1996, with the discovery and expropriation of a large unproductive latifundium), and its process of development, was the result of the union of local families.

People from various locations in the region came to the settlement. [...] Here, in the beginning, it was a seven-month struggle. This vision of collectivity unified these people in discussing a settlement built in such a way that everything we were going to experience was collective. Everything we were building was collective, collective land, collective housing, agricultural production, and livestock production. Besides, the entire structure of the settlement is collective.

However, this collectivist view, which prioritizes community values over financial gains, may represent a limitation on the development of Brazilian cooperatives, as commented by Interviewee 12 (Manager, 47). Acting as a manager in a cooperative complex in Mondragón (Basque Country), the interviewee made some comments about the local cooperatives, comparing them to the initiatives carried out in Europe. For him, this is an attempt to unify the cooperative concepts and universal solidarity, which can harm the competitiveness of cooperatives and the insertion of their products in the market. In Mondragón, on the other hand, “all economic dynamics within the cooperative itself are stipulated within contracts”.

Although Brazilian cooperatives also work with a partnership system, cooperatives in Mondragón have more advanced legislation, which allows them to reduce the risks of the cooperative itself. “Contracts are present in all relations with partners, stipulating what will be produced and what will be consumed”. The interviewee notes, however, that the socio-economic context in which local cooperatives are inserted is quite different from that present in his country.

The counterstrategies performed by the initiatives depicted in this section share the need for building something of their own. In this process, community discourses are developed and maintained as a way to subvert some market logics (e.g., permaculture or MST cooperatives)

or establish local legislative systems, based on contracts, to compete in the formal markets (e.g., cooperatives in the Basque Country). Comparing with previous initiatives, such as Couchsurfing, some differences can be pointed out. Despite being based on relationships organized around reciprocity and sharing, Couchsurfing members do not seem to share a single discourse. On the contrary, they are based on a multi-discursive perspective, which is updated with each new interaction between its members. The activities in MST and Permaculture initiatives have a more structured discourse, which, similar to a 'proper', seems to firmly guide collective practices.

## 5. Discussions

Appropriating collective productions, the market would function as a reference system that structures the positions and practices of individuals. Consequently, markets guide our behavior in other social spheres. It represents what De Certeau (1984) calls the place, i.e., a game of stable and univocal positions that determines a way of being in the world. Even out of market circuits, individual or collective action remain submerged in general marketing principles, responsible for maintaining social cohesion and intensifying the very morphology of the capitalist markets.

Although the instrumentality of market exchanges may represent a teleological reference system, individuals are faced with choices and conflicts that, by crossing the boundaries of their structures, can somehow disrupt market logic. Market resistances arise over this dominant place. Consequently, resistance cannot be characterized as casual disturbances with which the social order must deal, but as spontaneous deviations from the attempt to maintain such an order. As the research findings suggest, many resistance tactics do not seem to completely subvert the dominant economic order. On the contrary, and as described by De Certeau (1984, p. 34), such tactics "trace 'indeterminate trajectories' that are apparently meaningless, since they do not cohere with the constructed, written, and prefabricated space through which they move". This is the case for the countless deviations and counterstrategies performed by the interviewees.

As the experiences in Couchsurfing reveal, resistance is not a process of gaining power from a dominant pole, as if everyone were fighting for the conquest of the same power. On the contrary, these experiences are mainly associated with creating and disseminating diversified alternatives against that dominant economic order. Admitting the possibility of fighting on several fronts, through a Certeauian perspective, market resistance would be characterized as a multi-discursive position that deals with places of power by manipulating sets of practices established by them.

Even if the creations of the common people feed, in part, the forces of the market, they may be able to contribute to the achievement of social conquests through the market structures themselves. This is the case for projects carried out by permaculture and MST cooperatives, which promote actions linked to sustainability, empowerment of political minorities, and socio-economic inclusion (Singer, 2002; Lisboa, 2005). This point leads us to the perspective that not only consumers can resist the market, but any agent embedded by its relationships. Thus, we have abdicated the use of the traditional concept of consumer resistance, excessively focused on consumption, for a broader and more flexible idea of market resistance. Recent research has focused on the role of the market and non-market agents (such as the internet, religion, and state) in the practices of resistance against market structures (e.g., Giesler, 2008; Close & Zinkhan, 2009; Karababa & Ger, 2010; Sandikci & Ger, 2011). The possibility of forming social alliances between consumers and other market agents is recognized as a way to resist the dominant structures passively or actively (Peñaloza & Price, 1993; Brownlie & Hewer, 2011).

Resistance tactics can use elements of the market itself to a lesser or greater degree. This happens, among other reasons, because the markets are constantly appropriating even the forces and elements of resistance (Holt, 2002; Kozinets, 2002). This apparently inescapable character of the markets opens new possibilities of resistance. As the findings point out, it is not necessary to leave the market to exercise opposition against its structures of domination. But what would be the central object of this resistance? Indeed, there is no central focus, but heterogeneous orientations. Although each interviewee took different positions even under the same socio-economic model, some aspects of the market's hegemony were subverted or at least questioned. In many cases, the discomfort with characteristics of traditional market structures was pointed out, such as the calculus of market relations, the rigidity of trade, or the selection of the social practices that must be perpetuated. In opposition, we identified practices orientated to sustainability, denial of profit, defense of reciprocity, and search for social inclusion.

Another element present in the resistance tactics is notable both in Couchsurfing and other socio-economic models: the insubordination to the ontological assumption of *Homo Economicus*. The construction of the market's place of power is established through this assumption. By proposing to represent the ultimate essence of the human being, this concept has been able to (re)organize social relations and suppress their symbolic aspects. However, the pre-discursive characteristic of the ordinary man, revealed in the various practices presented throughout this research, represents the pillar over which the market resistances are based.

In addition to the absence of capitalizable practices and utilitarian rationality, a third factor also seems to be decisive for the formation of resistance tactics: the absence of formal contracts. Contracts are elements that formalize market relations, establishing symmetry and equivalence between commercial exchanges. Contracts serve places of power precisely because they organize relationships generally built on mistrust. On the contrary, most of the relations identified in the research are based on logics that do not require contracting to operate.

In the case of Couchsurfing, the absence of formal contracts is even more evident. The community relies on a trust-building system based on photos, testimonials, and credibility certificates, granted by the network or the platform itself. Although trust needs to be built, members do not engage in the community with the assumption of mistrust as a reference – as occurs in traditional market relations. After all, the idea of maintaining a sharing network, starting from a condition of total distrust, sounds somewhat contradictory. Thus, whether based on spontaneity, reciprocity, or trust, such relationships abdicate contractual regulations to develop. Together with the other aspects, the absence of contracts generates commitments and maintains responsibilities and connections (Pottinger, 2018), bringing Couchsurfing resistance practices closer to an economy of the gift.

## 6. Conclusion

The practices performed by the models analyzed in this study present different ways of dealing with scarcity and interdependence from those of traditional market relations. To this end, their members develop a network of relationships marked by different forms of resistance. Common to all models, however, is the renunciation of some central aspects of market systems. Considered waste and crime in the capitalist economy (De Certeau, 1984), renunciations of profit and private property become crucial principles for those models.

Resistance tactics are always present in contexts marked by economic conditions, guiding the formation of different socio-economic initiatives and models. In this process, it is possible to transcend the structures of the traditional market, developing entire alternative economies. As a theoretical contribution, and complementing De Certeau' (1984) thesis, this study reveals that practices that transcend the power of the markets can be developed not only

in the daily life of the common people, apparently far from the market hegemony. On the contrary, it can be found in the most diverse initiatives, including market models.

Practices that escape the purely market spectrum can be developed using a diversified repertoire of resistance tactics. There are different ways to operate scarcity and economic exchange besides traditional market relations. Other economies can be developed working on the interdependence of social agents through community-based relationships. These economies, however, are not based on the exaltation of profit or private property. Comprising a wide spectrum of tactics, ranging from pragmatic cunning to counterstrategies, these new economic initiatives claim space on a social terrain marked by individualism to establish the status of the collective.

Resistance tactics are established by subverting the marketing logic on at least one of the three fronts pointed out in this research: the immanence of capitalizable practices, the sovereignty of utilitarian rationality, or the need for formal contracts. Based on this perspective, some principles are identified in the interviewees' speeches and practices. First, common people do not search for the control of hegemonic power, but the possibility of creating and subverting powers. Thus, they seek to develop alternative socio-economic projects that can expand relational possibilities, in a process that can synchronize elements of creativity and planning. Second, the concept of consumer resistance is part of a greater concept of market resistance, i.e., a practice that presumes the association of several social agents to negotiate ephemeral or lasting alliances. Finally, among the various ways of resistance against the economic order structures one of the most basic is subverting the utilitarian rationality.

To deepen the analysis, the connection between Michel De Certeau's practice approach and Marcel Mauss' anti-utilitarianism can bring important theoretical contributions. Understanding the new ways of making markets, such as through the practices of collaboration and cooperation present in collaborative consumption and the solidarity economy, would be able not only to point out new directions and business models but to subvert the abstract and timeless utilitarian rationality. In this sense, more debates involving the two theoretical perspectives are needed, addressing other research contexts that have shown empirical prominence in the social scene.

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