

İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

RATIONALITY OF THE POLITICS OF COMMONS

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113679009

PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIAL THOUGHT

Master Thesis

Advisor

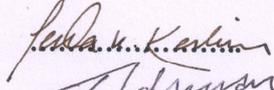
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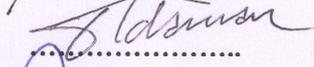
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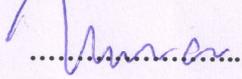
RATIONALITY OF THE POLITICS OF COMMONS
(MÜŞTEREKLER SİYASETİNİN RASYONALİTESİ)

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Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih : 17.11.2015

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı : 83

Anahtar Kelimeler

Keywords

1) Müşterekler

1) Commons

2) Rasyonalite

2) Rationality

3) Müşterekler Siyaseti

3) The Politics of Commons

4) Siyasal Olan

4) The Political

5) İlk Birikim

5) Primitive Accumulation

This work is dedicated to friend and comrade Suphi Nejat Ağırnaslı, who always lead the way both in theory and in practice, and whose words I remember with a great longing:

“Never forget, never forgive!”

ABSTRACT

The politics of commons is a contemporary form of politics that appears as the defense of the commons, reclaiming the commons and new commoning practices. These make what we understand as the politics of the commons in the contemporary political sphere. However, this is not only the content of the politics, but also a way of understanding and doing politics. Moreover, there are different kinds of ontologies that lead to different ways of understanding the politics of commons. Within the individualistic ontology, the commons are reduced to communal assets that are appropriated by the individuals. However, within the relational ontology, the commons lead to a different way of understanding the society in terms of ontology and politics. Therefore, this way of understanding the politics results in thinking different on the rationality of the political. Against the enclosure process in the contemporary world, there are different kinds of political movements that share and create a common way of understanding and doing politics. The politics of the commons, based on the commoning practices, implies a rationality that alters our understanding of the political, and opens up a possibility for the commoning the politics.

ÖZET

Müşterekler siyaseti, müştereklerin savunulması, ele geçirilmesi ve yeni müşterekleştirme pratikleri biçiminde, güncel bir siyaset biçimi olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bu pratikler, güncel siyasal alanda müşterekler siyaseti olarak ifade ettiğimiz şeyi oluşturmaktadır. Ancak bu pratikler yalnızca bir siyaset biçimi olarak değil, aynı zamanda siyaseti anlama ve siyaset yapma yolu olarak da düşünülmelidir. Dahası, farklı ontolojilerin farklı müşterekler anlayışlarını mümkün kıldığı söylenebilir. Bireyselci ontoloji içerisinde müşterekler, bireylerin kullandığı varlıklara indirgenmektedir. Ancak, ilişkisel ontoloji içerisinde müşterekler, toplumu, ontoloji ve politika açısından başka bir anlama biçimine imkan sunar. Günümüz dünyasında mevcut çitleme sürecine karşı, müşterek bir siyaset anlayışını ve siyaset pratiklerini paylaşan ve yaratan farklı politik hareketler vardır. Bu açıdan, müşterekleri bu biçimde anlamının kendisi siyasetin rasyonalitesini de başka türlü düşünmemize yol açar. Müşterekler siyaseti, müşterekleştirme pratiklerine bağlı olarak, siyaseti anlama biçimimizi değiştiren bir rasyonaliteye işaret ederken, siyasetin müşterekleştirilme imkanını da ortaya çıkarmaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank to TÜBİTAK-BİDEB, for providing me a scholarship that made me to continue work on my thesis. If this scholarship programme did not exist, it was impossible for me to conduct this thesis.

Moreover, I would like to thank some people for their contribution and support they gave me while writing this thesis. Thanks to Fikret Adaman and Bengi Akbulut, who gave me their support all the time and in all possible ways, supporting me to conduct a research about the commons in the university; to Deniz Özgür and Begüm Özden Fırat for their political and conceptual contribution; to Orkun Doğan who participated in my jury and supported me; to Cath Harvey for making a precise proof reading; to Eylem Akçay, for his unique contribution to shaping my ideas of the conclusion part; to Ferda Keskin, for accepting to be my advisor and for his stimulating suggestions that enrich the thesis; to Kaan Atalay for giving inspiration, strenght, desire and *conatus*, in the worst days; and to Özlem Işıl, for collaborating in the discovery and experience of the commons, for living this process together, for producing together, and for “all we have in common”.

This work is based on the experience of people that I met and encountered in different places such as the valleys of Black Sea Region and university campuses. This work is the commonizing of their histories. Thus, sharing our lives and struggles, this work could not be completed. Endless thanks to all of them.

TEŞEKKÜRLER

Öncelikle, lisansütü burs programıyla yüksek lisans eğitim sürecime verdiği katkıdan dolayı TÜBİTAK-BİDEB'e teşekkür ederim. Bu burs programı olmasaydı çalışmalarımın devam etmem mümkün olmayacaktı.

Bu tezin yazılma sürecinde destek ve katkılarıyla yanımda olan kişilere teşekkür etmek istiyorum. Fikret Adaman ve Bengi Akbulut'a, müşterekler üzerine akademik bir çalışma yapmamda ön açıcı oldukları ve her zaman ve her şekilde çalışmalarımı destekledikleri için; Deniz Özgür ve Begüm Özden Fırat'a politik ve kavramsal katkıları için; Orkun Doğan'a, tez jürimde yanımda olduğu ve desteklediği için; Cath Harvey'e, yaptığı titiz son okuma için; Eylem Akçay'a, tezin sonuç bölümündeki düşüncelerimin gelişmesine sağladığı benzersiz katkı için; Ferda Keskin'e, bu çalışmayı beraber yürütmeyi kabul ettiği ve ufuk açıcı önerileriyle çalışmayı zenginleştirdiği için; Kaan Atalay'a, çok zor günlerde verdiği ilham, direnç, arzu ve *conatus* için; ve müşterekleri beraber tanıdığımız, beraber deneyimlediğimiz Özlem Işıl'a, beraber yaşamayı ve üretmeyi mümkün kıldığı için ve "paylaştığımız her şey için" çok teşekkür ederim.

Bu çalışma, Doğu Karadeniz vadilerinden üniversite kampüslerine, bir çok farklı mekanda tanışılan, karşılaşılan insanların hikayelerinin müşterekleşmesine dayanmaktadır. Paylaştığımız yaşamlar ve mücadeleler olmasaydı, bu çalışma mümkün olmayacaktı. Hepsine sonsuz teşekkürler.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	4
ÖZET.....	5
ACKNOWLEDGES.....	6
TEŞEKKÜRLER.....	7
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	8
I. INTRODUCTION.....	10
A. THE AIM OF THIS WORK.....	10
B. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	13
II. A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE COMMONS LITERATURE.....	20
A. THE INDIVIDUALISTIC ONTOLOGY.....	21
1. The Tragedy of the Commons.....	21
2. Commons as Common-Pool Resources.....	24
3. The Free-Rider Problem.....	26
B. MARX AND MARX-INSPIRED CRITIQUE.....	29
1. Enclosure of the Commons and Primitive Accumulation.....	30
2. New Enclosures.....	32
3. The Logic of Separation.....	36
4. Becoming a Class.....	40
III. RATIONALITY OF COMMONING.....	43
A. SUBJECTIVITY.....	45
1. Biopolitical Production.....	45
2. Multitude.....	47
3. Commons and Communities.....	50

B. THE POLITICAL SPHERE.....	54
1. Beyond Private and Public.....	54
2. Beyond Ownership.....	56
3. The Governmental Logic of the Commons.....	57
IV. RATIONALITY OF THE POLITICS OF COMMONS.....	60
A. THE POLITICS OF COMMONS.....	62
1. General Types of the Politics of Commons.....	62
2. The Commons Movement.....	65
B. THE COMMONS AS CONSTITUENT POWER.....	69
1. Building Institutions Based on the Common.....	69
2. The Guiding Principle.....	71
3. General Summary of the Politics of Commons.....	72
V. CONCLUSION.....	74
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	80

I. INTRODUCTION

A. THE AIM OF THIS WORK

In 2011, while I was with a group of friends shooting a documentary of the anti-HEPP movement in the Black Sea Region of Turkey, I was surprised to see that people from different walks of life supporting opposing ideological positions, were *acting in common*. Villagers were united against the privatization of use rights of rivers and acted together against this process. It appeared to be an alliance, to defend common resources: rivers, which were being used as part of villagers livelihoods. They were *unified* in a resistance that was based on defense of village livelihoods and they were calling themselves “the defenders of livelihoods” no matter their political identity.

This was a common case for other ecological movements as well, most of which were based on the defense of livelihoods, as a unified subject no matter what their political identity was. After that engagement, I have started discovering the different kinds of alliances in different resistance practices such as workers’ strikes and student movements. Each time, there was something unifying people in a struggle, negating conflict between the opposing political identities.

In June 2013, when one of Turkey’s most important political events occurred, the Gezi resistance, it was the same unification of people for a common cause, arising from a defense of the Gezi park, which led to the construction of new modes of relations in a temporary livelihood. This time, I was part of this political action experiencing both the unification in a common cause and developing everyday life practices that would change me as a person.

What I felt was something like this: the condition of this “political subject” did not refer to a permanent identity such as nation, religion, or even an ideological position. Indeed, this composition of people was not a real society, in the sense that they could not be defined as a community, formed around an identity or an essential quality. However, there was somehow a community in front of our eyes, a becoming community, which we were not able to define, and which made us wonder about the possibility conditions of this becoming *event*.

This invoked my philosophical desire to understand what was “beyond” this actuality. Instinctively, I tried not to think of this subject in terms of “class”, which would reduced it to a concept of sociology, or as the “people” which mostly refers to the “poor” or the “nation” in

the Middle Eastern context. That was the beginning of my philosophical journey into the literature of the commons.

The commons is generally used to refer to the *common natural resources* that people use and/or benefit from, mostly in their livelihoods, or in a wider context, the natural elements that all living beings use and/or benefit from in general. As in the case of our Black Sea region trip, people were benefiting from rivers in most of the villages, using them as a common resource for their agricultural production. In other cases, forests, seas, oceans, some types of land, the atmosphere and indigenous knowledge are defined as commons. Indeed, some use commons as “common-pool resources”; others use it as “human heritage”. What is common in this usage is that, the commons were referring to something that was common, be a resource, knowledge, or heritage.

Moreover, some thinkers criticized the governance of the commons in terms of their ineffective usage by communities, their unsustainable character, or their end as a *tragedy* for all. In other words, there were also different kinds of approaches to the commons that were supporting their privatization, corporatization, or governance by the state in order to prevent us from the *tragedy*.

However, all around the world, similar to Turkey, there were people acting together against the privatization, commodification or corporation processes, resisting against the companies or the governments that implement projects, which destroy livelihoods and force people to migrate. Against these projects, people acted in common in the name of “defending livelihoods”, forming different kinds of alliances as we have witnessed in Turkey. In other words, these kinds of resistances were called as “the politics of commons”, which were local, based on a livelihood or a community, formed by people who have different political identities but act together.

As far as I realized, there was something interesting in this *kind* of politics, which was beyond the politics of identity. Identity politics is based on sharing an essential quality, whether it is a gender, nation, religion or political ideology. The political is defined as the struggle of conflicting identities in terms of gaining more power. On the other hand, the politics based on commons, necessarily, creates a communication between the people who never had any communication before because of their conflicting identities. Within the politics of commons, there was a *possibility* of opening a space that would allow us to become what we are not, or act in common while keeping our differences. This possibility is one of the most important points that made my desire to conduct this work.

Moreover, there was a second point that made me think of the politics of commons as a *rationality* within which people form practices and relations. The politics of commons were based directly on the commoning practices and relations of the people. Witnessing the direct transformation of practices to a form of politics made me question the possibility of thinking these practices as a rationality. What were their practices and relations, which become a condition for them to act in common? These considerations promote another question, another important one that I would try to answer: if they practiced this kind of politics once in a particular place and once in another, can we take these experiences as the initial points while thinking the *political*? How would the politics of commons give us an understanding of *the political*? Does it offer a new rationality of practices and relations that would lead us to a new rationality of politics?

In this work, I would like to answer these questions by discussing a set of concepts that I think helps us understand the politics of commons by focusing on what is behind these politics and what these politics imply for further thoughts on the political.

B. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The definition of the commons is both a discussion of politics and ontology. Indeed, it is not possible to define the commons without proposing a way of understanding, and formulating a concrete methodological standpoint.

Moreover, the historical transformation of a concept in which it is unfolded or limited in meaning contributes to what we understand from that concept. The commons, for example, was understood as what was shared physically in common, in 17th century Britain, mostly as the common land that was open and freely used by the peasants. Indeed, it was the forests, oceans, mountains that belonged to all the people, no matter that it was under protection by the national or international laws. Hence in the contemporary world, commons cannot be limited to a physical entity after the invention and promotion of, for example, the internet. There is now a space of which the 17th century people could not imagine as a common space, which people use as the commons. Thus the historical transformations of relations of people also transform what a concept really means.

I will try to unfold the discussion or the conflict between different conceptualizations of the commons, which is not only based on different historical understanding but also different ontological standpoints. What is common for different understandings of the commons is, in some way, the reference to sharing something in common, no matter whether it is based in property relations or not. It can be a material or immaterial commodity, a set of relations and practices, a way of understanding the world, a way of relating to the world etc... The commons refer to something shared in common, produced in common, or a condition that is shared in common.

I will propose two different ontological standpoints that are the basis of definition or understanding of the commons: *the substantial ontology* and *the relational ontology*. The substantial ontology takes the individual as the methodological standpoint. In this way, the individual-society division is taken as a dichotomy *a priori* and the individual is taken as an *atom*. I will call this understanding of the commons *the individualistic approach*, which is based on the “individualistic ontology”. In this ontology, the commons are taken as entities. On the other hand, the relational ontology reduces *the social* into *practices* and *relations* in which we can only understand the individual and the social in terms of relations and practices. This ontology will provide a different understanding of the commons that force us to think of the commons as relations and practices of the commoners, who create, use or share the commons, and who are thinkable only in their relation with each other.

Moreover, while transiting from the individualistic ontology to the relational ontology, I will discuss the Marxist understanding of the commons that provides a historical description of the enclosure of the commons, in which we can trace a relational process that makes a critical contribution to understanding the commons. The position of the commons in Marx's thought resulted in different interpretations of primitive accumulation and capitalist mode of production, which inspired a different ontology for some thinkers as a standpoint for further investigation on commons. I will try to show this difference while discussing the definition of “primitive accumulation”. Indeed, understanding of “the so-called primitive accumulation” diversifies discussions and gives it a character, related to the ontology upon which thinkers base their arguments. In other words, the Marx-inspired understanding of the commons can also be divided between the two different ontological standpoints that affect the definition of further points and concepts.

I would propose that different ontological standpoints would result in different rationalities in relation to the commons. This fact appears clearly, when we discuss “how commons should be governed”. It is clear that different rationalities based on different ontological standpoints will result in different strategies to govern the commons or their production, for they imply something different whenever they refer to something as commons.

The individualistic ontology takes the individual as its methodological standpoint to understand the formation and governance of a society, in the image of the *individual atom*. In this ontology, there are the relations of individuals: individual practices that are connected to each other with practices or institutions of governance. These relations reflect the bonds between the individuals, which is the formation of the subject. In this sense, we are within the modern ontology of the subject, which is defined in substantial terms. The separation of the subject and the object is the basic assumption of this ontology. In other words, the subject is the *being* that moves and acts in the society and relating with other subjects as beings, reducing them into objects. In this sense, the limit of this being is defined in its finitude, and the relation can be understood only occurring between these subjects, only in their finitude.

Methodologically, this understanding is based upon the individual to understand society, and it reduces the individual to an atom. In this sense, this ontology is based on a set of practices and relations that defines the individual in terms of its relation with the society, which can be possible only by its being individual. Thus being social is a technology of the self, based on arranging and organizing the self into a set of practices that conform to his

subjectivity. This is also the formation of the subject. In this way, we can only understand the social in terms of the individual, in the image of individual.

As opposed to the individualistic ontology, relational ontology focuses on *the process*. In this reasoning, there is not an essential feature that characterizes a society, but there is *the process* of subjectification that provides rationalities for singular beings for their becoming-subject. In other words, singular beings are not *a priori* “subjects”, like the individual. They can become a subject only under their practices and relations corresponding to a set of principles that forms the subjectivities in a society. Relational ontology is an analytical tool that focuses on the relations and practices that singular beings produce, and it understands their becoming subject only through these activities. In this reasoning, we do not take the individual as the production of society, but we focus on the process of socializing and subjectivation that are based on the practices and relations corresponding to a set of rational principles.

In this case, *commoning* would be helpful to understand the production of commons as practices and relations of singular beings. Indeed, the relational ontology would suggest that there would be no commons possible without commoning practices. On this basis, I will take relational ontology as an analytical tool for understanding the commoning practices, where we can trace the formation of the social from the relations and practices of becoming. In this way, it would be possible to understand the commons as relations and practices, but not as entities. Thus the rationality of commoning would appear as the commoning practices of singular beings.

Departing from the *commoning* as my methodological entry point, I would like to arrive at a point where we can think of the rationality of commoning also as the rationality of the politics of commons. In other words, I will also use rationality as a concept for understanding the principles of *the political*. The understanding of the political based on the individualistic ontology results in the identity politics of contemporary world, which is also the governable unit of the State, namely of *neoliberal governmentality*. Within neoliberal governmentality, singular beings, communities or parties act in accordance with the formation of the political as the relation of atomistic individual entities, principally separated and distinguished from each other, forming parties and representing different parts of the society, within a rally of gaining and controlling the power. In other words, the rationality of the politics based on the individualistic ontology is the representation of different parts of society in the name of political ideology or identity. On the contrary, the rationality of the politics based on the relational ontology, as I will propose, will provide an opportunity to think of *the*

political with a different vocabulary, in different ways of understanding the relations and formations of society, based upon the commoning practices of commoners.

The discussion on “primitive accumulation” will be my point of entrance to the different understanding of the politics in terms of relational ontology. Primitive accumulation is the enclosure of the commons, and a generalized way of understanding the separation of the old farmers from their land, and their becoming deprived of their means of production. It can be said in general that this was the starting point of capitalist mode of production, providing *the conditions for capitalist relations*, which is the *separation of the doers from the doing*. In this case, the “so called primitive accumulation” gains a double meaning: first, it characterizes the transition from the pre-capitalist mode of production to the capitalist mode of production; second, it characterizes the continuous character of separation between the doing and the done. In this case, accumulation becomes a way of subjectification of population as the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, namely the wage-labor, rural worker etc...

The subjectification of population is the production of subjectivity. However, this should not be understood as formation of the subject from “above”. Subjectivity is the art of government, the government of the population. In this case, I would take Michel Foucault’s (2009) understanding of governmentality as the rationality of neoliberal subjectivity. This understanding does not take the population as an “object” which does not produce itself, but it traces the potentials and relations of singular beings, in which they conform to specific subjectivity positions or their resistances to these subjectivities. In other words, “subjectivity” is not formed according to an essence, or it is not imposed by the power above. Hence it is formed in practices and relations of the singular beings, acting in accordance with the rationalities they confirm. This is an example of the reduction of the social into acts and practices, using a relational ontology.

The question of subjectivity in our case appears as a basic question: could the “singular beings” have made themselves in another subjectivity, which would not reproduce the capitalist mode of production, but something else? Could it be possible to resist the forced separation, and produce a different subjectivity? The pre-capitalist communities were acting according to a different kind of subjectivity, which is not just a historical fact but also a contemporary possibility that refers to the “outside” of capitalist dominion. In this case, I will discuss subjectivity not as a fact of history but as a possibility of different acts, relations and encounters produced by singular beings. Therefore, subjectivity is not something given *a priori*, but it is a production based on the conditions of becoming.

Starting from Foucault's analysis of power and subjectivity, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2001; 2004; 2009) define the contemporary conditions of production as "biopolitical production", which is not only economic production, but also the production of subjectivity as a way of producing life. Foucault (2009) analyzes relations of power and conceptualizes this *biopower*, that is, the government of population as the production of subjectivity. In the contemporary world, power relations are not directed from the top down, but it is a process of production of life according to governing strategies. In other words, "bare life" is the condition of production of subjectivity and governmentality. Bare life is the sphere where power is formed *as a relation*. In this way of understanding, life itself becomes not only the sphere of being but also the becoming relations of existence, in which subjectivity is produced. Thus the life itself is what is designed, produced, and reproduced within the power relations.

Hardt and Negri conceptualize biopower as the biopolitical production shifting the helm to the production process, namely the production of life *in common*. In the contemporary world, the condition of the production of subjectivity is the biopolitical condition of *the multitude*. The multitude can be thought in terms of pre-political vocabulary, which refers to the non-subjectified productive force of life, the potentiality that is not unified or subjectified in terms of governmentality. Moreover, multitude can be seen as a political project in which non-capitalist subjectivities are produced. In this sense, the multitude describes both the pre-political forces of life and production, and the new political vocabulary of non-representative politics that generates the production of subjectivity as its expression.

Hardt and Negri focus on the "immaterial production" which they think became the new hegemonic form of labor, determining all the production processes. The immaterial labor, namely the production of codes, affects and knowledge is determining the processes and forms in all its diversity, which is the production of subjectivity. Thus the proletariat, as labor without possessing the means of production, is now not only producing materials as commodities, but also producing life in its entire activity of production. In other words, today, we cannot think of production only in terms of economy, for it is also social, cultural and political simultaneously. Indeed, the distinction between the social, economical and political is blurring each time there is production, as it is the production of subjectivity.

The politics of commons appear as an expression of this subjectivity based on the commoning practices of singular beings living in common. Indeed, we can see a direct passage from the act of commoning to expressing what is common in different practices of commons politics. For example, the politics that is expressed as defense of a specific

commons directly turns to a defense of life in terms of subjectivity. In this sense, politics of commons, based on the production of subjectivity via commoning practices, can be seen as an expression of the multitude with its own vocabulary and definition of the political sphere.

I will take *the community* in a specific meaning throughout this work, while referring to different uses of the concept. Commons are produced by the commoners in communities. In this sense, community is the concrete *space* of production in which different governmental practices can be traced. However, these communities are not defined in terms of any essential qualities such as identity, nation or religion. When we say commons communities, we refer to a specific community that produces the common. In other words, I will refer to the production of subjectivity while discussing the communities of commons.

Moreover, I will take *the common* not as something different from *the commons* but as the derivation of the same concept. For example, either the production is *in common* by *commoning* practices that produce *the commons*, or the production of *the common* within *commons communities*. I believe that, within the critical investigation of the commons literature, the distinction between the common and the commons becomes so technical that we can omit the difference. In this sense, I will use both terms interchangeably referring mostly to the same thing.

I will propose that “commons” will provide us a new vocabulary, vision and understanding to formulate the *political*, which is based on the practices and relations of the commoners producing in common. In this sense, departing from the commoning practices, we can define “rationality of the politics of commons”, which is not based on the essential qualities or identities that are core elements of contemporary politics based on representation, but which is based on the direct expression of the rationality of commoning itself. In other words, I will propose that the pre-political activity of commoning is the bare expression of the political, which in this work I will call as the rationality of the politics of commons.

Under the presence of these circumstances, I will start my discussion by engaging with the commons literature. My main contribution would be placing the literature under two ontological standpoints. First, I will start from the individualistic ontology, which takes the commons as entities, and departs from methodological individualism. After critically engaging with this literature, I will move on the Marxian understanding of the commons in relation with historical enclosure acts. Then, I will discuss the “new enclosures” process that refers to the contemporary dynamics of the capitalist society. The new enclosures process is understood by Marx-inspired thinkers in such a way that while they refer to a “new” historical fact, they also symbolize the logic of capital relation, referring to the “primitive

accumulation?”. In other words, the new enclosures process makes it possible to discuss the continuous character of primitive accumulation, which is the foundation of the capitalist mode of production. Later, I will discuss the Marx-inspired understanding of the commons, in which we find the commoning practices as a rationality that would be the base to conceptualize the politics of commons within a new framework. In order to do so, I will discuss the biopolitical conditions of production. This will lead us to understand the contemporary productive forces in terms of the multitude. These conceptions bring us to the discussion of the political sphere, in which we will problematize the private/public discussion and try to base the commons in a place beyond property relations.

The rationality of commoning will be the base of the rationality of politics. In other words, I will discuss the rationality of the politics of commons as a new vision, a new vocabulary and new practices based on the commoning practices. Later, I will discuss the consequences of this rationality in terms of transforming what we understand from the political. Finally, I would like to finish with a proposition that, politics of commons based in the commoning practices would be a way to understand the commoning of the political.

II. A CRITICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMONS LITERATURE

In this chapter, I will critically interrogate the commons literature basing my discussion on two different ontological standpoints. I will begin my discussion by focusing on the commons literature that I place in the individualistic ontology. Later, I will analyze Marx's contribution to the commons literature by analyzing some of his basic concepts. Finally, I will discuss the Marx-inspired approach that gives room to understanding commons within relational ontology.

A. THE INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH

In this section, I will start by discussing the “tragedy of the commons” proposed by Garrett Hardin and elucidate the assumptions of his analysis by considering the “individualistic ontology”. Then, I will discuss the critiques of Hardin’s approach, mostly developed by Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues, which do not make an ontological criticism but try to strengthen the conclusions.

1. The Tragedy of the Commons

The commons has become a discussion point after Garrett Hardin’s famous essay called *The Tragedy of the Commons* (1968) was published. Hardin, by introducing the concept to the focus of discussion, opened up a space for an approach to understand, criticize, and change the relations of people with the commons, all around the world, from the academic world to international policies.

Hardin focuses on the relations of individuals to an imaginary pasture (which is the commons in this scenario) and analyzes the relations that will make the commons an unsustainable commodity. In his scenario, commons will be ruined for all in the long term, because each rational herdsman would want more amount of pasture to use. The “tragedy of the commons”, then, is based on the thought that what is thought to be to the benefit of all would destroy all.

The term “commons” was not new at all. What Hardin did was just a contemporary introduction of the concept to the academic world with unpredictable consequences. Indeed, it was used in England to describe the “shared” resources based on land, forests, oceans, etc, which provided, for example, a way of communal farming, or farming without ownership (Angus, 2008). Moreover, commons was the basis of most of the indigenous communities’ shared and communal way of life, sustained, governed and protected for centuries without the need of an extrinsic authority or intrinsic mechanisms such as the modern state apparatus.

The aim of Hardin’s discussion was to solve the “population problem” (or the overpopulation problem) based on the “increasing of the population and decreasing of the goods” dilemma. Hardin (1968) proposes that “in a finite world... per capita share of the world's goods must steadily decrease” (p. 27), because of the increase in population. His analysis develops from two premises and a conclusion: First, it was the “greatest goods for the greatest number” (p. 27). Second, “it is not possible to maximize for two variables at the same

time” (p. 27). From these premises, the conclusion would be as the following: “maximizing the population does not maximize the goods” (p. 27).

In this case, humanity should find a way to stop this process, thus prevent self-destruction. Hardin proposes that we need a “criterion of judgment and a system of weighting” that we can find in the nature, which is the survival (p. 28). For him, this is a project to solve the problem and it is possible only with “the tendency to assume that decisions reached individually will, in fact, be the best decisions for an entire society” (p. 28). In other words, Hardin thought that the imitation of nature would bring us to analyze the rationality of individual, which will give us clues about how we could react against the overpopulation problem, namely the destruction of humanity.

To make this imitation clear, Hardin suggests we think about a scenario that would reflect the overpopulation problem within the commons, which ends as *the tragedy of the commons*. He wants us to “picture a pasture open to all” (p. 28) where there is the herdsman, the individual who lives in order to “maximize the good and decrease the pain” (p. 29). In this scenario, “the rational herdsman will select to increase the number of his animals” (p. 29) for it is the best way for him to maximize the gain. When each herdsman is motivated with the desire to increase his animals, the system becomes locked, for each of the herdsmen would do the same to preserve himself and gain from the unlimited open access to the commons (p. 29). As a result, the commons turn to be an open-access regime, without any control or governance, in which each individual acts for the benefit of him. As all individual herdsmen want their own gain, this will be the ruin of all (p.29).

Hardin’s argument seems to be based on imaginary assumptions that are the basis of individualistic ontology. In other words, these assumptions are considering the “singular beings” as an agent in terms of the individualistic ontology, which results in defining commons as commodity. First, individuals are acting themselves. They are like isolated atoms, which are based on the assumption that there can be an “individual” *a priori* to its relations and practices. Secondly, the individual is the unit of analysis. We start from the individual, and we are in a sphere within individuals. Hardin’s commons is a place where individuals meet, act or compete. Only in this way is there a society, as a form made of combination of the individuals. Lastly, the individual is taken for granted as having an infinite capacity to compete with other individuals, to maximize his gain. Therefore, it can be said that Hardin’s approach reflects the individualistic ontology as a tool, which presupposes the separation of the individual from the society, separation of the doing from the object before the action takes place.

In this case, Hardin was not sad about the destruction of the commons, but the tragedy was the “*inevitable result of shared use of the pasture*” (Angus, 2008). The freedom of all, understood as the infinite access to a communal-shared resource, would be the ruin of all, which is the ruin of everyone’s benefit. Then, as rational individuals, we have to choose a different way to maximize our gain, for our unlimited freedom provided by commons is not the thing that would provide us the maximum gain.

Hardin’s understanding of the individual resembles what Jeremy Bentham (1907) considers to be the basic unit of analysis: rational individuals’ motivations are only dependent on the amount of their own gain. Firstly, this “utilitarian approach” is one of the basic motivations that we can consider while understanding how Hardin relates to the individual as the unit of analysis and subject. Secondly, Hardin was trying to take down the “Smithian fantasy” that everyone is pursuing his own *interest*. This fantasy departs from an isolated and atomic being, whose motivation is to maximize his own gain, which is codified as the “self-interested” individual in the history of thought (Hardin, 1998). Third, it also resembles the Hobbesian world of the state of nature in which everyone who is pursuing his own “self-interest” is at war with everyone else, and that this state of war (the unlimited freedom that Hardin thinks about) is the destruction of the self and all in the long term (what Hardin calls as *the tragedy*). In other words, “Hardin assumed that human nature is selfish and unchanging and that society is just an assemblage of self-interested individuals who don’t care about the impact of their actions on the community” (Angus, 2008). Overall, what Hardin uses is the “individualistic ontology” that formulates the individual as an atomistic unit. This individual is motivated by his “self-interest” intrinsic to his actions, which forms his rationality.

In this context, departing from the individualistic ontology results in a rationality of the “self-interested” individual. This rationality of the individual appears as “design principles” to “build better theories for explaining and predicting behavior” (Ostrom, 2012: 69). In other words, the individual is expected to act in conformity with the rationale of what his ontology creates: with conformity to his being individual, at war with others, and trying to follow his self-interest as an atomistic self. The society of individuals is designed by this rationality before the action takes place. In other words, there is the individual without the relation to the others and *before the action takes place*. Moreover, departing from Hardin’s analysis, we see that there is also the design of the action, by its consequences, *a priori*. Action comes only after the calculation of the results of the rational possibilities: the prohibitions and elections of these possible actions for their consequences. The rational act of the agent is defined according to its possible results. Thus the “rational agent” is the

individual atom that can act only under the circumstances in which he is bound to others, and only in this sense he can be defined as an individual.

This way of putting the problem corresponds with another assumption that gives a character to this kind of rationality: “individual selfishness is the central assumption underpinning Hardin’s analysis” (Mattei, 2012). This is the *homo economicus* of the contemporary world, which is not the source of the tragedy, but is the ontology of the problem, itself.

2. Commons as Common-Pool Resources

Within the commons literature, the “individualistic ontology” tradition has its most powerful formulation in the work of Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues. Ostrom’s core argument is to “save the commons” in terms of the best governing ways that can be constructed. This was due to the solution offered by Hardin to the tragedy of the commons. For Hardin, the open-access regime should be given up and a regime of governance by the state or the market should be in drive. Ostrom and her colleagues mostly focus on the solution that Hardin offers, while formulating the commons in a new meaning.

In general, the post-Hardinian tradition (Berkes, 2009: 263), then, does not have a criticism of the core presuppositions of what Hardin proposed, but has some revisions of the theory, which they find lacking in fixing the conceptualization of what the commons is. For Ostrom proposes, what is problematic in Hardin’s approach is the conceptualization of the commons within the “free-rider problem”: “Whenever one person cannot be excluded from the benefits that others provide, each person is motivated not to contribute to the joint effort, but to free-ride on the efforts of others” (Ostrom, 1990: 6). Departing from the “free-rider”, Hardin’s solution becomes an institutional solution corresponding to an intervention of the market or the state. However, Ostrom proposes that the “solution” is “neither state nor the market”. She claims that Hardin’s thought results in a “tragedy” because Hardin thinks of the situation of the individuals as helpless and “caught in an inexorable process of destroying their own resources” (Ostrom, 1990: 8).

Hardin’s solution, for Ostrom, results in a need of “central authority” which will be in control of what, where and how the production will occur. She thinks that it is similar to the “Leviathan” in the sense that this authority becomes possible only in the condition where individuals are lacking power (Ostrom, 1990: 9). That is why, she proposes “neither state nor

market” as the solution, for she is in favor of the collective actions that are able to solve problem within themselves in accordance with an external authority figure.

Ostrom has a neutral position to what we can call the “privatization of the commons”, or the “market” as the solution. She thinks that, market is also an “institutional change” which is thought to “come from outside and be imposed on the individuals affected” (Ostrom, 1990: 14). She proposes that “instead of there being a single solution to a single problem, I argue that many solutions exist to cope with many different problems” (p. 14). Her approach tries to give the participants a role in *designing their own systems* instead of a force from outside, neither being privatization, nor being nationalization of the commons (p. 17). Her analysis is mostly derived from her investigations into real systems, taken as a fact, to defeat Hardin’s imaginary scenario and assumptions based on this scenario. Indeed, as Angus shows, Hardin’s understanding of the commons is repudiated by the real world examples:

Hardin simply ignored what actually happens in a real commons: *self-regulation by the communities involved* [...] Part of that self-regulation process was known in England as “stinting” -- establishing limits for the number of cows, pigs, sheep, and other livestock that each commoner could graze on the common pasture. Such “stints” protected the land from overuse (a concept that experienced farmers understood long before Hardin arrived) and allowed the community to allocate resources according to its own concepts of fairness. (Angus, 2008)

The practices in the real world of the commons were the departing point of Ostrom’s work for criticizing and developing Hardin’s idea of tragedy. However, Ostrom’s work can be placed within the same individualistic ontology, as taking the individual as the unit of analysis, just revising the behavior of the individual as opposed to *a priori* model of competing actors. Ostrom’s solution is based on the proposal that “adequately specified theory of collective action whereby a group... can organize themselves voluntarily” make this group act together, which will not result in tragedy (Ostrom, 1990: 24-25). This group of people is thought to be *individual agents*, which are related with each other in terms of their individuality, and forming a group within this individualistic basis. They are acting as “rational individuals” who find themselves in “complex and uncertain situations” and solve the problems on this basis (Ostrom, 1990).

This way of understanding the commons signifies a transformation of the meaning of commons. From the tragedy of the commons as open-access resources, Ostrom formulates the commons as the “common-pool resources” (CPR) that is the resource systems providing resource units for appropriation by the individuals using the system (Ostrom, 1990). In a

CPR, “the resource system is jointly used, but the resource units are individually used” (p.30). Moreover, “when multiple appropriators are dependent on a given CPR as a source of economic activity, they are jointly affected by almost everything they do” (p. 38). Each individual must take into consideration other individual’s choices while assessing their own personal choices (p. 38). Commons as common-pool resources are resources that individual agents use in a collective agreement, in the benefit of all, for commons are based on institutional regimes to save and sustain the resources. Therefore, rationality of the CPR approach is based on the “rational individual” and his “rational action and choice”, who acts in a “resource unit” that must be governed by the rational choice of the group of individuals, which might be called an agreement, “collective action”, or even an invisible or legally open contract. They perform collective action while acting independently but adopting strategies “to obtain higher joint benefits or reduce their joint harm” (p. 11).

As it is clear, Ostrom understands the commons as common-pool resources and tries to solve the tragedy in favor of the individual believing that he can work together with others, while sustaining his atomistic individuality. This is an important step to understand the commons within a collective base, “refuting Hardin’s tragedy” but failing “to notice that corporations and States, if not individuals, behave in ways that nonetheless produce tragedy” of the commons (Mattei, 2012: 6).

3. The Free-Rider Problem

The post-Hardinian work puts emphasis on the “free-rider”, which turns the tragedy of the commons into the problem of “free-access” based on *non-property regimes*: “Hardin’s model applied to open-access exploitation of the commons but was not valid for community-based resource use systems” (Berkes, 2009: 262). Here, what I mean by “non-property regimes” is a “system” in which production, sharing and distribution relations are not thinkable in terms of the vocabulary of “property”. In other words, in these regimes, the assets, entities or power do not have an ownership. Participants of these kinds of regimes do not depend on resources as commodity. Property is not valid in these regimes and ownership is not commodified.

Then, what Hardin points as *tragedy* is the “open-access” to resources which are not based on a specific property regime, be it a private or a collective one. This creates considerable ambiguity and a conflict for the individualistic ontology, for this ontology is based on rational design principles of individual agents and valid only under these

circumstances. However, a non-property regime consists of contingency and does not leave room for the rational design of the individual actions, *a priori*.

Therefore, it can be said that, the Post-Hardin thinking does not go beyond the limit of the individualistic ontology, but only revises the established paradigm for a better understanding of the behaviors of individual beings. For example, Ostrom (2010) proposes eight “design principles” for her commons understanding, which formulates the collective use of common-pool resources based on individual activities: “*User boundaries and resource boundaries*” that define who are and are not users; “*Congruence with local conditions*” which defines the rules on how to relate to social and environmental conditions; “*Collective-choice arrangements*” which formulates the principles of participation for making the rules; “*Monitoring of users and monitoring of the resource*” which designs the right monitoring of each user to others; “*Graduated sanctions*” which formulates the sanctions for those who violate the rules; “*Conflict resolution mechanisms*” which defines the mechanisms to solve the conflicts among users; “*Minimal recognition of rights*” that gives room for the participants to make their own rules recognized by the government; and, “*Nested enterprises*” that defines the relation of a common-pool resource to a larger system (in De Angelis and Harvie, 2014: 285-6).

This understanding of the commons as common-pool resources is strictly related with the understanding of design principles based on the individualistic tradition. Berkes (2009) claims that, this is a theory that focuses on the “property-rights relations” in order to clarify and establish property regimes (p. 262). In this sense, we can think of the rational individual acting with rational choice only under a definitive property-rights regime without any contingency of his/her actions giving room to a different way of understanding rationality. To clarify this position, Berkes (2009) defines four different kinds of property regimes that he calls “pure analytical types”: first, the “open access” regime that is “the absence of well-defined property rights”. Second, the “private property” regime “in which an individual or corporation had the right to exclude others and to regulate use.” Third, the “state property” regime in which peoples’ “rights to the resource are vested exclusively in government”. Lastly, “common-property” regimes are the ones “in which the resource was held by an identifiable community of users” (p. 263). This shows clearly that, in this understanding, the so-called tragedy arises because of the absence of a clear-cut property regime over the commons.

As a result, what was once “the tragedy of the commons” now has become a problem of the “free-rider”, which was wrongly formulated by Hardin, and which is transformed into a

new conceptual framework by the post-Hardinian tradition while leaving the presuppositions of Hardin untouched. The post-Hardinian tradition not only uses the individualistic ontology as an analytical tool to understand the relations, but also produces an ontology that cannot think of human activities and human relations without “property-based thinking”. With this analysis, what becomes important is that if “free-access” exists, we can think of the commons not only as common-pool resources but also as a way of “free-access”. However, the common-pool resources approach reduces the commons into “resources”, proposes a group of individuals relating to this resource, and designing individual actions that would solve the problem of overpopulation within the regimes of property. The logical consequences revealing the presumptions of this understanding are as follows:

Even if the herdsman wanted to behave as Hardin described, he could not do so unless certain conditions existed... There would have to be a market for the cattle, and he would have to be focused on producing for that market, not for local consumption. He would have to have enough capital to buy the additional cattle and the fodder they would need in winter. He would have to be able to hire workers to care for the larger herd, build bigger barns, etc [...] Hardin didn't describe the behavior of herdsmen in pre-capitalist farming communities -- he described the behavior of *capitalists operating in a capitalist economy*. (Angus, 2008)

In conclusion, we can say that the understanding of commons based on the “individualistic ontology” takes the individual as its methodological standpoint and arrives to the social as the group of individuals acting according to a rationality, which designs their actions. This understanding grasps *the tragedy* as a problem of “absence of the property regime”, and it legitimizes the commodification of commons. Thus the individualistic ontology as an analytical tool to understand the relations becomes the basis of the individualistic rationality.

B. MARX AND MARX-INSPIRED CRITIQUE

Karl Marx and thinkers that are inspired by him approach to the “so-called tragedy” in a very different fashion, handling a different ontology. This school of thought (with all its varieties and sometimes oppositions) forms a different rationality of the commons, which can be thought of as opposed to the rationality developed by the individualistic approach. In this section, I will examine Marx’s approach by discussing some key concepts that he uses such as *enclosure of the commons* and *primitive accumulation*. Moreover, I will examine a more contemporary approach that is inspired by Marx, which has developed concepts such as *accumulation by dispossession* and *continuous character of primitive accumulation*. This will give us an opportunity to discuss a more contemporary understanding of the commons based on a different ontology, which opens up a space to think commons as a different rationality.

First, I would like to start with Marx’s understanding of the commons that refers back to the historical process of the enclosure of the commons, and he uses this in order to explain the historical process of the formation of the wage-worker class and the bourgeoisie. Marx, in detail, explains this process with historical examples, in order to explain the dialectical relationship between the enclosure of the commons and the making of the proletariat.

What makes Marx’ approach to enclosures and the problem of the commons very different from the individualistic approach is that he tries to uncover what is seen as “natural” when we think of the emergence of the proletariat. In this way, his analysis makes it possible to see that the enclosure of the commons is a “historical process”, no matter the intentions of individuals, the process of *class relations* and within the history of *class wars*. In other words, Marx put emphasis on the formation of the classes, the relation between the classes, and the struggle between the classes. Thus “the commoners” are neither individuals nor “rational agents” that have “free-access” to the land; but they are seen as members of a class having strong historical roots, diversity of relations and collective behaviors. As a result, the problem of the commons becomes a problem of class relations which can be understood within the relational ontology.

A last remark about the importance of this approach is that the class relations as the focus point of the problem directly refers to the problem that is conceptualized as “free-rider”. In other words, when the matter is put as the relations of the classes, it turns into a problem of ownership. In this sense, we are still in the domain of the problems that were proposed in the previous section.

In this section, I will begin by describing the historical enclosures and their relation to the commons. Then, I will focus on the logic of the enclosures by discussing some basic concepts. In this way, I will try to show how we can use relational ontology to understand the continuous logic of capital that operates against the commons. Hence I will reduce the commons into practices and relations and search for a different rationality that these relations and practices would provide.

1. Enclosure of the Commons and Primitive Accumulation

For Marx (1977), the problem of the commons appears at the “origin” of the capitalist mode of production. He focuses on the “so-called primitive accumulation” of capital and the formation of the capitalist society, and discusses in detail the enclosure of the commons beginning from the 17th century of England.

The enclosure of the commons, first, refers to a *historical process* that resembles the transition from the pre-capitalist property relations to the capitalist mode of production. In general, this transition process is related especially with the *common land*, which was used by the peasants as the *means of production*. The “enclosure” refers to the forced separation of the peasants from the common land that was used as “free-access” in general. In other words, it is “the historical movement which changes the producers into wage-workers”, who were “robbed of all their own means of production” as expropriation (Marx, 1977: 669). For Marx, this is a history that “is written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire” (p. 669).

This *historical process* is a *historical event*, in the sense that it had happened in a specific time in the history, through the relations and practices of singular beings that were subjectified in this process. Marx gives very detailed examples of how this process was realized: “The expropriation of the agricultural producer, of the peasant, from the soil, is the basis of the whole process. The history of this expropriation, in different countries, assumes different aspects, and runs through its various phases in different orders of succession, and at different periods” (p. 669-670). It was a process of force, violence, and resulted in the disciplined labor: “Thus were the agricultural people, first forcibly expropriated from the soil, driven from their homes, turned into vagabonds, and then whipped, branded, tortured by laws grotesquely terrible, into the discipline necessary for the wage system” (p. 688).

The enforced enclosing of the commons has a constitutive role in the foundation of the capitalist social formation. It creates *the conditions* for the capital to be accumulated and the labor to be exploited, through a long time process. Indeed, these conditions were “original” in

the sense that it created the possibility for the capital to be accumulated. In the logic of capital, there is the necessity that “in order to accumulate capital it is necessary to possess capital” (Read, 2002: 26). This implies an “original point” or a previous accumulation “which is not the result of the capitalist mode of production but rather its point of departure” (Read, 2002: 26). This means that “the enclosure of the commons” was an *act for accumulation*, namely “the primitive accumulation”, which has very foundational consequences in the history of capitalism: “this entailed taking land, say, enclosing it, and expelling a resident population to create a landless proletariat, and then releasing the land into the privatized mainstream of capital accumulation” (Harvey 2003: 149).

How Marx dealt with the “historical enclosure process” is important. First, he does not see the process as a story of the *individual*. Rather, he puts it in a *historical context*, as the struggles between classes and the formation of a new society. Thus the “enclosure of the commons” gains a character that is reduced to relations and practices. In this case, methodologically, Marx does not depart from the individual, but he focuses on the “encounter” of different subject positions acting in the conditions they face.

Second, Marx relates the enclosure of the commons with the problem of dispossession, which is the separation of labor from the means of production. This way of understanding the issue opens up a space to discuss how “the means of production” and “labor” interact beyond an economic reduction. In other words, the relationship of labor with the means of production can be thought beyond reducing the means of production to entities such as land, machines etc. Marx’s categorical distinction makes this discussion possible, which is directly related to the commons not only as resources for production but the *biopolitical conditions* produced collectively.

Third, “primitive accumulation” as in the form of “enclosure of the commons” opens up a space to understand the enclosure not only in terms of a historical transition but a continuous character that is contained both in the “new enclosures” and in the “separation of the doing and the deed” each time there is the class formation process. In other words, the “so-called primitive accumulation” might be the core characteristic of the capital relation, whenever we face the encounter of classes as an event of their subjectification.

Thus Marx’s understanding of the enclosures and the ontology he uses to reveal the problem of the commons make it possible to understand the commons as relations and practices. The commons, in this sense, are relations and conflicts of collective agents, and antagonism between different systems: “The other aspect of the accumulation of capital concerns the relations between capitalism and the non-capitalist modes of production which

start making their appearance on the international stage” (Harvey, 2003: 137). This understanding leads to the problem of “mode of production” which is the relational understanding of the production in the sense that it reduces production to the relations and practices within a current rationality. In other words, we can think of *capitalism* only in terms of the “capitalist mode of production” and its others, such as non-capitalist mode of productions. This is one of the reasons why the commons based on a non-capitalist mode of production does not conform to the capitalist property regimes. The historical enclosures of the commons, then, not only refer to the formation of classes as subjectivities, but also to the expansion of the space that are based on the capitalist mode of production.

How Marx understands the commons, then, implies some aspects of the commons that are different from the individualistic approach. First, the commons are not reduced to a tool; rather, it is a constitutive part of the social relations. In other words, a specific commons is not only a forest, pasture, land, air or river, which is mostly formulated as “common-pool resources” or simply as “natural resources”, but it is a constitutive element of a society, in which a society cannot be thought of without that element. Second, this element of the society refers to a different type of property relationship (or a non-property relationship), which has an antagonistic difference with the capitalist property relations. This means that the “free access” to the commons is a *rationality* that is ontologically opposite to the property relations of the capital. Lastly, the class wars for the commons opens up a space for the discussion of understanding the separation and non-separation of the “doing and the deed” (Holloway, 2003: 2).

2. The New Enclosures

The historical enclosures can be understood as the “old enclosures” (Midnight Notes, 2001: 1) in the sense that there is the “new enclosures” (p. 4) or “neocolonial enclosure of commons” (Mies and Benholdt-Thomsen, 1999), which defines a specific historical process mostly related with the neoliberalisation that has been ongoing since 1970’s. The “new enclosures” work in a way similar to the “old enclosures”, primarily “by ending communal control of the means of subsistence” (Midnight Notes, 2001: 4). Moreover, the forms of these enclosures contain privatization, corporatization, liberalization, and commodification (Harvey 2003: 148). This process has been going on not only to expose the capitalist mode of production *outside* the capitalist world, but also to expose it within the capitalist world that was governing the commons with different means (Harvey, 2003: 158).

Harvey (2003) thinks that this process is simply the ongoing “primitive accumulation”, but it is awkward to call an ongoing process as “primitive or “original”. Therefore, he offers to “substitute these terms by the concept of ‘accumulation by dispossession’” (p. 144). Here, “accumulation” refers to the main characteristic of the capitalist mode of production: the production process that accumulates more capital, based on pre-accumulated capital. “Dispossession” refers to two different problems: first, the separation of labor from the means of production and people becoming dispossessed from the means of subsistence. Second, dispossession is a process that is made by “force”, which is the expropriation of labor from the land or separating the labor from their means of production. By using “dispossession”, Harvey refers to a process of re-production of separation and exploitation in every single productive act within the capitalist mode of production. In other words, dispossession is not only an act of being dispossessed from the land, but it is a fact that occurs repeatedly *in each singular production activity*.

The new enclosures or the accumulation by dispossession refers to the same understanding of the commons as a way of resources, as public assets, as services that has to be done by the public. In other words, this approach is still using the substantial ontology that reduces the commons into commodities, stock of resources, or assets. However, this is an economic and reductive understanding of the commons, which refers to commodity as the “resource of life” of the producer. There is a hidden presupposition in this understanding that the producer who has the property-right or usage-right over the commons uses this resource, like *consuming* it. However, this is a form of separation of labor from the means of production, *a priori*. In other words, this is another way of putting the question in the sphere of individualistic ontology.

Primitive accumulation separated the doing and the deed. Hence we have to ask a serious question in order to make the problem clear: what makes it possible for us to think of commons as *a resource* (a common-pool resource, public resource, natural resource etc) for the *doing act*? Does it become a resource for the individual appropriator? In other words, when we put the matter in this way, are we already presupposing *a* separation, which makes *the* separation possible? Whenever we divide the act between the doer (subject) and the done (object), it is clear that the separation that was promoted by the enclosures is possible, because the division between the subject and object is possible only in this ontology. So, the commons as common-pool resources are based on the modern ontology of the subject, which

already presupposes the separation between the doing and the done, subject and object, individual agent and society.¹

There are some different attempts to conceptualize the “natural resources” in the vocabulary of the commons. For example, Harvey (2003) calls land, air or water the “environmental commons” (p. 148), which is not owned according to a specific property regime, but is under attack by the enclosure process in terms of the commodification of nature. It is clear that an intensified “attack” on the *common entities* within the planet has been one of the strategies of the neoliberalisation of society for more than a decade. However, putting the matter as “common-pool resources” invites the problem of governance of these resources, not in terms of them being a part of the society, but in terms of them being commodity.

Massimo De Angelis (2004) criticizes the individualistic approach for it “engineered a justification for privatization of the commons” (p.58) by thinking of the commons without communities. Indeed, this was also the lack of relations and practices of the commoners. Moreover, Harvey (2011) claims that, thinking the commons as “natural resources” is wrong because “all resources are technological, economic, and cultural appraisals and therefore socially defined” (p. 103). In other words, there is not any *a priori* definition of a “resource” without the context. Something can be thought of as a resource only if it is defined socially. Thus the commons as resources are only valid under certain circumstances, which make them to be seen as resources.

This matter puts the emphasis on the “social reproduction” (De Angelis, 2004: 77): How would *the social* be produced and reproduced? The dominant mode of production determines the character of a social reproduction. If we were to produce the social in terms of the common, this would affect all our social relations and understanding of the practices. In other words, if the social were produced in terms of *the common*, the act of production would turn into *commoning*, namely the production of the common. In this case, we would not see the commons as commodities, but they would be socially defined as relations and practices. They would become a relation, an encounter without which a society would not be able to thought and understood.

¹This presupposition has a root in the ontology of property. The property regimes are based on the idea that there is always an ownership of something. This ownership is based on the appropriation of something as a possession: the nature, the power, the labor etc... I will discuss more on this issue in the fourth chapter. Moreover, for a more philosophical criticism of the separation between the doing and the done, see Nietzsche (1968).

Peter Linebaugh (2008) cautions us for taking commons as “natural resources”. For him, this is not only “misleading” but also “dangerous”: “the commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, an activity, rather than as a noun, a substantive” (p. 279). Then, we arrive at a point that suggests we think not only of the commons but also the commoning act of the commoners (p. 7). In this way, there appears a possibility to think of the commons not only in terms of commodity (as in the individualistic approach) but in terms of relations and practices. Understanding the commons as commoning practices of the commoners can only be possible if we use a relational ontology. As a result, by approaching the commons with a relational ontology, commons would only exist within the relations and practices of the commoners, in the act of *commoning*. Without this, we cannot think of such a thing as commons, no matter if it is “free-access” land or etc...

The act of “enclosure” has an implication on the productive forces that are based on the commons. Before the enclosures, we could not understand the “productive force” as a distinctive unit from its own labor and the means of production. The common land was a production tool, but it was hiding its own productive characteristics. In other words, the labor was a non-separate unit, which was not separated from her means of production. Indeed, this non-separate unity was containing both the labor and the land as a *common life-space* that was hiding the labor as an exploitable object. When the separation has occurred, the land and the labor became an exploitable unit. Thus the enclosure of the commons made us think of the commons as natural resources, the resource of the communities, populations and the capital. After the enclosure of the commons, the unity is destroyed. Now, we are able to talk about the labor and the land as two distinct, productive units: the former as the force turned into the wage-labor and the latter as reduced to the means of production. In other words, there is the separation of the labor from its means of production, the labor is turned into the wage-labor, and the life-space is turned into the means of production that is defined and rationalized in economic terms.

By putting the matter in this way, now, we cannot reduce the commodification of nature to a *policy over the natural resources* and commons to an “alternative policy” against this process (De Angelis, 2004: 76). On the contrary, because of *commoning*, commons are “social practices that are *alternatives* to capital (in the first place by posing a limit to it, *that at the same time* open a space for alternatives and their problematization)” (p. 76). The commoning practices have a huge impact on understanding the commons in a new sense. By expanding (or by discovering with a different ontology) the commons from “common-pool

resources” to the commoning practices and relations, we can find different kinds of commons and new enclosure acts that are to enclose these commons. Similarly, with the new enclosures, the meaning of the commons has been extended to what is produced in common, what is produced and reproduced day by day, and something that is not only a physical entity but more than it.

Within the new discourse on the commons, “the immateriality of the production” offers a new vision and opens up new possibilities of understanding what the commons is. In this way, concepts such as “language, agricultural and farming methods and skills of any kind”, so the cultural basis of any society, and genes, “the building blocks of life itself” (De Angelis, 2004: 81) are thought to be commons. In other words, the immaterial production of any kind of knowledge and culture is considered as commons. In a sense, what is “based on life and knowledge” can be taken “as commons” (p. 81) for they are produced within commoning practices. The commoning practices are, now, the biopolitical conditions of the production of commons.

3. The Logic of Separation

There is a rich debate on the characteristics of “primitive accumulation”. This debate is based on whether primitive accumulation is just a “historical event” that happened somewhere in history and now completed, or whether it is also a process that still continues, and that gives the capitalist mode of production its core character (Bonefeld, 2001; De Angelis, 2004; De Angelis and Harvie, 2014; Glassman, 2004; Harvey, 2003). For example, De Angelis (2004) summarizes the discussion as the following:

To simplify, the narrative goes something like this: *before capitalism* there were enclosures or ‘primitive accumulation’. These processes of expropriation are preconditions of capitalism because they *create* and develop markets for commodities such as labour power and land. Once the job is done, we can stop talking about enclosures (or primitive accumulation) and need to talk about ‘capital logic’. (De Angelis, 2004: 60)

This is a way of understanding the primitive accumulation “based upon predation, fraud, and violence to an ‘original stage’ that is considered no longer relevant” (Harvey, 2003: 144). Moreover, this is a linear way of understanding “primitive”, which is, here, used as an adjective corresponding “to a clear-cut temporal dimension that separates the past understood as *feudalism* from the future understood as *capitalism*” (De Angelis, 2004: 62).

This way of putting the matter corresponds to a criticism of what is understood as *capitalism*. De Angelis (2004) reminds us that, capital should not be thought as a “stock” or “commodity”, but as a social relation (p. 62). Then, “for primitive accumulation to be a precondition of accumulation, it must be a precondition of *the exercise of capital’s power*” (p. 62). As a result, “primitive accumulation” gives two emphases to its “so-called” meaning. First, it is “so-called” in the sense that it is not a “clean” process but a process of enforcement in different forms. Second, it is “so-called” in the sense that it did not *end* in the shores of history, but continues, for it is the foundational element of capitalist mode of production. Indeed, it is “a contribution to an understanding of the ‘materiality’ of social relations and subjectivity, and ultimately, despite appearances, to an understanding of the capitalist mode of production itself” (Read, 2002: 25). In other words, “it is possible to glimpse in Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation a ‘noneconomistic’ account of the mode of production in which the mode of production does not simply designate a particular economic relation which has its linear effects on other social relations, but rather is the dense point of articulation of power relations” (Read, 2002: 26).

Therefore, throughout the history of capital, there has been a period of intensified enclosures of the commons, which made the capitalist mode of production possible as the hegemonic mode of production in some places of the earth. Thus the “original” and “so-called” accumulation has a specific reference to that history as an event, but it is not “original” in the sense that it has already finished. Indeed, “it is the historical ‘act’ that constitutes the capitalist social relations as a whole” (Bonefeld, 2001: 7). While “the historical enclosures” implies a transformation process, the primitive accumulation implies something different:

[T]he expropriation and legislation necessary to destroy other economic and social relations in order to make them productive for capital. Thus, primitive accumulation becomes not only a cause of the capitalist mode of production but its effect. The two essential results of primitive accumulation—workers with only their labor-power to sell, and capital free to invest anywhere—are also effects of the capitalist mode of production’s encounter with other modes and economies. (Read, 2002: 36-77)

Both being the “cause and effect” of the capitalist mode of production, primitive accumulation gains a different character, rather than being an “originary” point or “question of genealogy”: being a social relation, “genealogy presents itself *continuously*” in the capitalist mode of production (De Angelis, 2004: 63). In other words, capital as a social

relation is “*ex-novo separation* between producers and means of production” which makes it constitute “itself necessarily as a social *force* in opposition to *other* social forces” (p. 63).

Therefore, what Marx calls the “so-called primitive accumulation” turns into a *continuous character of capital accumulation*, no matter it is done in different means or forms. De Angelis (2004) proposes that “*ex-novo separation*” occurs in two processes: First, “when capital identifies new spheres of life that it may colonize with its priorities” such as land enclosures, enclosures of water resources through privatization, enclosures of knowledge through enforcement of intellectual property rights (p. 67). Second, it occurs “where there are other social forces that are able to identify social spaces that have been previously normalized by capital’s commodity production as a possible space of an alternative to commodities, such as commons” (p.67-8). Whenever there is a relation between capital and labor, this relation will separate the doing and the deed: the worker from his means of production and the labor from its production activity.

What lies under the term “primitive accumulation” is thus the separation of labor from the means of production. This implies that if the capitalist mode of production exists and continues to our day, the separation and so the primitive accumulation continues: “Capitalist social relations are founded on the separation of labour from the means of production and this entails that capitalist accumulation rests on the continuously reproduced divorce of labor from her means” (Bonafeld, 2001: 3). This ends with a relational way of understanding capital and labor, the enclosures and the commons, and so the commoning practices. Separation of the doers from done (Holloway, 2003: 2) “is a common characteristic of *both* accumulation and primitive accumulation” (De Angelis, 2004: 63). Moreover, “the difference between accumulation and primitive accumulation is not a substantive one; rather, it is a difference in the conditions and forms in which this *separation* is implemented” (p. 63). Thus within this ontology, the separation cannot be thought in terms of a historical act or substantial ontology, but it is the very foundations and conditions of capitalist mode of production. It is what “forms the concept of capital” (p. 66)

This way of understanding the continuous character of primitive accumulation begs another question about the separation: when does it really occur? As we have seen, it cannot occur before *capitalism* for capital is not a thing but a social relation. In other words, it has to be *occurring* when there is the relation and practices of capitalist mode of production. (De Angelis, 2004: 67) By claiming that the *ex-novo separation* is not an historical event but a *process*, we arrive at a point where the “enclosure of the commons” is a contemporary fact with different forms and tools. Bonafeld (2001) claims that, “while the capitalist production

and exchange relations subsist through the commodity form, primitive accumulation is the secret history of the determination of human purposeful practice in the form of a wage-labouring commodity” (p. 5). In other words, we can claim that separation occurs whenever the production of commodity is realized through the accumulation of capital, by turning labor into wage-workers.

This understanding of the primitive accumulation opens up a different understanding of *capitalism*, as a “mode of production” that is based on an entire series of complex factors (including the state, law, and ideology) which are necessary to the functioning of capital (Read, 2002: 39). In other words, *the capitalism* understood as a *mode of production* refers to relations between the forces and modes of productions (p. 25) that forms “a conception of the social totality, encompassing the economic, political, and social relations within a given historical period” (Negri, 1991; in Read, 2002: 25). Understanding the world from the perspective of “mode of production” opens up a space to see other social forces that are not based on the capitalist mode of production but within the dominion of capitalism. In other words, this way of understanding *capitalism* makes it as a relation, but not as a “closed system”, a thing or an object, but a lively production of the labor, the enclosure of the *commonwealth* produced in commoning practices through different tools and means (Hardt and Negri, 2009).

Continuous character of primitive accumulation implies the continuous production of commons, in terms of commoning practices. In this sense, “the common is not [...] something extant once upon a time that has since been lost, but something that, like the urban commons, is continuously being produced” (Harvey, 2011: 105). So, whenever there is the production of commons and its being captured in the commodity form, we can think of the “enclosures of the commons” as a form of separation. The production of the common, which is the commoning, is prior to the enclosure of the commons. Moreover, we can think of the “new enclosures” as “directed towards the fragmentation and destruction of ‘commons’, that is, social spheres of life whose main characteristic is to provide various degrees of protection from the market” (De Angelis, 2004: 75). Therefore, what is expropriated, commodified and put in the market are not only the natural resources or natural assets, but the *social wealth* or the *commonwealth* that is produced within the commons, in common, and by the commoners. In other words, “capitalist accumulation is nothing other than primitive accumulation continued onto the shop floor, thus nothing other than a continuation of the modification of violence begun with ‘bloody legislation’ and the enclosure acts” (Read, 2002: 38).

There are certain consequences of putting the matter in this way. First, we are to accept that commons as common-pool resources might still exist in capitalism, and this can be the reason for the “new enclosure” process. Second, the production of the common, “like the urban commons, is continuously being produced” but the problem is they are “continuously being enclosed and appropriated by capital in its commodified and monetary form” (Glassman, 2006: 610). As a result, capitalism can only be understood as the *continuous becoming of separation*.

4. Becoming a Class

Now, basing our argument on relational ontology, we have arrived at a new conceptualization or understanding of capitalism as relations and practices. From this basis, the relations, activities, practices and encounters of agents within this society unfold as the relations of classes, as their becoming-class.

Separation of the “doing and the done” refers to the development of capitalist society in the sense that it is the emerging of the bourgeoisie as the hegemonic class and the proletariat as the propertyless class. Hence this is not just a historical fact or an event that appeared just for once in history. In other words, the relational understanding of the primitive accumulation opens up a space for us to understand the formation of classes as becoming-class, as the production of subjectivity. Hence the continuous character of capitalist accumulation implies the continuous character of the formation of class, as *becoming-class*.

The history of becoming classes in capitalism can be reduced to the encounter of two agents, their relations and practices in concrete material conditions: “on the one hand, the owners of money, means of production, means of subsistence” and “on the other hand, free labourers, the sellers of their own labour power, and therefore the sellers of labour” (Marx, 1977: 668). For Marx, these are the fundamental conditions of the capitalist mode of production, in which the polarization between the classes has become (p. 668).

In this sense, we cannot take class as a simple economic fact or a sociological reality. Class, is made of relations and practices that forms subjectivity. Wage-labor is, for example, a class that is “normalised to the capitalist market” by “the construction of ‘economic man’ normalised to markets and enclosures” which is the “result of policies emerged from theoretical frameworks such as economics which work on the *assumption* of such a normalised subject” (De Angelis, 2004: 82). It was a “forcible creation” by “the bloody discipline” with which “the disgraceful action of the State which employed the police to

accelerate the accumulation of capital by increasing the degree of exploitation of labour” (Marx, K. 694). *Homo economicus* is the rationality of this subjectivity:

Capital is a process of separation. It separates the done from the doing, and therefore the doers from the done and from their own doing. In the same movement, the doers are separated from the wealth they have created and from their ability to do-differently. We are made poor and robbed of our subjectivity. Capital is a process of separating us from the richness of human social creation, from our humanity, from our dignity, from the possibility of seeing a different film tomorrow. (Holloway, 2003: 2)

As we have seen above, this subjectivity is produced through different relations and practices, and encounters between different agents. It is the production of history, class and the relations, based on the conditions of separation. In this sense, *encounter* is the basis of the production of subjectivity that implies the contingency of different encounters that make the necessary to become:

[A] process, and not a simple transition from contingency to necessity, because the different elements of a mode of production—the social, technological, and political conditions—have independent histories and relations, and this independence threatens any mode of production with its dissolution or transformation. (Read, 2002: 30)

In other words, doing things in *a specific way* that consist of different encounters between different subjects constituted a class that is called the bourgeoisie. The logic of encounters, detours and effects, thus “replaces the teleological logic of intentions and their realization underlying classical political economy” (Read, 2002: 31). This is a move from the “materialism of teleology” to the “materialism of the event or the encounter” (Read, 2002: 30). Thus the capitalist mode of production “is a relation, or an ensemble of relations” (Althusser and Balibar, 1975; in Read, 2002: 31). I think, this is what Michel Foucault (2007) calls as “historical *a priori*”. In this understanding, history cannot be understood in terms of the intentions and desires of subjects, but relations, practices and encounters of agents make history by producing their subjectivity or conforming to a specific subjectivity at a time.

In this way, we can think of intentions and desires in relation to practices and relations. In other words, we can reduce these intentions and desires, ideas and thoughts to relations and practices. In this sense, “Marx’s critique of so called primitive accumulation begins to point to a specific problem within the mode of production—the manner in which a mode of production is constitutive and constituted by desires, forms of living, and intentions: subjectivity” (Read, 2002: 35-36). We cannot understand capitalist accumulation and the capitalist mode of production by the intentions and desires of singular agents, or their design

of actions. Understanding capitalist accumulation within a relational ontology leads us to the discussion of the production of subjectivity, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

To sum up, it can be claimed that our move from defining commons to defining the enclosure of the commons showed us that this act of enclosure consists of the fundamental characteristics of capitalist accumulation, which was called “primitive”, but which is the continuous character of capitalist accumulation. Capital is not a stock of objects, but it is a social relation based on the production of subjectivity. This relation is formulated as the capitalist mode of production. Capitalist mode of production has three fundamental characteristics: the first is the separation. Second, there is the subjection: the production of subjectivity. Third, there is the encounter of different classes and different modes of productions. That is, it is the encounter of the “social totality” of subjectivities.

III. RATIONALITY OF COMMONING

With the critical investigation on the commons literature, we have reached a point where we can find an alternative understanding of the commons by using a relational ontology, departing from the relations and practices of singular beings that we called “commoning”. We have reached this point by critically investigating the “individualistic approach” and Marx-inspired thinking, especially the unfolding character of the commons as a concept. In other words, studies and discussions on the commons as a concept made it possible to think of the commons within a different ontology.

Especially, the act of separation is one of the key elements in understanding the distinction between two ontological standpoints. Indeed, the act of separation “appears” only when we reduce it to practices, activities, relations and encounters of agents. This is a kind of reduction, which aims to reduce a concept into actions and practices. In this way, it is possible to understand the separation as the production of subjectivity, including subjection to a mode of production and producing alternative subjectivities that are resisting to this subjection.

In this chapter, I will discuss the contemporary conditions of subjectivity production and the political sphere in which this subjectivity shows itself. They both resemble the two aspects of the politics of commons: first, they are the conditions in which politics of commons emerge. Second, they give us the possibility of thinking of an alternative definition of *the political* that politics of commons affect. Both are based on the rationality of commoning, namely the practices and relations that make the commoning act, and make the politics of commons into *a new way of politics*.

In the first section, I will discuss the conditions of the production of subjectivity by focusing on the contemporary biopolitical conditions. Basing my argument on the biopolitical production, I will discuss the multitude as a philosophical concept and the project of multitude as a way of understanding the expressions of subjectivity production. Then, I will discuss how the multitude is expressed in terms of commons communities.

In the second section, I will discuss how the formation of the political sphere can be possibly articulated by the rationality of the commons. In order to do that, I will discuss the public/private dichotomy, the problem of the commodification of power in terms of ownership, and the governmental logic of the commons. In this way, I determine the key

problems of the politics of commons, which will lead us to the rationality of the politics of commons in the next chapter.

Throughout this work, I use the concept rationality referring to a specific way of thinking that shapes our practices and relations. Moreover, it is a way of interpreting life, with relations, desires and ideas. Thus it is not something that is enforced from above, but our set of practices and relations, ideas and desires conform to a specific type of rationality, or we create a new way of thinking and interpretation of the world with our practices and relations. Therefore, when we discuss the rationality of commoning, it is be rationality based upon the relations, practices, ideas and desires of commoning practices, which shape our way of thinking and interpreting the world.

A. SUBJECTIVITY

1. Biopolitical Production

As we have seen in the previous chapter, commons are the productions of commoning practices, based on the relations and encounters of singular beings. To understand this activity, I would like to discuss its ontology in more detail. In other words, to understand the rationality of commoning, I would like to conduct an investigation into the conditions of the commoning, the biopolitical conditions.

Before going deeper, we have to make a conceptual difference between *the commons* and *the common* (Hardt, 2010a:350). As we have seen, the unfolding of the commons as a concept led us to the framework of commoning, which is a way of understanding commons within a relational ontology. Hence we have to distinguish the commoning as the production of the common. In other words, when we talk about commoning practices, we are referring to the practices of *production of the common* and *production in common*. The former refers to the production of subjectivity based on the commoning practices while the latter refers to the conditions of this production. Thus distinction between the common and the commons will not refer to a strict one distinction but I will use them interchangeably and will indicate whenever there is a distinction.

In this case, commoning is the production of the common(s) and production in common. If commons is not a commodity but a relation, it should be produced. This production has a twofold character: in the first place, it is the autonomous production of the labor that produces life in common, which is expropriated by the capital, by different forms of expropriation. Second, it is the conditions of production of the common, which has been becoming more common at the world scale. We will call this as the biopolitical conditions of the production in common.

The biopolitical production refers to a form of production that lets us to think *the production* beyond economic terms. Indeed, it is the “social production” of not only “the material goods but also the production of communications, relationships, and forms of life” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: xv). This social production takes place in “our communication, collaboration, and cooperation” (p. xv) which are not only the conditions of the production of social relations, but also its consequences for the production of the social. In other words, production in common is the conditions of the production of the common, in terms of social production.

Gigi Roggero (2010) expresses the conditions of biopolitical production of the common as the following: “the common has a double status” (Roggero, 2010: 358) that “it is both the form of production and the source of new social relations; it is what living knowledge produces and what capital exploits” (p. 360). Moreover, “the common is not a natural good” (p. 361). In other words, we do not focus on the common as the commodity. Rather, what we are focusing is the “relations of production” (p. 361).

Hardt and Negri (2004) propose that the common that is becoming the center of production is related with the transformation of the conditions of social production. The “immaterial labor” is the new hegemonic mode of production, which is “the production of ideas, knowledges, and affects” that “directly produces social relationships” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 66). The dominant form of labor, the “immaterial labor” determines every production in terms of its *common character*, producing and distributing itself, which expands the notion of economy: it is what “produces all facets of social life, economic, cultural, and political” (p. xvi) in the sense that it becomes the *production of the life itself*.

In this sense, immaterial labor is a way of understanding the production within a biopolitical vision. It is the biopolitical production that “is oriented toward the creation of forms of social life” (Hardt and Negri, 2004; 66). In other words, in the contemporary society “labor” does not create only material goods (which refers to the economic reduction of the production) “but also relationships and ultimately social life itself” (p. 109). This way of understanding the production is *biopolitical*, which “thus indicates that the traditional distinctions between the economic, the political, the social, and the cultural become increasingly blurred” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 109; and Hardt, 2010b: 267).

The biopolitical production, then, becomes the conditions of the production of life in every aspect. It is both the production of capitalism, as a “one world”, which Hardt and Negri (2001) call the *Empire*. For them, the Empire it is the conditions of the labor that is the productive force of contemporary world. In other words, the “one world” is both the becoming-one world of the conditions of the production of common, and the forces (like the Empire) that are based on the enclosure of this production (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 114). In this way, it becomes possible to understand the “economy” beyond its “restricted meaning of the term around commodity production” (Özgün, 2010: 378). The life is the production in common, and the economy is the economy of every aspect of life in the biopolitical conditions.

Thus when we think of the production, we are thinking of the *production of life*. The conditions of this production are based on the common. Moreover, the biopolitical production

is resulted in the production of the common, which seems to be a tautology: the common is both the conduction of the production and its results. Hence this can be also understood as the direct and autonomous production of life as subjectivity: “who we are, how we view the world, how we interact with each other are all created through this social, biopolitical production” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 66). Therefore, the biopolitical production of the common is the production of subjectivity.

2. The Multitude

The biopolitical production leads us to the *production in common*. The biopolitical conditions of production are not subjected to us, but we make these conditions, namely the production of life in common, possible. Then, we have to understand this “we” in terms of the production of subjectivity.

Methodologically, individualistic approach depends on the individual-society distinction *a priori*, on behalf of its individualistic ontology. In this case, the unit of analysis is the individual, and what has been constructed as a narrative departing from the individual does not alter its ontological basis, no matter that it arrives at the collective or not. In other words, the production of subjectivity within the individualistic approach is the production of *being* (as a subject or an entity), which takes the individual agent as its departing point. On the contrary, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the relational ontology reduces the “subject” into its relations and practices. In this way, we do not focus on a subject of being, but on the becoming-subjectivity. Thus we talk about the subjectivity only when it actualizes in relations and practices.

This methodological distinction is important because it defines our entry point to the ontology of the subjectivity, which we will propose as always relational. Indeed, we can talk about the ontology of subjectivity only in the relations and practices of agents in a given context. In other words, it is “a rethinking of social subjectivity not as subsumed under the image of a necessary Subject, but as the encounter of a *multitude* of partialities in search of some forms of commonality” (Barchiesi, 2003: 6). This “encounter” of partialities is the space or the *areality* in which singular beings are exposed to outside, as “exposing-sharing”, which is the “being-in-common” (Nancy, 1990: 29). In this “areality” of “exposing-sharing”, there is the encounter, collaboration and production of social relations. The areality of these relations and practices is the “place” where we begin our investigation into subjectivity. Thus in this

case, for example, no subject exists as *the proletariat* before the production, and there is no class struggle before the becoming-class-struggle.

In this sense, there is not any concept of ontology that would represent this areality in terms of a subject. The multitude of relations and encounters, and production of subjectivities are not representable within the vocabulary of the Subject. We have to use a concept that would grasp this characteristic of non-representation in order to represent this discussion. In other words, departing from the “tautology of the common”, the concept that would reflect the subjectivities in general has to contain these characteristics and qualities.

The multitude is a philosophical term that aims to represent what is non-representable: the multiplicity of partialities that are in relation with each other forming infinite forms and encounters, which is impossible to represent in the *modern political field*. On the other hand, encounters and productions of subjectivities are represented in forms of political parties, organizations, unions, governments, NGOs etc... The assumption of these organizations is mostly the representation of the “one” instead of the multiplicity, no matter how their representation expresses a multiplicity of discourses and demands. This is the foundational problem of *the political*, which unifies, codifies and subjectifies the multiplicity, gives a name, and creates representation tools.

Hardt and Negri (2001, 2004, and 2009) call this totality of non-representable multitude as *the multitude*. The multitude is the “pre-political subjectivity” (Bailey and Mattei, 2013: 970) in the sense that it is not a term of representative politics (Tormey, 2005) of the mainstream political field. In this way, the multitude is a concept that will not only express the pre-political as potentiality, but also expresses *directly* what is not representable *as* non-representable. Indeed, the multitude is a concept that grasps the meaning of the pre-politics: the production of the common as a theoretical understanding *a priori* to becoming-political. Thus multitude is a generic term, *a priori* to the becoming of the multitude in its experience and its subjectification in different categories, classes or identities.

Hardt and Negri (2004) make a distinction between two meanings of multitude, one as *the ontological* and the other as *the historical* (p. 221). In their understanding, we cannot “conceive our social being without” the ontological multitude. However, the historical multitude “is political, and it will require a political project to bring it into being”. This can be thought as the pre-political multitude expressing itself as a political project that resembles the “double temporality” of the multitude: “always-already and not-yet” (p. 221-222).

On this philosophical basis, we can understand our social being as the relations of singular beings producing in common, or the multiplicity of singularities that are “a social

subject whose difference cannot be reduced to sameness, a difference that remains different” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 99). In other words, “a multitude is an irreducible multiplicity”, that means, “the singular social differences that constitute the multitude must always be expressed and can never be batted into sameness, unity, identity, or indifference” (p. 105). In other words, the multitude reflects itself directly *as it is*. It is not a unity, sameness, a class, a category, or any other concept that reduces its multiplicity. The multitude is the multitude.

Moreover, there is the “becoming-multitude” beyond the *a priori* multitude, which is a biopolitical concept appropriate at the times of the conditions of biopolitical production. In other words, we can think of the multitude as a concept of subjectivity, which reflects the production of subjectivity *directly*, not reducing itself to a set of social categories. The multitude expresses what itself is directly: the *difference in itself* (Tormey, 2005) within the production of the common. Hardt and Negri (2004) compare the concept with some other political subject categories such as *the people*, *the masses*, and *the working class* in order to underline what the political multitude would mean. “The people”, for them, is a “unitary concept” that reduces the diversity in a “single identity”. Moreover, “the essence of the masses is indifference: all differences are submerged and drowned in the masses”(p. xiv). At last, “the concept of the working class has come to be used as an exclusive concept, not only distinguishing the workers from the owners who do not need to work to support themselves, but also separating the working class from others who work” (p. xiv). On the contrary, the multitude, as it is “becoming-political”, is “an open, inclusive concept” that reflects all the differences, colors, and multiplicity of the multitude (p. xiv).

In this way, the multitude is both the political ontology and the subjectivity of social being. The pre-political multitude as a political ontology and becoming-multitude as a political subject, thus reflects its conditions of production, production in common and producing the common. What is “shared” in common, as a “political body”, is not an essential quality or a unitary identity (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 100). In other words, the ontology of the multitude as the production of the common(s) is not something that can be reducible to a unity. It has to be always thought in terms of its expansion, in the production of subjectivity that is *a priori* exposing its limits. It is always the becoming-multitude, which cannot be thought in the ontology of the Subject.

Hardt and Negri (2004) conceptualize “the singular being” as *singularity*. In this way, they claim, “the multitude replaces the contradictory couple identity-difference with the complementary couple commonality-singularity” (p. 217-218). This is the ontological basis for the extension of the common. First, the commonality does not depend on the reduction of

the “difference” into an “identity”, but it is a concept that depends on the communication and collaboration of the singularities. Second, the communication and the collaboration are the practices that are extending the singularities. Although the singularities are irreducible, acting in common is the areality of going beyond the limit of the singular, which can only be thinkable in terms of becoming. Thus the “multitude is the singularities that act in common” which is based on the idea that “there is no conceptual or actual contradiction between singularity and commonality” (p. 105).

The production of the common as the encounter and productive activity of the singularities still does not answer the question of “what is the multitude” as a political subjectivity. However, the rationality of the political project that depends on the production of the common alters the question in a radical way that the question is now “what can the multitude become?” (Hardt and Negri, 2004: 105). As I proposed above, the multitude as a pre-political ontology expresses the common conditions of production, namely, the biopolitical production. Thus the becoming-political of the multitude has to have *innumerable forms and modes of subjectivity production* that would reflect the expression of multitude in terms of *the political*. What is important in this point is that, the methodology of understanding the political is radically altered, liberated from the modern dichotomies of subject-object, difference-identity, social-political-economical; and expresses directly its conditions of production as the conditions of subjectivity production.

3. Commons and Communities

Community is an ambiguous term that has different connotations throughout the history of the concept.² In this work, I will refer to the “commons communities” in terms of a non-essentialist understanding, which might be a basis of “counterpower” or “life forms”. In this sense, community would be “a space in which global capitalist strategies become recognizable and intelligible at the specific territorial level that today constitutes their main terrain of implementation” (Barchiesi, 2003: 5). This kind of understanding of the community is potentially a way to go beyond the essentialist understanding of the community (Nancy, 1990).

The commonality of these communities is not based in their sharing something, but being in the interaction, engaging in communication, and having existence in common, as the

² To follow this discussion, see: Agamben (2007); Anderson (1983); Esposito (2010); Nancy (1990).

conditions of very subjectivity. We can call these as the “commons community” (Bailey and Mattei, 2013: 1009), that are based on the concrete relations and possibilities of becoming. In these communities, the life is defined around the “social relations, spaces of dialogue and cultural practices where this connection takes shape in the interaction of everyday experiences” (Barchiesi, 2003: 5). In this way, the political mobilization and the production of life becomes inseparable, as it is the production of subjectivity.

The defense of the commons as a way of politics has put attention to the community as *a new sphere* for the social production and organization. First, it can be said that the community as a political sphere is a *fact*, because it has emerged as a fact, but not from imagination. However, when we enter the sphere of politics as the organization of the community, the community becomes something different from just a fact. Therefore, here, I will try to understand, why we are focusing on the community, rather than class, gender, or a nation as a unit of investigation of politics.

First, community gives us a possibility to understand the production in terms of relational ontology. The commons community is closely related with the production of the common in a concrete livelihood, based on practices and relations. As it is about the practices and relations, the community becomes a concept about the production that is a “more organic, intuitive, lived-in” (De Marcellus, 2003: 3) way of conceptualizing the space of relations. In this sense, it is the production of the common, which defines the community.

Within the anti/alter-globalization struggles, community has appeared as the site of “domination of global capital, defining potential patterns for collective subjectivity formation” (Barchiesi, 2003: 2). In other words, the concrete and specific communities were implying the global character of the resistance, and projecting *the commons community* as a form of subjectivity produced *vis-a-vis* the capitalist world. Then, the community becomes also the name of subjectivity that is formed within the resistance.

However, the community as a concept has some potential risks. First of all, “definition of community necessitates the definition of what is *common* among them, yet, it does not tell us anything about the *relations* among them” (De Angelis, 2003: 10). Indeed, this definition of the common has the risk to fix the common not as something in terms of the production but in terms of an essentialist understanding: nation, gender, religion, class, etc... The commons communities are not the ones that take something “essential” as their common. Moreover, there is another way of understanding the common in the community, such that it can be the temporary common of a business community, academic community, neighborhood community etc... (De Angelis, 2003: 10). So, while we are discuss the community, there is a

risk of understanding it in terms of a group of people who share something in common, which might be an essential feature of these people (like religion, nation, gender) or a temporary feature of what they share (like being in business, having the same work, and etc).

In this sense, commons community is not a community that shares an essential feature or something random like a place or an occupation. In other words, they do not make a community for they just “share” a sphere of place, in which they only “share” the atmosphere they breathe. In definition, this is not a commons community, but it is *a group of people*, randomly sharing something, which is in the sense, randomly common. On the contrary, common communities are “the basis of people's power and sovereignty” (Mies and Benholdt-Thomsen, 1990). Singular beings produce, collaborate, and communicate in the communities. They produce in common and they are commoning their productive powers, their space and time. In other words, “communities are social networks of mutual aid, solidarity, and practices of human exchange” (De Angelis, 2003: 10) which is the basis of subjectivity production. In this way, communities are connected to other spaces of production, other communities and networks that go beyond the local. It is a “trans-local” space that invents a new form of locality (De Angelis, 2003: 12). Thus the commons communities have the tendency to point outside of their borders to gain much more from the commonwealth, which is the production of other commons communities (p. 12). In this way, commons communities are *trans-local*.

However, as Caffentzis and Federici (2014) reminds us, “*commons are not given, they are produced*” for they are “constitutive social practices” but not just “material things” (p. i101). This is also *the reproduction of our life by collective labor*. The production of the common and the reproduction of life should involve “*a common good, in the form of a shared natural or social wealth*” and as it is clear, it must be controlled by “us” but not by the state (p. i102). Then, it is not a shared identity or space, but something *produced in common* within the commons communities: “*Commons require a community*. This community should not be selected on the basis of any privileged identity, but rather on the basis of the care-work done to reproduce the commons and regenerate what is taken from them” (p. i102). Therefore, the production of the commons becomes a process; namely, the commons and the commons communities are not *given*, but they are, same as the primitive accumulation, *a continuous process* that is the production of subjectivity.

Then, the commons communities can be understood as *a political sphere* that has the potential for *another rationality of politics*. This is a political sphere of the multitude, expressing itself in biopolitical conditions of subjectivity production. In this way, the

community becomes the space of politics, the actualization of relations and practices where subjectivity production occurs.

In conclusion, it can be said that the biopolitical conditions of the production of common is the basis of the production of subjectivity, which can be conceived in the spatiality of the community. The continuous character of commoning puts the subjectivity production at the heart of *the political*. The production of subjectivity is the product of the multitude, in terms of expressing itself in its own forms. The commons community, containing the two qualities of the production of subjectivity, namely, the biopolitical conditions and the production in common, becomes the sphere of the political as well. The basic activity that is “essential” in this community is the production of life, in terms of biopolitics. In this way, we can understand the community as the space of commoning where the rationality of the commons appears in relations and practices.

B. THE POLITICAL SPHERE

1. Beyond Private and Public

For the common understanding of the political, the politics takes place in the sphere of *the public* or *the private*. The public or private distinction is also related to property and the governance of production. The private is understood as “private property” that is outside the sphere of the “public”. The public is mostly associated with the “state”, which is the ultimate owner of the “common”.

In most cases, commons are understood within the public, in which they are thought to be belonging to the public in terms of ownership. In other words, commons are owned by the public and so the state is the governing force behind this ownership. In this sense, commons are thought to be a derivative of the public-private dichotomy, formulated in terms of property relations, and taken as a commodity, which does not have an individual owner.

On the contrary, the rationality of commoning implies a different possibility, in which we can think of the commons in terms of the “common”. This implies a vision that, when we refer to the commons, we think “neither the private property of capitalism nor the public property of socialism” (Hardt, 2010a: 346). In other words, the rationality of commoning, as an ontological difference to the rationality of property, has to be formulated in a *new political sphere*, in a new terrain, and as a new basis of action, that defines *the political* as something different. *The political* implied by the politics of commons must be based on the practices and relations within the communities, between the localities (or trans-localities) and inside the everyday life practices and relations, which we have conceptualized as commoning. Thus it has to reflect the biopolitical character of subjectivity production. This vision planes the political sphere in the sense that we are within the “below” and discussing the possibility of the political from *the below* to the below.³

The public-private dichotomy reduces the “constituent power” into the realm of “individual private property relations” (Bailey and Mattei, 2013: 973) and *the people* becomes the actor of this modern political construction as “a unified political entity constituted by the constitutional form, not something that has an *a priori* status” (p. 970). Hence what is behind the people is *the multitude*, “the pre-political form of ‘the people’ whose constituent power is reduced in the modern political “above” of the “public” as “the people” (p. 970) This case

³ Here, I am using “below” as an expression in order to make a distinction between the “above” that is generally associated with the state and governments.

reflects the enclosure of the commons in terms of the political: The multitude produces the common and governs the commons. Property relations of capitalism forces the multitude to produce in the capitalist mode of production, and the multitude is subjected in the name of “the people” by representing itself in the parliament of the “public”, or make itself as an agent in the market, become the capitalist entrepreneur subject. Thus the history of the multitude is the history of the enclosure and expropriation of the common.

In this sense, the rationality of modern politics is based on a political ontology taking the individual as its standpoint. In the sense, the modern political ontology is based on the “universalizing combination of individualism with the State/private property dichotomy” (Mattei, 2012: 3). This “dominant view of the world” is “the ideological choice of the individualistic tradition” that is based on “the rule of a subject (an individual, a company, the government) over an object (a private good, an organization, a territory)” that deduces the power into the centralization of the decision making process (Mattei, U. 4). In this case, power is commodified, and the political is understood and structured within this individualistic ontology.

Then, when we think of the politics of commons, we have to problematize the modern ontology of politics, which is founded around the public/private dichotomy. For example, can we think of *the political* of the commons as a “third way” to the “neither public nor private” (Ostrom, 2012) discussion? Alternatively, does it refer to another definition of the political based on a different ontology?

If we follow the ontology based on the production of common, namely the rationality of commoning, we can say that an alternative understanding of the political should be based on this “commons framework”. The collaboration of commoning can define the new ontology of politics based on the commons framework (Federici, 2010). The rationality of commoning is based on every day practices and relations of the commoners, which takes place in the “below”. In this sense, the commons framework of the political is related with “democratic constitutionalism” of the people from the below, which is an opposition “to the imperial project of ‘constitutional democracy’” (Bailey and Mattei, 2013: 975) from the above. In other words, an “institutional imagination” can be formulated as a true alternative to the modern political framework that defines *the political* beyond the public/private dichotomy and guarantees the democratic participation (p. 1005-6). Therefore, within a relational ontology, a constitutional democracy would mean a social process base on the subjectivity production. The commoning practices are definitive relations of the political sphere, in which

production is the biopolitical production of the society. This brings us to the problem of ownership.

2. Beyond ownership

The public and private distinction, in its essence, refers to property relations. By property relations, I mean the property of anything: the ownership of the means of production, city centers, forests, rivers, labor, house, labor, people, love etc... Therefore, whenever we talk about the private-public dichotomy, we are within the context of ownership.

Some of the commons literature refers to the commons as the “communal ownership” of resources. In this way, it falls in the trap of the “public”, or the “global”. For example, when we think of a forest as property of the public, there appears the problem of access, governance, and production. How can we define the practices of the communities related with the forest, if we take them as two separate entities, *a priori*? Who will govern the commons, if they are separate from the concept of the community? Which regulations will be held for access? What will be the criteria to decide on the territory? The general answers to these questions would be the “government” referring to the state control, if they belong to the “public”. This is the reflection of the public-private debate onto the ownership problem of the commons. Indeed, this is the core problem relying under the commons debate: what is the rationality of governing? Which type of ownership will be the determinant if any?

The logic of property relations is based on a simple deduction: there has to be ownership. A formulation of collective ownership would fit best for the commons, but the “collective” here implies a group of people, or simply a community, which is still within the logic of property relationships. Indeed, this logic is based on a basic fact: the commodification of governance appeared as public or private, which alters the understanding of power as ownership. In this sense, the governance can only be owned, and the government represents this ownership. In other words, it is the commodification of the governing as a self or collectively owned property, which made the understanding of “collective governance” and property possible. Even the communal property, in this sense, is based on the individualistic ontology of ownership.

On the contrary, the common refers to something beyond ownership. As Hardt (2010a) suggests, we have to think beyond relations of possession and give up regarding the world and ourselves as property (p. 352). *The common* is a ground for thinking outside property logic, the individualistic approach and ownership vocabulary (Mattei, 2012). Within

the rationality of commoning, we would see ourselves not as the owners of the commons, but our relations, encounters and interactions will be on focus. In other words, we would “see to what extent we are the commons, in as much as we are part of an environment, an urban or rural ecosystem” (p. 7). The relational ontology makes it possible to think in these terms, such that we think of the subject as the part of the object: “commons are inseparably related and linked to individuals, communities, and the ecosystem itself” (p. 7).

Dolenec and Žitko (2013) claim that this is an approach “much closer to Ostrom’s interpretation of the commons” as she “was centrally concerned with principles of governance, not ownership regimes” (p. 7). By understanding commons not as a commodity but as *a relationship*, we have the chance to understand the rationality of the commons in terms of relations and practices. This would reveal the relationships “based on inclusion, access and community duties” whereas the sovereignty based on public/private ownership becomes an *economical-quantitative* category based on exclusion. This exclusion is “rhetoric of individual-centered rights and the violent concentration of power into a few hands” (Mattei, 2012: p. 8). The move from the logics of the ownership to the logics of “governance” can be the base of our critique of ownership, which is the fundamental principle of the public/private dichotomy. The ownership refers to something frozen: a closed, accumulated type of labor; a closed history, as accumulation. In this case, the essence of ownership is accumulation. Thus the formation of a society based on accumulation is a society of essence: it is based on the reproduction of itself, from its own image and foundations.

The logic of governance is similar to the Marx’s (1977) *use-value* distinction. Commoning is based on the use-value, giving priority to the production in common and production of the common. In this sense, it is always based on the collaboration and the communication of singular beings, which is the act of governing the production of the commons. Thus the production of the common forces us to think beyond the vocabulary of ownership, as social relations, and the power of people governing the commons. This is the rationality of commoning showing itself as the governmental logic of what is produced in common, as opposed to the commodified image of the power in terms of property relations.

3. The Governmental Logic of the Commons

The practices within the commons communities, the rationality of commoning imply a value system that is ontologically different from capitalism. First, this system is based on the production of the common, based on the common/s. Second, this system is based on access to

and distribution of the commons based in common. Third, this system implies a modality of politics, or a new definition of what the political is. With combination of these characteristics, there appears a new question: how can we think of the commoning as a rationality that is defined in governmental terms?

This question forces us to think on the governance of the commons. By the “governance” of the commons, I refer to the *governing logic* that rationalizes the practices and relations developed under the production of the common and producing in common. In other words, it is the question of how the subjectivity is produced, rather than the conditions of the subjectivity production. In this sense, the rationality of the commons does not refer to a system of governing practices that reflects a power network, but refers to the collaborative relations of the commoners that govern the production of subjectivity.

Because the commoning practices are not based on the logic of ownership, there should be something different, functioning as rationality. This “something” must take the relations and practices as the only valid activity. In other words, the value determining all the productive activity must be based on the commoning activity. Hence this determination should be the logical determination of this activity in the sense that it makes it possible to identify with the subjectivity that is based on the rationality of commoning. Thus commoning is not only the description of a specific kind of activity but also the activity of describing itself. It is this rationality functioning as giving a meaning to the relations and practices of singular beings, which are involved in a common subjectivity production.

Indeed, the commoning practices functioning as rationality addresses the issue of governance by highlighting the problem of power relations. Dolenc and Žitko, departing from Foucault’s (2009) notion of “governmentality” point to the formulation of commons as a new vision beyond a claim for a new political space (Dolenc and Žitko, 2013). In this case, commons does not only stand as a critique of the political, but it also starts to define a new understanding of the political. In this way, it becomes possible to move from power that is understood as commodity to a definition of power that is reduced to relations/power relations (Foucault, 1978). The commons, then, “validates new schemes of human relations, production and governance – one might call it ‘commonance,’ or the governance of the commons” (Bollier and Helfrich, 2012: 5). In other words, the problem of governmentality, governance of the commons, or the “commonance” is at the core of *the political* beyond the state and the market.

Moreover, this way of defining the political liberates politics, which is based on the identity. The subjectification of the singular beings under identities is the process of

individualization of the multitude that destroys the common of commoning. In this way, competition becomes the dominant worldview as opposed to cooperation, collaboration and communication. Thus the power turns to be a commodity with which one class of identity declares its sovereignty on the other. On the contrary, commons vision does not act on the identification as the individualization of singularities. Rather, it is a “worldview” against the competitive world, which traces the rationality and functions as commoning the world in its difference.

In conclusion, it can be said that the rationality of commoning that first appeared as a practice has now become a *framework* for the political that implies a new vocabulary to understand the space and agents of *the political*. In other words, it is rationality in the sense that it focuses on the governmental logic of the production of subjectivities, which is based on the common practices and relations of singular beings.

IV. RATIONALITY OF THE POLITICS OF COMMONS

The affects of the rationality of commoning can be traced in the *politics of commons*. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the rationality of commoning is making possible a new way of understanding the political, in terms of space and subjectivity. Thus this rationality of the politics appears as a distinct form of politics as the politics of commons.

The politics of commons has emerged as a distinct form of politics, in its contemporary sense, as a response to the new enclosure processes. This was especially a response of the communities that were using the commons as resources, or communities that were defined by the fact that they exist *with* the commons.

The politics of these resistances, when associated with the commons, gained a broader meaning in terms of the “politics of commons”. From *the defense of the commons*, it turned to *the reclaim of the commons* and *the reinventing of the commons* (Klein, 2001; Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). These practices mostly referred to a community, defending their livelihoods against “attacks” by neoliberal policies. In this case, community was not only referring to a group of people sharing a common property, but it was a space where politics was actualized in everyday life relations. In other words, the community as a space was the place of the actuality of production relations and politics.

In general, we have witnessed resistance movements against the capital, in terms of the new political agendas of neoliberalism applied by governments. These resistance movements can be categorized into groups such as movements against *privatization* and *corporatization*; movements against the *destruction* of environment and *dislocation*; movements against the *commodification of nature and space*, etc... Moreover, we have witnessed huge occupy movements in the city centers, from the *Arab Spring* to the *Occupy Wall Street*, from the *Indignados* to *Gezi Park*... At first glance, these movements were about defending the “public space” in the cities, about resisting against the expropriation of the common by the capital, in different forms, such as enclosure, commodification, privatization or corporation. In most cases, they defended what is thought to be belonging to *the public* or for the welfare of the public, such as cities, forests, universities, education and health services, etc... In this way, they have been considered as part of a movement located in the public-private struggle. Hence whenever these movements were at work, they strongly questioned the representative role of state in public ownership. Therefore, these movements are an

opening phase of a lengthy struggle, challenging the continuous capitalist accumulation, pointing out its character in the capitalist society and crack capitalism (De Angelis, 2014; Holloway, 2010).

Thus the politics that were related to the commons does not depend only on a specific community that implies a locality, rather it was the *community of commoning* that both occurred in a local space, a public space, or in trans-local spaces. In this way, different kinds of struggles that were not appearing as politics of commons can be understood in terms of commons vision, which refers to the act of commoning as rationality.

Basing our discussion on the rationality of commoning, we will discuss the politics of commons in two ways. First, we will discuss how the politics of commons are defined and discussed in the literature. Then, we will discuss the consequences of the politics of commons as rationality. In this way, we will move from the rationality of commoning to the rationality of the politics of commons as the direct expression of the relations and the practices within commons.

A. THE POLITICS OF COMMONS

In this section, we will start by discussing the different expressions of the politics of commons. Then, we will continue with the “commons movement” as an exploration of practical expressions of the politics of commons. In this way, we will have the tools to move forward in order to discuss philosophical consequences of the politics of commons.

1. General Types of the Politics of Commons

The general understanding of the politics of commons has three implications: defending, reclaiming and reinventing the commons (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). In general, these all manifest themselves in different discourses, forms or principles. What is in common is that they tend to *declare something in common* and express the desire to produce in common, as using the commoning forms such as collaboration, communication and cooperation.

Defending the commons generally refers to the political acts that are based on the defense of a community or a “livelihood” against the enclosure “attacks”. This politics is the layer in which the politics of commons mostly unfold, leading to other forms of the politics based on the commons. Indeed, commons acquire different meanings and forms when the defense of the commons opens up a space in which what is defended expands in a generalized manner to define the similarity as commons. In other words, for example, “struggles against intellectual property rights opens up the question of knowledge as commons. Struggles against privatization of water, education and health, opens the question of water, education and health as commons. Struggles against landlessness open up the question of common land [...] In a word, struggle against actual or threatened enclosures opens the question of commons” (De Angelis, 2003: p. 7-8).

Departing from the “natural resource” discourse, the defense of the commons makes us move to different types of social productions, of material and immaterial commodities, “public” services, and others to be defined in terms of commons: “we hear calls for culture to be understood as a commons. Others call for seeds, crops, biodiversity, community gardens, public spaces, natural resources, the broadcast spectrum, and other resources to be re-imagined as ‘commons.’ The same is said of the production of software, the internet, cultural commodities, and publicly funded university research” (McCarthy, 2005: 10). As it is clear, the defense of the livelihoods, common resources, and human heritage and so on opens up a

space first to think of these all as commons. Second, they declare the necessity of reclaiming them as commons, as they are the basis of people's common ownership of land, culture, and the communal democracy (Bailey and Mattei, 2013; McCarthy, 2005; Mies, and Bennholdt-Thomsen, 1999). Thus *the process defining the commons* has become a sphere of the politics of commons, and the expansion of this definition has appeared as new spaces of resistance.

The defense of the commons was based on what is produced in common. The defense against the enclosure of the commons in terms of destruction of the livelihoods or dislocation from a livelihood by dispossession processes are perceived as an “attack” to what is produced in common. In other words, it was the collaboration, cooperation and communication of the singularities that produced the space and culture, and the enclosure of the commons was a process attacking to these commoning practices. In this sense, the defense of the commons is a biopolitical resistance, defending the “bare life” and its conditions, which can be thought in terms of production of subjectivity.

Moreover, a new way of understanding the commons has emerged with the help of resistances against the neoliberal enclosures, and by the discussion on the meaning of the commons. This is the “expansion of the commons”, for this movement of expansion defines new type of material and immaterial resources, communities and relations as *the commons*. In other words, not only the term “commons” gained a new and broader meaning, but also a strategy as the politics of commons has appeared as *commoning*, based on the rationality of commoning in the commons communities. Thus the conceptual discussion on the concept also results in the production of new political strategies.

If “commons are forms of *direct* access to social wealth, access that is not mediated by competitive market relations” (De Angelis, 2003: 7), then they can be distinguished as “natural” and “artificial” common (Hardt, 2010b: 266). This stems from the idea that commons are not based on their substantiality but on their relationality. The defense of the natural resources generally focuses on “the *limits* of the Earth and the forms of life that interact with it” while the “discussions of the social or artificial forms of the common generally concentrate on the open, *limitless* nature of the production of the common” (p. 266). In other words, the relation of the people with nature is not something like a relation of the subject to a global *tabula rasa* of stock materials. What is natural is defined in the social process (Harvey, 2011). Thus the expansion of the commons in terms of a relational ontology is based on the commoning practices, and these practices opened up a possibility to understand the relations of production as commoning.

Based on this understanding of the commons, *reclaiming the commons* refers to the transformation of the ownership of a so-called commodity, mostly from a private one to an “open-access regime”. In other words, what once appeared as a private property is transformed into commons by the commoning practices of singularities. For example; the occupation of private flats that belong to individuals is a form of commoning that alters the ownership relations in that locality. The occupation movements that appeared in Europe and Latin America can be seen in this category. Moreover, the occupation of private lands in Brazil by the *Landless Workers Movement* (MST) is a way of opening the space for agro-ecological production and communal relations. In this case, the commoners “liberate” the space and open it to access by removing the borders, and produce different mode of relationships based on this land. This can be formulated as the *ex-closure of space* in terms of commoning. The mass occupation of city centers as occurred in the global occupy-movement can also be considered in this type of politics. In this sense, *reclaiming* means the *ex-closure of the space*, in terms of its use-value. Now, the space or the commodity in focus is opened to access and governed by a specific trans-local community.

Another form of the politics of commons is *reinventing the commons* in the sense that it is the production of subjectivity, inventing a new commons. New kinds of organizations that are not based on a common identity but the production of common can be seen as examples for this kind of politics. For example, alternative communities, solidarity economies, community economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006) can be categorized within this mode of politics. Moreover, reinventing the commons is strictly related with reclaiming in the sense that it is not creating something from nothing, but “self-valorization” of the labor in terms of production of subjectivity. This self-valorization process is a way of reclaiming the production, but also an invention of new modes of valorization. Communities based on this type of subjectivity production are the best examples of this politics.

Overall, common characteristics of the different modes of the politics of commons can be summarized as follows: first, they are about *the common*. No matter upon which type of ownership they are acting, they act upon the commons, as resources, as communities, as open-access spaces, etc... Second, they produce a subjectivity, which is seen in terms of community that does not refer to a shared identity of essence, but refers to production in common. Third, in most cases, they have potential to the ex-closure of space by expanding the sphere of the common they produce and questioning the limits imposed by the state and the capital. This is a self-valorization in the sense that acting upon the commoning practices corresponding to a redefining of the value of labor.

2. The Commons Movement

The neoliberal enclosure was targeting not only resources, but also all social relations, including forms of life, subjectivity production and valorization of labor. These all were understood in terms of the common, or become meaningful after thinking within the commons vision. These might be seen as a resistance of the labor on the definition and understanding of the common, against the capital. In other words, the politics of commons opened up the possibility to *understand the commons as the commons*, which lead us to the resistance of the commons and new commoning practices. The defense of the commons made us see what was once thought of not as commons which can be defined but as commons now and what is now defined as commons can be the basis of the politics of commons. In each case, it is turning to the struggle against “the privatization of every aspect of life, and the transformation of every activity and value into a commodity” (Klein, 2001: 82).

In this sense, the politics of commons can be seen in a wider context and can be defined as a “social movement” that not only changes the means of politics but also its vocabulary and rationality. Bailey and Mattei (2013) claims that social movements have two important roles that has to be considered. First, “they are liberating the concept of politics from the liberal constitutional form, which in turn is extending the concept of constituent power beyond representative politics” (p. 977). Second, “they are filling a crucial vacuum where representative politics have failed, offering alternative channels for political engagement” (p. 977). Indeed, the politics of commons as a social movement have implications with the following consequences: they “are expanding our understanding of politics as something more than a set of actions taken in formal political arenas” (p. 977). This is about the power to “redefine” the *political* by taking initiative to define it. Thus it functions as “reclaiming popular sovereignty and exposing the hidden and unjust assumptions and prefigured distributions of liberal constitutionalism” (p. 977).

The horizon of “popular sovereignty” is clearly from the below, with the direct participation of the “people” living in an “ordinary life”. It is based on the practices and relations of the singular beings, within the commons communities, in commoning practices of subjectivity production. This gives a possibility to claim autonomy from the state and the capital, which is “outside” that which is referred by the production of the commons (De Angelis, 2007). In this way, “autonomy provides the freedom for social movements to engage in politics, utilizing nontraditional methods and nontraditional forums, such as protests, occupations, transnational networks, and most interestingly... alternative institutions of

governance” (Bailey and Mattei, 2013: 979). In this sense, it is not only a “social movement” within the politics of representation, but also a vision for “doing politics” (p. 979) with different and alternative logic.

For the last two decades, we have witnessed social movements against the “neoliberal capitalist enclosures” (De Angelis, 2003), which are conceptualized in different names such as “anti-corporate, anti capitalist, anti-free trade, anti-imperialist movements” (Klein, 2001); “social movements of the commons” or “the commons movement” (Bailey and Mattei, 2013); and others that refer to a “counter-hegemonic” position against the mainstream way of doing politics (McCarthy, 2005). This can be called as “counter-hegemonic” in the sense that they share a “spirit” based on a “radical reclaiming of the commons” (Klein, 2001: 82).

While challenging the neoliberal enclosures, these movements also challenge the role of the modern state, through their autonomy in accessing and governing the common resources and creating forms of collective governance (Bailey and Mattei, 2013: 977-8). Within these movements, there emerged “a coalition between organized labour, environmentalists, farmers and consumer groups” (Klein, 2001: 83). In other words, we cannot think of these movements in terms of “subjects” that refers to the identities such as “environmentalist”, “Turkish”, “worker” etc... Rather, it can be seen as a “coalition”, or a movement of movements (p. 81). Hence this “coalition” understanding can be only a “primitive” form of conceptualizing the commons movement in the sense that “coalition” needs the agents that are in coalition, *a priori*. However, what is important is *being in the coalition*, namely, becoming-common. In this way, the commons movement can be understood as producing a new type of politics that overcomes the limit of small-scale experiments (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014). In other words, a “coalition” can only be actualized “on the management of *the common*, which is quickly becoming the central terrain of political struggle across a wide variety of political contexts” (Hardt, 2010b: 265). No matter whether we think of “the particular positions are dangerous, contradictory, naïve, insufficient, ‘right’, ‘wrong’, romantic or idealizing, [...] the *articulation* of the various practices of the movement is giving rise to something greater than the sum of particular positions” (De Angelis, 2003: 5).

This can be seen as the core characteristics of the politics of commons as a movement.

Indeed, rather than being based in identity politics, the commons movement is based on the reappropriation and self-valorization of the labor in terms of subjectivity production. In other words, commoning practices make the politics of commons possible, as a rationality based on the relational ontology. Thus there is nothing before commoning; the politics of

commons becomes possible only at the *time of commoning*. It is not the identity of subject as an essential property, or the intentions of the individual agents that make it political, but the becoming-common in the practices and relations by reclaiming and reinventing collaboration, communication and cooperation based in common.

This is the reason why “taking state power” or being represented in parliament is not the core aim of the commons movement: “Direct acts of reappropriation of resources and the definition of radically autonomous societal relations” (Barchiesi, 2003: 1) are the basis of the rationality of the politics of commons. In this sense, commons are pointing to “outside” of the capitalist mode of production and mainstream political sphere, as a social movement consisting of multitude of practices, agents and identities that are producing in common.

The becoming common in the political is not an ahistorical process that bypasses the historical desires or the conflicts between the commoners. Indeed, the commoner is not an individual agent with his/her self-history and conflicts, participating in the production of the common with his own intention and consciousness. On the contrary, s/he is possible only in the actual participation of the commons, only in becoming. Only in this sense, can we understand the commoner as a commoner who becomes in his/her relations and practices. Thus the rationality of the commoning as the basis of the politics of commons can only be thinkable in its becoming-political. There is no commoner before commoning and there is no politics of commons before the relations and practices within the commons.

Then, commons politics and commons social movement can be formulated as the politics of the “outside”, which refers to the outside of the capitalist mode of production and its *rationality*. First, the ex-closure of space occurs at the “interstitiality” of the society (Holloway, 2003). The production of subjectivity resisting the hegemonic social is a “crack” in the society where the alternatives emerge (Holloway, 2010). Indeed, it is the “plurality of alternatives” (De Angelis, 2003) based on patterns created by value practices which are other than and incompatible with the capitalist mode of relations. In other words, it is “becoming other than capital” (De Angelis, 2007) that commoning practices imply and the consequences of these practices are a vision and position that are pointing to the “outside” of capitalist dominion.

To summarize, it can be said that the commons as a social movement is a way of politics that is based on the rationality of commoning. This movement expresses itself in different forms such as defending, reclaiming or reinventing the commons. These modes of politics imply the outside of the capitalist mode of production, as “cracking capitalism” by the production of new subjectivities. Overall, these social movements transform the rationality of

politics, basing themselves on the rationality of commoning, which implies a new rationality of the political.

B. THE COMMONS AS CONSTITUENT POWER

As we have discussed above, the commons movement has the potential to be understood as a “constituent power” of the multitude, which builds its own institutions based on the rationality of commoning. In this section, I would like to go further in investigating the potential of the “constituent power” that commons politics provides. Then, I will conclude my discussion by investigating the rationality of the politics of commons and discussing the guiding principles of this kind of politics.

1. Building Institutions Based on the Common

The “outside” can be viewed as the institutions of commons based on commoning practices, or the institutionalization of the commoning practices in terms of commons. Indeed, the state and the market, and their derivations work, based on the production of the common and as the expropriation of the common that is produced in commoning practices. Thus when we think of the institutions of commons or the institutionalization of commoning practices, we are mostly referring to how commoners can express themselves *vis-a-vis* the capitalist dominion. This occurs in such a way that both defends their commoning practices and expands their mode of productions as a way of cracking the institutions that are expropriating their commons.

Then, the outside can be formulated in terms of the *constituent power* that is both related with the formation and the governance of the society. In other words, the problem of “outside” is the touch point of commons politics with the representative politics of the state, with the capitalist market based on the expropriation of the common, and the legal rights based on the subjectification of the multitude. In this sense, problematization of the outside opens up a space to discuss the possibility of transforming and redefining the political in terms of the politics of commons.

To underline the potentiality of the outside, we can look at the discussion through “societal constitutionalism”, that provides a basis for the different spatiality of the outside. Bailey and Mattei (2013) claim that “commons social movements are not only sites of political protest outside of traditional political arenas, but also sites of societal constitutionalism, producing alternative forms of resource governance and management” (p. 1012). In this way, commons social movements can be seen as “a truly bottom-up constitutional and deliberative process capable of reversing the progressive transfer from the

commons to the private on local, national, and global levels” and providing a new definition of concepts such as “constituent power” and “popular sovereignty” (p. 1013). In other words, while the discussion of outside let us to see that we can expose the political sphere going beyond the public-private dichotomy, understanding of the commons movement in terms of the constitution of society would be supplementary for the foundations of *the political* in terms of power relations.

The relation between the commons movement and the modern political sphere based on parliament and representation is, thus ambiguous, and this is a disempowering fact of the commons movement. If the commons movement is based on continuous production of the common, it should find ways to express itself properly as production of subjectivity that is based on here and now, in the case of the organization of the governance and management of the commons.

The organization of the present is the “institutions of the commons” based on the biopolitical production of the common. In other words, the biopolitical character of production, which is here and now, beyond public and private, which is the “multiplicity, not nature; singularity, not the individual; and the common, not the universal” (Rogerro, 2010; 365) can be the new “horizon” of thinking the societal construction, both in theory and in practice. If the biopolitical condition of the production of common is the condition of subjectivity production, then it can also be the basis of resistance against capitalist dominion and subjectification, which lets the commoners produce their own subjectivity against the hegemonic subjectivity production of the capital. In this way, “continuous constitution of the common and by the common” (Rogerro, 2010) gains a possibility to express itself in terms of the common by the institutions of the commons. This way of putting the matter resembles the continuous fight between the labor and the capital, based on the ownership of means of production and governing the subjectivity production. In other words, production of subjectivity is the continuous production of the outside within the world of capitalist dominion, which is the basis of the production of the common and the expropriation of the common as well.

Thus the biopolitical conditions let the commoners express themselves in the commons movements in terms of the institutionalization of the commoning practices and transforming the meaning of *the political* by changing the space and the sphere of politics that corresponds to an alternative rationality. In other words, the possibility of “commonance” is actual where there is the commoning practice.

2. The Guiding Principle

The problem of the outside, within the biopolitical conditions of production, is the problem of subjectivity production. The production in common can be non-capitalist, *a priori* to its expropriation by the capital. In this sense, the production of subjectivity does not need a self-affirming discourse. Indeed, it is not the “ideological power” that determines the power of commons movements. However, what *isa priori* in the determination of labor articulation is the fight of different forces to govern the subjectivities that are produced within or outside the hegemonic mode of production. The reason we aim to understand the rationality of commoning is in order to have “the commons as a new narrative and worldview” (Bollier, 2007).

Bollier (2007) claims that the discourse of the commons “can play a profound role [...] much as the meta-language of ‘the environment’ did in the 1960s” (p. 15). Functioning like a meta-language, it is a way to re-think and re-order the social and cultural practices as well as what *the political* is about: “The air, water, soil and wildlife had always been there, of course. But they were not conceptualized in a coherent, unified way until Rachel Carson and others began to popularise the idea of ‘the environment’” (p. 15). Like that of the environment, the politics of commons can function as a vision, a self-sufficient worldview, a coherent but multiple narrative, based on the commoning practices. In this way, it would reflect our everyday relations and practices, and design our practices as having the function of ethics:

Once the idea of the environment took root, people could begin to make mental connections among diverse phenomena that had previously seemed unconnected. It turned out that dying birds were linked to household chemicals, and genetic mutations in humans were linked to industrial pollution. The language of the environment not only gave us an overarching narrative, it helped galvanize a political movement by providing a new, accessible story. (Bollier, 2007: 15)

Then, we can think of the commons “as a worldview that can integrate the personal, the social and the political in new ways” (Bollier, 2007: 15). This resides in the fact that, the politics of commons departs from our everyday relations, as our cooperation, communication, production and sharing with others; and it arrives back to our everyday practices, as reflecting what we have done so far with *guiding principles*. Thus being the guiding principles of our everyday actions, relations and practices, the politics of commons would function as rationality.

The politics of commons based in the production of the common, implies rationality because we create the commons, we participate in the common and we share what we produce (Hardt and Negri, 2009: viii). While taking commons as relations, we not only change our logic but also our language. Ristau (2011) focuses on this point with a comparison between the languages of Indigenous people who use “verbs, rather than nouns as we do in English, as the foundation for communication”. English language works fine when we think of “acquiring things” but in case of action words, we need to learn, think and create new ones, like that of the “commoning”, for example. In this sense, “the practice of commoning demonstrates a shift in thinking from the prevailing ethic of ‘you’re on your own’ to ‘we’re in this together’” (Ristau, 2011).

Moreover, if we are to attribute a rationality to the commoning and derive a rationality for the politics of commons, we have to “constitute” this rationality by understanding the different patterns in which these practices are manifested (Nahrada, 2012). These can function like a “blank form” that would be practiced and shaped through experiences. Departing from social activist Rob Hopkins, Nahrada (2012) proposes some qualities that might be an example to describe the patterns of the commoning practices: viral, open source, self-organizing, solutions focused, iterative, clarifying, sensitive to place and scale, historic and joyful... Of course, these might be changed from different kind of commons to different cultural experiences. This way of putting the matter is a half way of formulating the rationality of the politics of commons. It shows that it is strictly practical, local, and experimental form of the commons, mostly based on the community, which we inhabit.

3. General Summary of the Politics of Commons

The rationality of the politics of commons has some consequences in thinking *the political*. First, it is neither state nor the private, but the common that commons paradigm is constructed on. The production of the commons is *a priori* and autonomous to both state and the market, and can take a different form by the production of subjectivity. Second, it is “antithetical to property” (Özgün, 2010: 378). It is neither private property nor public property. It is not a property, at all. This implies a worldview that offers “a constitutive political ethics” (p. 378). Third, it does not function like an identity, but it always refers to ex-closure of the space as well as our singularities. In other words, the politics of commons is not based on the essentialist identity position but on the production of the common, itself. It is based on our doing, producing, distributing, and making the world and so making ourselves. Indeed, it is

practicing different patterns that produce our subjectivity. Lastly, the politics of commons can “provide both an intellectual and political horizon that we can enrich through our practices and thinking in the context of concrete struggles” (De Angelis, 2003: 4). With these general deductions, the politics of commons can be seen as rationality based on a specific type of practicing and understanding the world.

However, rationality of the politics of commons should not be thought in terms of a ‘unifying’ imperative, which reduces the plurality of the commoners into generalized categories. On the contrary, it reflects the multitude of meanings that are immanent to the production of the common: “an intellectual framework and political philosophy”, “a set of social attitudes and commitments”, “an experiential way of being and even a spiritual disposition”, and “an overarching worldview” (Bollier and Helfrich, 2012: 3)...

These all make what we call the politics of commons, a way of understanding and doing politics. In this way, rationality of the politics of commons opens up a space to redefine and practice *the political*.

V. CONCLUSION

Departing from the commons as “open-access” regimes that would result in tragedy, we have discussed mainly two different understandings of the commons based on two different ontologies. The first was the individualistic ontology that approaches the commons as commodities, mostly in the form of natural resources that are governed by communities with the state and/or the market. This approach relies on the basic assumptions of the modern political ontology in the sense that it takes the individual-society and society-nature relationship in substantial terms. In other words, the individualistic ontology takes the individual as a substance where his image is the founding image of social relations.

On the contrary, the relational ontology takes practices and relations as a methodological standpoint and focuses on the formation of the social in terms of becoming, rather than the beings as subjects. Therefore, what become important for the relational ontology are the production of subjectivity in terms of practices and relations of singular beings and the rationality of these activities that makes a singular being as a part of subjectivity.

When we approach the “so-called primitive accumulation” with a relational ontology, a new way of understanding the capitalist mode of production and the social appears in front of our eyes. This is a way of understanding the social in terms of relations and practices, and this gives us an understanding of how *the social* becomes each time these practices and relations occur. In this way, the “so-called primitive accumulation” becomes the fundamental character of the capitalist mode of production, as a continuous separation of the labor from the means of production, the doing from the done. In this way, capitalist dominion turns into a continuous enclosure process of the commoning practices of the commoners, in the form of exploitation, expropriation, dispossession, dislocation, etc... This is why “defending a natural resource” simultaneously become a defense of livelihoods, which is an expression of self-valorization of the labor and commoning practices, which occur in concrete space and time, namely within the commons communities.

In this description of the capitalist dominion, the continuous separation is a form of subjectivity production. Prior to the capitalist expropriation, there are the commoning practices of the multitude: collaboration, communication and cooperation. These practices refer to the production in common: producing life, space, time, history, culture, etc... In other

words, the rationality of commoning is based on a “blank form” without (and before) the subjectification within the power relations, which turns the multitude in terms of economic, political, cultural or social subject (categories). The production in common as the commoning practices are everywhere in the world, which can be determined in terms of its form, a blank form that is not turned into subject categories, yet. Hence the capitalist dominion based on the market and the state reduces the multiplicity of the multitude into subject categories, most of which are the *homo economicus*, *the people*, and *the working class*... These categories are the dominant forms of subjectivities that work as the basis of the capitalist dominion. In other words, they are based on the continuous separation of the doing from the done, continuous expropriation of commoning relations, and continuous subjectification of the multitude in terms of power relations.

The most general form of the subjectified multitude is an identity, which mostly works for the division of society in terms of essence. The identity works as the norm for different subjectivity groups in a society, with which singular beings identify themselves and attribute a meaning to their practices and relations by the rationality of these subjectivities. In other words, by relating to a normative subjectivity, singular beings gain identity positions that form an understanding of the world and are constructive in their relations and practices. Thus identities are the constructive elements of subjectivities in terms of subjectification of the multitude as unities.

This understanding is based on the commodification of the power, and, as a consequence, unification and centralization of the politics in terms of state. In this way, the state power has become the force of the powerful subjectivities that are represented in a society. In other words, identification with a subjectivity position is resulted in different expressions of representations such as political parties, non-governmental organizations, etc, that forms the different parts of society symbolizing the political sphere in terms of state. Thus in this sense, *the state* is representing both the relations of power based on the subjectivities and the ultimate commodification of the power in terms of identities.

Then, it can be said that the power relations that are symbolized as the state work in terms of identification, subjectification and classification of the multitude. Indeed, for the state, the multitude can become visible only in terms of subjectified identities. This understanding of the state is based on the commons vision such that it is reduced to the relations and practices of singular beings, relations of power and relations of production. On the contrary, as it is claimed in this work, the individualistic approach arrives at a definition of the political, as the modern political sphere, which is the commodification of power and

representation of the multitude in terms of state. This state is the ultimate image of the individual and the consequences of the individualistic approach, which cannot go beyond this image with its rationality.

At the end of the day, within this rationality, the subjectivities are represented in the power relations within the government. The state and the market is the government of the subjectivities that are divided by the relations of power in society. These relations reflect the interests of different power groups. Then, representative politics are formulated as the reduction of the multitude into different subjectivity positions that can be representable in terms of the state. One of the consequences of the commons vision as a critique of the relations of production is the critique of public/private property regimes that can only be possible in terms of the commodification of the power. The private/public dichotomy can be understandable within this perspective as the continuous reproduction of the separation between the doing and the done, which turns the common into an expression of public ownership or private ownership that both depend on the ontology of property relations.

While focusing to the critique of the “so-called primitive accumulation”, we tried to see a different way of understanding the rationality of capitalist mode of production by approaching it with a relational ontology that reduces the “subjects” into relations and practices. In this way, we have reached a conclusion that the primitive accumulation is the continuous separation of the doing and the done. However, we could not stay there for the critique of the primitive accumulation resulted in some points that brought us to the rationality of commoning. First, as the primitive accumulation was the continuous enclosure of the commons, commons was also continuously produced by the commoning practices of the commoners. Moreover, commoning practices of the commoners were the production of the common, which could be formulated in terms of the commons, itself. This consequence was implying an investigation on the ontology of the multitude, which was the basis of the production *a priori* to the relations of power and the state form. This investigation has two results: first, the multitude is action on the biopolitical conditions of production. Second, the multitude was a pre-political form of the subjectivities that expresses the multitude of forces that are not yet signified in terms of the state.

The critique of the property relations was a necessity to understand the critique, which was the consequence of the rationality of commoning. The common, as both the basis and the result of the production, does not belong to the public or the private until it has been commodified. Then, the relations of subjectivity production become relations of power on which the dominion of capitalism is constructed vis-a-vis the “outside”. Here, we witness a

clash between two value practices, two worldviews, and two constituent powers that are contradictory in terms of their ontology and rationality.

Thus the rationality of commoning appears as a critique of the capitalist dominion and the capitalist mode of subjectivity production at first hand. In this critique, we find the core elements of capitalist dominion that are based on the individual/social, public/private and state/market dichotomies. The commoning practices in this sense, can be thought in terms of rationality, which is antagonistic to the continuous separation of the capitalist mode of production. It provides a vision, a worldview that we can act upon in order to conduct a critique on and change the capitalist mode of production as well as invent new modes of relations and practices.

One of the direct consequences of this critique has been appearing within the commons movement in different forms around the world. The politics of commons as appeared in the form of defense of the resources, communities or livelihoods; as in reclaiming of lands, labor or common spaces; and as in reinvention of new communities based on non-capitalist modes of productions all indicate the commons movement that questions the mainstream representative politics as well as the market-state relations in terms of enclosure. Indeed, it is the enclosure of desires, affects, labor and limitless possibilities of becoming of the multitude, which these movements uncover. In this sense, it is not only a form of resistance to some kind of policies, or invention of new life words, but also the disclosing of the political sphere in terms of the ex-closure of relations. *The ex-closure* is the commoning of relations in the interstitials of society. In this way, relations of commoning are expanded in the sense that politics of representation is reduced to the production of subjectivity in terms of relations and practices, and the relation between the capitalist accumulation and the capitalist dominion of the political sphere is uncovered. Overall, the ex-closure of commoning against the enclosure of the commons is a way to understand the transformative affects of the commons movement.

Moreover, the commons movement implies the potentiality of constituent power to become a “popular power” of the multitude from the “below” as a way of constructing the below. The power of joining the societal constitution can be understood in this way: it is the politics implied by the politics of commons, from the below to the below, changing the relations and practices, and opening up new spaces in which the people from the “below” can join to decide on their now and future. As it is clear, the politics is always about the constituent power, but who uses and governs this power is the foremost. In the politics of representation, the power is reduced to the representation of the power in terms of commodity

and those who have the ownership of the state --as it is the commodified power-- can apply the power in terms of its governmental principles.

Against this understanding of societal constitution, the constituent power that commons politics refers might be the *commoning of the politics*. Indeed, it is the commoning of politics by the ex-closure of the commoning practices in terms of biopolitics. In other words, the commons politics has two consequences that we can deduce from this work: first, by referring to the continuous commoning practices as the production of subjectivity, what creates *the political* is the *expression* of these subjectivities. Second, it is the biopolitical conditions of the multitude that turns “bare life” obviously *political*. In other words, *the political* can be understood as the production of subjectivity that occurs in each time and each space, within the commoning relations and practices of the singularities. Thus the distinction between the economical, political and social has blurred.

However, the relation between the commons movement and the politics of representation is not very clear in this understanding. How would the expression of the subjectivity relate itself with the relations of market and the state? How can we explore the conditions for the institutionalization of the common while formulating the relations between the markets, governments and these institutions? What relations can there be between the commons and the mainstream/representative politics? These questions remain in this work, or this work poses these questions for further studies.

Moreover, *the commoning of the politics* is another consequence of this question that is left without a clear answer. The institutions of the commons are self-created organizations that are open, common, reliable, accessible, self-valorizing, etc, which might symbolize the “non-state” character of the movement. In this sense, the sphere of politics that is enclosed by the state, reduced to the production of subjectivities in terms of identity, which become a one-way politics from the above by the representatives, have the potentiality of ex-closing. Thus the rationality of the politics of commons may imply the outside of the mainstream representative political sphere, by ex-closing it. This might be “reclaiming the political sphere”, and declaring it as a popular sovereignty based on the relations and practices of the singularities. Alternatively, it is possible to think of the rationality of the politics of commons as the commoning of politics. Hence this needs more clarification in further debates on the rationality of politics.

In conclusion, it can be said that the politics of commons refers to a set of practices and relations that are based on the rationality of commoning. This rationality results in understanding the political within a new rationality, namely the rationality of the politics of

commons. The rationality of the politics of commons can be a base to understand the relations and practices that occur in the social, political, economical and the cultural terrain as the basis of the political, which is the translation of everyday biopolitical relations in terms of the political. Thus the political turns out to be the production of subjectivity and expressing this subjectivity with a proper discourse, which directly expresses the multiplicity of singularities as the multitude.

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