CHAPTER 3. DISCOURSES IN THE MOVEMENT

In chapter 2 some of the discursive patterns in the movement were hinted at. We now need to take a closer look at these. There is first of all a meta-division of types of discourses that I will call modes of management of meaning. They can be understood as two different attitudes towards doxa and thus work as a basic background, in relation to which individuals shape their words and actions. Against this backdrop, we can understand variations in styles of participation and contrasting attitudes towards gender. This chapter also explains the workings of gender and age and different ways of counting membership, structural factors that one must take into account to describe the neighborhood movement.

The greater part of the chapter describes how movement activists talk about the movement, their activities in it and its relationship to urban life and to gender. There are a number of key symbols, words that condense a set of values that have been important throughout the movement's history, some of them uniting activists with their ideological strength, others separating as they define positions in ongoing debates.

Finally, I address the ambivalent relationship between movement discourses and feminist debates.

Gender is treated mainly as a structural and discursive principle here. The substantial history of women's participation in the movement and the descriptions of women's activities will follow in chapter 5.

The expansive mode of management of meaning

It has become clear in my material from over twenty years of anthropological work in Spain, that one can discern a generally available repertoire of two ideal-typical discourses. Individuals and groups tend to prefer one or the other, but any individual can use them situationally according to need and desired effect. This is a major factor that shapes discourse in Spain and thus also in the neighborhood movement. In the eyes of an outsider they can be seen as a repertoire, that is; for people who live with them, they are a fact of life, experienced doxically as a way of discerning who is a potential friend and who is not.

In Valencia, in 1982–83 (Thurén 1988) I found two discourses that were recognized by all and seen as dichotomous and opposed to each other. One of them was usually called "traditional" (by its opponents sometimes "reactionary"); the other was usually called "progressive". I analyzed the key symbols of each and found that the so-called progressive discourse was very close to classic Enlightenment thinking. It explained itself as the result of an awakening, an emancipation, an opening of eyes to the realities that had formerly been hidden or distorted. In other words, it was seen as a process of learning, made possible in a new political conjuncture (the transition from dictatorship to democracy) and as a discovery of the real and beautiful possibility of justice, equality, democ-

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1 I take the term doxa from Bourdieu 1977. It refers to that which is, in a given context, taken for granted to a very high degree, considered so self-evident that it is usually not talked about, perhaps even invisible to the actors in that context. It goes without saying because it comes without saying, as Bourdieu says; that is, it is unquestionable because it fits perfectly with experience. Bourdieu opposes doxa to the universe of discourse, which is everything that can be talked about, all those things that in a given context are culturally visible, exist. Inside the universe of discourse, some ideas are more or less accepted or hegemonic, others are more or less oppositional or creative; this is the division of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Doxa is neither, or perhaps a form of extreme, absolute orthodoxy. I think a matter of degree should be introduced here, so I usually speak not of doxa but of doxic. Doxa loses ground — i.e. the universe of discourse expands — when a given context becomes more plural, when circumstances change, when the experiences of all concerned no longer coincide, etc.
racy. Naturally it was not totally new. Spain has had an Enlightenment tradition. But it has been counter-cultural and persecuted for nearly two centuries, with only short intervals of relative freedom, and it had recently been firmly suppressed during forty years of dictatorship in which the dominant discourses were explicitly opposed to it. The conservative discourse neither emphasized nor denied values like justice, rationality and social equality, but it emphasized other things, such as Christianity, morals as something given and not debatable, and both morals and stable social institutions as things that had to be anchored in something beyond human thinking. To question, reason and analyze was seen as dangerous, subversive, destabilizing. Unrestrained thinking was considered to cause chaos, criminality and general unhappiness.

In my project on the gender order in middle class Madrid (Thurén forthcoming) I developed this analysis to make it clear that the two styles of thinking or discourse do not correspond to two kinds of persons but exist as choices for all individuals, when they adapt to the requirements of different situations. But I also described how the cultural model in both discourses was of two incompatible types of reason corresponding to groups of people. Most of my informants disliked people who preferred the type they themselves did not prefer. To prefer one type was usually to also consider the other one a threat.

I called these two types the cautious and the expansive modes of management of meaning. They were not just discourses, in the sense of ways of speaking, but meta-phenomena: ways of choosing ways of speaking. The cautious mode tends to search for already-known values and expressions in order to place the matter talked about in a given grid of shared ideas. The expansive mode implies a search for new angles to question and a constant effort to probe in order to expand what can be thought about the matter talked about. Using Bourdieu's terms (Bourdieu 1977), we can say that the cautious mode moves in a cultural field where the important opposition is between heterodoxy and orthodoxy, while the expansive mode recognizes this opposition but finds more interesting another one, the opposition between both of these, as the already known, and an unknown terrain to be explored in order to expand the universe of discourse.

This meta-phenomenon also shapes the discourses of the neighborhood movement. Inside the movement, the cautious management of meaning is delegitimated. The movement as a whole is about questioning given things and negotiating what would be desirable instead. But this happens most of the time in non-intellectual ways, more in action than in reflection. In my terms, the whole movement is a forum for expansive management of meaning. But the participants are not expert expansivists. On the average, they have few years of formal schooling, they work in manual occupations, and they live mostly in small social worlds. The women especially have almost always been educated to cultivate particularistic relations with other people, and they tend therefore also to particularistic interpretations of norms and morals. This is less true for the men, but it does apply to them as well. They often declare, quite without self-consciousness, that what they are interested in, in the movement, is to work for a good life for themselves, their families and their barrio, and that they do not care about the rest of the world. They are often skeptical of claims to wider concerns, seeing them as ideological, therefore not realist, and perhaps dangerous, manipulative, something people like themselves had better not let themselves be fooled by. "The world gets along very well without me worrying about it!" is one characteristic phrase. This is not literally what they feel, or they would not be active in the movement. But what is meant is that one can work with "small" nearby understandable things without thinking constantly about the connections between what is near and what is distant.

The neighborhood movement is an ethically, politically and practically expansive cultural context, where the ideals of Enlightenment, universalism and rationality are guiding stars, and the collective experience is that collective agency exists and can create new social and cultural circumstances – but most of the participants have dispositions shaped by more cautious, naturalizing, traditionist and particularistic circumstances (norms, social organization, schooling, everyday practices...)

My interpretation is that the tension between these two ways of managing meaning sometimes causes personal distress for participants, which is expressed in such things as personal conflicts or ideological rigidity. But this tension is also the source of an experience informants often mention: that of learning, of seeing the world opening up, of discovering that connections between
one's personal life and the rest of the world do exist and are more or less graspable. Both women and men talk about this experience, but judging from my material women experience it much more intensely, in stronger contrast to their pre-activist ways of understanding life.

If we express it in Enlightenment terms, they really do open their eyes and realize things that a rational mind ought to realize. They go from obscurity to clarity, from repression to truth and liberation. That is what they feel.

But they retain much of their particularistic dispositions. The tasks in the movement are about "contributing" to the good life nearby, in the barrio or at most in the town they live in. The movement is about "neighbors," i.e. persons to whom you feel connected and obliged due to social similarity. The motive that counts is a cultural principle, the idea that people who live near each other have a connection to each other. In comparison to other possible principles of social organization, such as class, gender or ethnicity, it is less abstract; it rests on everyday concrete experiences. People in Spanish towns and cities usually do know many of their neighbors, and they do share basic material conditions with them, and it is with these known others that one works to improve these shared circumstances.2

So in some ways the neighborhood movement can be seen as political and practical (but not discursive) criticism of Enlightenment universalism. It is concerned with an "us", defending itself against a "them," variously understood as power holders, rich people, or just people "not from my barrio."

It is therefore from the perspective of an outsider that I suggest that the neighborhood movement can be seen as a great experiment in the direction of establishing social institutions, contexts, fora, for practical, political and moral work of a participatory and expansive kind, where meanings can always be questioned, and the Enlightenment liberties are used, not feared, but used in a non-doctrinaire way, always connected to everyday life.

Such a space influences change in all orders of life.

Let us now look at some more concrete variations in the discourses of the movement, keeping in mind that these other divisions occur mostly within the expansive mode of management of meaning and that there is usually an implicit anti-cautiousness intention in much of what activists say.

**Three kinds of activists**

The activists in the movement have different motivations, different political outlooks, different class backgrounds, different levels of formal education, different possibilities of dedicating time to the movement, and so on. We have already seen that the main division is that between persons who also belong to a political party and persons who do not. This is the division that causes most conflicts and that is constantly referred to. But both party people and independents vary among themselves, of course.

There is another possible categorization. Using a mixture of motivational and political criteria, I discern three categories, which I think most movement activists would recognize as relevant.

I will call them revolutionaries, reformists and sociables. These are not emic terms3 – there is no generally agreed-upon emic categorization – but they come close to the ways movement activists themselves talk about each other. I have derived them in part from what they say, and in part from my observations of activities, alignments and events.

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2 But this may be changing. Cf. chapters 13 and 14.

3 The terms *emic* and *etic* were invented in analogy with phonemics and phonetics. In linguistics, a phoneme is a sound that is experienced, by the speakers of a language, as one and the same, separate from other sounds. For example, voiced and unvoiced s is one phoneme in Spanish, two in English. Phonemics is the study of sounds as they are interpreted from the inside of a given language. Phonetics is the study of sounds as they actually sound, "objectively" recorded by some technical device. Now, of course there are no machines that can record ideas objectively, so in a strict sense the analogy is false and anthropologists have largely abandoned the terms. But in my interdisciplinary work I have found it very useful to point out that things do not usually look the same from inside a context as from its outside, and even if this is a simplification of the original intention of the terms emic and etic, I think it clarifies things to use specific terms without evaluative connotations to handle the distinction between an inside and an outside perspective. An alternative suggestion is that of Geertz (1974): experience-near and experience-distant.
Naturally, any individual might be a mixture of two or more, any individual can move situationally or over time from one category to another, and most activists would probably resist being categorized at all. In fact, what I will describe is better understood as discourses than as categories of individuals. But let us begin by pretending that we are describing kinds of individuals, since this is how activists speak about each other, and since categorization is a common strategy in local conflicts, and since the differences in ideology and discourse do cause conflicts between individuals, and since there are clear patterns of individual preferences for different discourses.

The revolutionaries are the kind of people who dominated the movement in its origins, during the heroic years and during the glorious years, that is throughout the 1970s. Whether independents or party people, they usually had a strong class-consciousness and had in one way or another come to perceive society as unjustly organized. Some thought the neighborhood movement was an instrument to be used in the service of "larger" goals, others found such thinking idealistic and impractical and preferred to concentrate on immediate local issues. But for both sub-categories, the key word was and is "reivindicación", a Spanish word meaning literally demand or claim, but having connotations of struggle and serious political analysis.

The revolutionaries felt less at home in the movement by the 1990s, and many had given up and left, perhaps finding other causes or channels for struggle. Whether outside or still inside the movement, they shared the view that today's movement was much less reivindicativo than it used to be. And this was the main reason for being skeptical about the future. The revolutionary standpoint was that for the neighborhood movement to loose its reivindicativo character was for it to lose its basic reason for existing.

The typical story of a revolutionary was that she or he became active in a political party during the underground period and was sent to work in the movement, or else she or he began working in the movement and learned about politics there, and then perhaps, perhaps not, joined a party. In any case, the typical declaration of motives went, "I realized that the society we have is unfair/hierarchical/ irrational and that it is not going to improve by itself. I don't like social injustice so I am going to fight it wherever I find it." And once his or her political consciousness had been explained, a motivation for the choice of the neighborhood movement usually followed. People who were also members of a party would say something about the need for new forms for political work, the special capacity of the movement to reach the grass roots, the complementary logic of having an organization with a territorial base alongside parties and unions. Independents would give some argument about why they did not like political parties in general, or how they had not found any they could agree with sufficiently to join, and then argue that the neighborhood movement was a good alternative.

Most of the revolutionaries were independents or communists, but some were socialists. They called themselves radical, leftists, progressives or similar, or they stressed their struggle-oriented personal temper, labeling themselves fighters, rebels, oppositional or critical. They saw the reformists and the sociables as equally dangerous for the "true" goals of the movement. But they distinguished between them. They saw the reformists as either dupes or tacticians of the PSOE, either manipulated or manipulators, but in any case politically lukewarm, not really leftist although not quite conservative either. They did recognize that the reformists, like the revolutionaries, saw the movement as political.

The sociables were the ones who did not. The revolutionaries can be divided into a set of sub-categories according to how they interpreted the sociables: as innocuous nice people who have

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4 Carmen in chapter 4 is a good example as is Francisca in chapter 10, and also Mati and Encarna in chapter 6. That is, I think most others saw them in such a way and they themselves liked that image.

5 It is not easy to find a good English translation. My dictionary suggests claim, grievance and vindication. I have usually opted for the last one, in part to honor Mary Wollstonecraft, in part because it fits most of the instances better than the other terms, even though the English word does not carry the same overtones. In some places I have retained the Spanish word. "Demando" is a better translation in certain contexts. From the same root, both a verb, reivindicar, and an adjective, reivindicativo, can be formed. Cf. note 6.

6 The approximate meaning of the adjective would be oppositional or critical, although, unlike the English words, it has stronger connotations of struggle and social change than of intellectual analysis. Therefore I have mostly retained the Spanish word when in the adjective form.
not had a chance to reach political consciousness and who might as well be permitted to do their thing, because otherwise they will not stay in the movement at all; or as a potentially dangerous shapeless mass of people who might fall prey to demagogic tricks and who are in any case always giving indirect support to the manipulators.

The reformists were the ones who now dominated the movement. Most were formally independent, i.e. not party members, but if a reformist independent leaned towards sympathizing with any party, it would usually be the PSOE.7

Just like among revolutionaries, however, there were among reformist independents some people who had quite clear political views but who would absolutely not have anything to do with political parties, seeing them only as bureaucratic machineries that subvert the democratic game. Some of them had reached this opinion by way of personal disappointments, others through intellectual analysis or through observation of the experience of others.

The reformists' labels for themselves were practically the same as those of the revolutionaries. They saw themselves as progressives and leftists, and they were in the movement mainly to change society. Just like the revolutionaries, they often used the word reivindicación and it had (almost) the same positive connotations to them. But unlike the revolutionaries, they stressed the improvements experienced in all areas of life in Spain since the socialists came to power, and they hesitated to criticize the PSOE discourse as neo-liberal. They tended to think that a "free market" is a good thing, and they did not analyze the limitations of the present economic system measured against that idea. They tended to see the revolutionaries as naïve, unrealistic and perhaps dangerous in their belief in "old-fashioned" political dogmas.

A typical reformist might be one movement leader we can call José Luis. At the time of the interview he was in conflict with another movement leader, whom he accused of having taken "abnormal" positions. When I asked him to specify, he said that this other man had the "old-fashioned" view of the movement as something similar to Latin American protest movements. This was absurd, because one cannot compare countries in such different circumstances. He also accused the other man of having opinions similar to those of the German Greens, also "evidently" absurd ones, according to José Luis. What he found especially wrong and dangerous was the other man's opposition to the efforts to combine the neighborhood movement with the consumers' movement. Not to do so would "marginalize" the movement, said José Luis, and in any case it was too late to oppose it, CAVE had already included the future fusion in its statutes. "There are a lot of people in the movement today at a certain level, who try to organize things from the top, we could say. What they are concerned with is to create legal and fiscal frameworks to enable us to function. For example, in the Maastricht treaty there are a few things that could serve us well," said José Luis. He felt it was important to look into management and organization and to stop considering municipal governments automatically as enemies.

All of this would sound like a typical PSOE discourse to a lot of people in the movement, I am sure, but in fact José Luis was a member of IU (Izquierda Unida, a leftist coalition of political parties, cf. Glossary). This goes to show that there was no absolute parallel between the division PSOE / IU and the division reformist discourses / revolutionary discourses.

This was a leader speaking. A representative account of the reformist attitude among the rank and file goes like this: "I like to do things for society to try to improve life. One cannot just sit at home watching TV. There are so many things to be done! It is not like twenty years ago, when there were such glaring injustices, such enormous material deficiencies (carencias, a key word, cf. below). But things are not perfect. And democracy requires participation. Personally, I would feel isolated if I did not participate. To participate is a way of knowing what is going on."

In their opinions about the sociables, the reformists were similar to the revolutionaries, except that they did not usually see much danger of manipulation. Some reformists, like some revolutionaries, saw the sociables as more or less ignorant people who, whatever their motives for participating, can do no harm and can sometimes help. If nothing else, they add numbers, engrosan las filas. Others felt mostly impatience with them. As one leader expressed it: "We have to work with

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7 Examples are Mary Luz, Nuria and Laura in chapter 6. Most of the leading activists of Elda, chapter 9, and of Vigo, chapter 11, were reformists, too.
what there is. There is no other way. Personally, I would like to be much more reivindicativo, I would like for the movement to be better organized and much more active in "real" (ironic snicker) politics. But most people are in the movement for the outings and the festivities. So that is what we have. One can only hope that the fact of participating will open their eyes, little by little. All of us have learned little by little, after all."

This man, and many others, thought that the sociables constituted a majority in the movement. That was not my impression, but the tendency may point in that direction. It definitely varied from place to place.

One sub-category of reformists was the energetic ones. I will call them reformist doers. Sociables are not doers, revolutionaries are, by definition. Reformists may or may not be, or it may be a question of degree. There were among them a number who were similar to the revolutionaries in their energy and desire to influence society. They tried to leave their personal or ideological imprint on whatever issue they chose to work with, so they were usually highly placed in the movement, they were leaders, but unlike the revolutionaries they were not interested in critical analyses of the shortcomings of present social structures; instead they usually saw the movement as an institution within a well-organized bureaucratic state. These were the people who talked about normalization, administration, management, and collaboration with other European movements, the need to rescue the movement from its present marginality, etc.

The sociables were the members who did not see the movement as political. They would not be in the movement at all, of course, if they did not agree with most of the common reivindicaciones. If asked, they would say that of course there is a need for schools, street lighting and such things, and sometimes the people of a barrio know much better than the authorities what is needed, so they do well in asking for it. And sometimes the needs are pressing, sure. And it is true that usually only those who ask for things get anything.

The sociables, too, would go out and demonstrate when there were local issues they felt strongly about. But by local they usually meant their own barrio, not the whole town or city, and as to anything beyond that, it was "politics" and that was bad. Politicians were manipulators, liars and traitors. The sociables would not usually feel uncomfortable with leftist discourses, whether coming from revolutionaries or reformists, because they agreed with the substance of these ideas. But they would not use them actively and they would become acutely uncomfortable if someone started bandying about party labels or behaving in any way that could be interpreted as political tactics.

The sociables were not in the movement in order to change things. Reivindicación was a neutral, descriptive word to them, something one can do or not, but not at all a key symbol, nor a reason for participation. What was really important was la convivencia, being together, getting to know each other, having fun. A representative account went like this: "I have lived in my barrio for many years, but before I joined the movement, I only knew the people of my street and a few more. Now I know everybody! I am not the kind of person to stay at home by myself, so before I used to spend a lot of time in the bar (men)/ in parish activities (women). But the association is a lot more fun!" The anecdotes the sociables liked to tell were usually about festivities they had organized, outings or courses they had participated in, and, above all, the valuable friendships they had formed.

Most sociables, then, can be described as having a low level of political consciousness. They themselves expressed their attitude as "normal" or "friendly", terms they saw as opposites of "political". But there were also some revolutionaries and reformists who stressed the sociable aspect of the movement strongly. All members included the sociable aspect in their evaluation of the special advantages of the movement, but whereas some thought it secondary, a side effect, others saw it as instrumental in building other things, like working class or barrio solidarity. What set the sociables apart was that they placed sociability first, and for most this was because they saw little value or usefulness in political activities. Some, especially many women, said they did not understand anything about politics. Some reacted strongly when I said the associations were political in some sense: "If this is political, I'm leaving! Right now!"

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8 A person who did not would hardly choose to become a member at all. This may be changing, however. There are now a few associations where centrist or conservative attitudes set the agenda. There are also extreme cases of sociables who are not conservative but not anything else either, they just do not care about or understand any political discourse. This would describe e.g. many of the members of the association described in chapter 8.
There were also some who must be classed as sociables, because they placed sociability first, but who combined this attitude with a political consciousness. Their argument might go like this: "Sure, we must try to change all sorts of things in society. But as I see it, the major drawback, the cause of very many other negative things in the society we have today, is the lack of solidarity, the lack of contact between people, the inhuman anonymity of urban life. To create a good atmosphere (ambiente, a key word) is of the first importance, because only when people care about each other will they want to work for a better society, and only when they feel appreciated by others will they be able to."

**Gender and age**

The accounts given above are valid for both women and men. There was a tendency towards genderization of the three categories of activists, but it was weak. In the early years, men dominated the movement, especially among the revolutionaries, and the revolutionaries were clearly the majority then. The movement as a whole was clearly political and therefore (in the logic of the times) mainly something for men. In the 1990s there were probably still more men than women among the revolutionaries, but the proportions were not very far apart. Among the reformists they were balanced, or perhaps women dominated slightly. Among the sociables, my estimate would be that perhaps three quarters were women. But it depended very much on the characteristics of the town, of the federation and of the individual association and its barrio.

Age discriminated more than gender on this count. The older a movement member was, the greater the probability that she or he preferred a sociable discourse. The sociables dominated overwhelmingly among the pensioners. The revolutionaries did not dominate any age group, but they were mostly found in the middle-aged group and especially among people who had been in the movement for a long time, i.e. people who experienced the heroic and glorious 1970s.

Gender had clearer effects on other categorizations. Above all it discriminated as to level of activity and as to level of the organizational pyramid: the higher up, the fewer women. Men were in clear majority at the top. Most women were active only in their own association. At the federation level, the women were few, not only on the board but among the association representatives to the federation meetings. But there were always exceptions, of course. At the time of my fieldwork, the president of the federation of Valencia was a woman. And the tendency is for women's presence to increase at all levels.

Gender also sorted members according to preferred activities but not in the way one might guess. Among the people who took on formal responsibilities, such as positions as president or treasurer, or informal but well-defined responsibilities, such as the typical "areas of work" (education, health, urban planning, etc.), both genders were represented in most associations, and often about equally. I had an initial hypothesis that there would be a tendency for women to take on certain tasks, closer to traditional gender-defined tasks, for instance education, while men would tend to take on "technical" areas like urban planning or anything that would entail contacts with the media or the authorities. I did find such a tendency, but it was weak, and almost all movement members energetically denied it. In the eyes of many, even to suggest such a thing was to be suspected of wanting to divide the world according to gender, and that was "reactionary" for most movement members. Even those who recognized as a general fact that "women and men still tend to prefer different things" seemed to think that it was best, in the name of progress, to deny that when it came to describing the movement.

So the positions and areas of work were not very gendered, except for the representatives to the federation. But women's preferences were clear, especially among the sociables and definitely among those who were not activists but just participated in the activities organized by the association of their barrio. Most of the "cultural" activities were very much in the hands of women. The participants in craft courses (ceramics, macramé, dress-making, etc.) were usually all women, and the participants in literacy courses were between 80 and 100% women. Visits to museums and theaters were also dominated by women. The audience at concerts and lectures would consist of between 50 and 80% women.
There were young people in the movement, but few people under 25 participated in regular activities. They sometimes organized youth associations and would then receive help and support from the neighborhood association. The youth association might be organized independently or under the "umbrella" of the neighborhood association. Some of these youth associations, born from the initiative of young persons themselves, included as many girls as boys, for instance film clubs and art activities. But others included boys only and were really groups of friends who set up an association in order to obtain certain resources, such as use of a room where they could play music.

As a whole, however, the youngsters took few initiatives of their own. The youth activities in the movement were mostly organized by older members. The main activity was sports, and the participants were mostly boys. Among the sports activities, the two dominant ones were traditionally male and continued to be so in the movement: football (not a single girl) and chess (very few girls). The movement members who specialized in organizing sports activities usually argued that they wanted to "help the young people off the streets" and especially "away from drugs". Since the youngsters who were in the streets were mostly male, it was boys they thought of, and the activities they organized catered to boys' tastes. But this was something most of them would deny vigorously if confronted with it. They would say that nowadays girls, too, spend much time in the streets, and girls, too, like sports, and so on. True, in a way, but the fact remains, the movement youth activities attracted mostly boys.

The discourses on age centered mostly on the low proportion of young activists. There were two main topics. One said that young people were not attracted to the movement because an interest in neighborhood issues comes later in life, when you get married, buy an apartment, settle down, and perhaps especially when your children start school. The other said that young people were not attracted to the movement because most members were middle aged or older, so it did not look like much fun to the young. And that was not a temporary problem. Society had changed in such a way that these people, who were young now, would not join the movement later in life either. They would do other things. And this meant that the average age of activists would continue to rise and logically the movement would die out. It was a one-time thing, in a certain historical moment.

This second topic was not common in 1995. In 2002 it was beginning to look like a major worry in some federations, whereas in others it was denied.

Membership files and family

Somewhat related to the issue of gender is the issue of family. The common cultural constructions of "family" in the urban working class had a significance for how membership was counted and how individual autonomy was understood in relationship to membership, and in this context the difference in outlook was not so much between women and men as between persons who took the old idea of family as a unit for all purposes very much as a given and people who questioned it.

It is difficult to calculate the number of members in any one neighborhood association and therefore in the movement as a whole. As in any movement, it oscillates, people move in and out. In this movement, there was the added difficulty that even board members often had little schooling and little patience with paper work, so membership files were never up to date. There were always people who had stopped paying dues but perhaps they just forgot, no one knew if they still considered themselves members or not. "We are trying to make everyone pay by bank, but a lot of people still don't have bank accounts, so we have to go around collecting the dues, unless they come in here on their own, and some do, actually, but..." There was also, of course, an understandable wish to imagine that there were more members than there really were, and as long as the files were untidy that was relatively easy.

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9 In Vigo I had a discussion, on two occasions, with a group of men and women around 20 years old, active in youth groups in the movement. They said at first that there were as many women as men in the youth groups, but when I asked for details, it turned out there were mostly men and mostly activities for men. They had not thought of it that way before, they said. Neither the men nor the women could think at the spur of the moment of any activities they might organize that would attract girls. The women also stressed that parents "still" control girls more than boys, so the girls do not go out as much. Gender mixed activities were desirable, in principle, but they stressed that they would probably lead to conflicts because there would be lots of amorous complications.
Another and more important reason for the difficulty was the fact that in most cases "one member" was not one individual but one family, of any size and any combination of ages, genders and relationships.

Almost all of the associations counted membership by family, and my questions about this were almost always misunderstood. The idea of family is still very doxic in Spain, especially in the working class. The unspoken but taken for granted idea is that a family is a unit for all practical purposes, including membership in organizations. My question ("Do you count membership by individual or by family? When you say 'one member', do you mean one person or one whole family?") was often interpreted as a simple question of total numbers and answered triumphantly, "Sure it is by family – so if we count individuals, there are many more!" I would then try to explain what I meant, for instance asking if it was possible for a woman to be a member if her husband was not, and did not want to be. This question was usually not considered important either, and it was hardly ever understood to be about individual autonomy. Instead it was sometimes interpreted as suspicion on my part that they might discriminate against women. The answers would be something like, "Well, if a head of a family signs up, it is logical to think that the whole family takes part, isn't it? And if the wife signs up, sure she can. But we would still count her whole family as members. Women are as much persons as their husbands! And sometimes women are heads-of-family! There are separated women, divorced women... We don't discriminate against them!" The implicit contrast was not with individual membership, but with associations like peñas (cf. Cordova, chapter 12) and other traditional associations where only men can be members.

There was also often an allusion to money: "People would protest if we made everyone in a family pay the dues. If a man pays his dues, how could we stop the wife or the youngsters from participating, too?"

Such was the average discourse on membership. It varied between regions and within them. In some associations, there was awareness that the ongoing processes of individuation for women would logically require individual membership. In such associations, my questions were understood as intended and usually prompted sighs and explanations of how they tried to make people take individual "responsibility" for dues and membership status, and that they were making headway but they still had to accept family membership, too, because otherwise people would be offended, they would not understand...

It is thus impossible to calculate the exact total number of individuals who consider themselves members of the movement. It is also impossible to say anything about the proportion of women and men among the passive members.

There were a number of possible situations: individual members, women or men; families where husband and wife both considered themselves members even though only the husband had registered; families where husband and wife were individual members; families where only the husband had registered and was active and the wife would have nothing to do with the association; families where the wife was the active one and the one who was on the register; families where the wife was the active one but the husband the one on register. There were also all sorts of possible combinations of adult or near-adult children of the registered member or members. Since young people in Spain usually live with their parents until they get married, and since the age of marriage has risen considerably, many people in the movement, both women and men, both passive and active, were members through their parents. I do not think any association would set an age limit for this.

For these reasons it is also impossible to say anything exact about the age or occupational profiles of the movement. What can be said must be based on estimations of the people present at meetings, demonstrations, congresses, etc.

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10 Cf. note 6 in chapter 2. The word familia can mean nuclear family but also a kin group of any composition, and no clear conceptual line is drawn between the two. In everyday contexts, familia is equated with household. "One" member of a neighborhood association could thus be an individual, a nuclear family of any size or an extended family of any size and composition. Some associations also admitted collective membership e.g. of a whole building.

11 Cf. Subirats (1998:139). According to a regional survey, la Encuesta Regional Metropolitana de Barcelona, in 1995 only 11% of sons and 23% of daughters had moved out of their parents' home at the age of 30. And note that Barcelona is not among the places hardest hit by unemployment. There are many reasons for the rising age of marriage.
This state of the matter is interesting from the point of view of cultural analysis. The most obvious conclusion to draw is the one already mentioned: the nuclear family is a highly taken-for-granted social unit for the Spanish working class. Second, it may look as if there was little or no awareness of the possible conflicts between wives and husbands on political issues. Actually, such an awareness did exist, since especially many women but also some men told stories of conflicts around women's participation (some husbands do not want wives to go out at night, some husbands do not like wives to be politically active, some husbands get nervous if their wives know more people than they do themselves, some husbands cannot accept that their wives spend time with a lot of unrelated men, etc.) and sometimes of similar family conflicts around men's participation (some wives object to husbands who are seldom home for dinner, who do not have time for their children, who spend too much money on association business (bus and taxi rides, stamps, paper, telephone...), etc.). But this awareness was hardly ever translated into any practical measures around membership files or dues and even less into any abstract questioning of the family as the basic building block of society.

Key symbols that unite

There are certain terms that have been in frequent use throughout the history of the neighborhood movement to signify crucial activities, values or issues. These are key symbols,12 used to mobilize energies and to signify commitment or standpoints. They are words that have a special emotional meaning within the movement but at the same time connect the movement to more general cultural concepts. They are bridges. Through these words the movement becomes intelligible to the wider population, and basic more or less doxic values become semi-visible. The traffic of meanings in both directions charges these words with cultural energy, giving the movement legitimacy. The activists use them to remind themselves of the importance of what they are doing and to remind non-activists of the movement's "natural" roots in the barrios.

The foremost of these key terms has been and continues to be vecino, which literally means neighbor, and that is the word I use in English. But the English word does not have the same connotations. The Spanish word, like the English one, refers to "someone living nearby". But it also means "someone belonging to the same community". To be vecino de means to live in; i.e. the genitive de (of) refers not to another person living nearby but to the surrounding community. The closest English equivalent would then seem to be inhabitant, but because vecino is a word with layered meanings, and the main meaning is of belonging, it is much more value-laden than inhabitant. Its meaning is sometimes confused with ser natural de, literally "to be naturally from", which in Spanish bureaucratic usage means to have been born in. A vecino, then, is a person you know because he or she lives near you but also because you share a community; a vecino is someone with whom you have things in common, things that are meaningful and durable, not possible to choose or ignore, not exposed to personal whims. It is not the same as kin, but I would place the two terms in the same semantic family of terms that refer to long-term relationships of solidarity and personal knowledge.

For vecinos to come together in an association is very logical in this light. From the emic point of view, they have as much or more in common as people who work in the same profession, and they have much more in common than people who share only a political ideology. Evidently, they share interests because they use the same urban amenities and suffer the same urban problems, but the tie is less instrumental than that. The feeling I detected was of some sort of shared mystical essence. It is not verbalized as essence, but emotional references to vecinos are common and legitimate. "I had to help him, you see – he was my vecino."

12 A key symbol, according to Ortner (1973), is a word or thing the people studied say is culturally important, and something they seem aroused by, not indifferent to, and around which there is some cultural elaboration. It may also be surrounded by cultural restrictions or sanctions. Key symbols can be summarizing, "expressing, representing for the participants in an emotionally powerful and relatively undifferentiated way, what the system means to them" (1973:1339), or elaborating, "providing vehicles for sorting out complex and undifferentiated feelings and ideas" (1973:1340). Cf. also Strauss and Quinn 1997.
From the noun vecino an adjective, vecinal, can be formed. It is used mainly inside the neighborhood movement (el movimiento vecinal), and refers to activities and values of the movement. But the connotations of closeness and solidarity of the root word carry over to the adjective, so that it can be used in a wider sense. For instance, one CAVE document states that neighborhood associations defend "the vecinal interests of the community" (cf. note 22, chapter 2). That does not mean "the interests of the neighborhood movement" only; the meaning is closer to social interests or common interests or democratic interests.

For people from a village, the vecinal essence arises from the history of the village, which in most cases does indeed unite its people deeply, determining their economic activities, their standard of living, their cultural outlook and to a high degree actual kinship. To be from a village is an attribute that can be inherited, so that the children of village people are "from" the village even if they have never lived there.

That is not so for urbanites. They are vecinos of their town or city, but that is a property that cannot be inherited, and it is not very emotionally charged. "Vecino de Madrid" can be translated as "inhabitant of Madrid" without much loss of meaning.

However, most urbanites are also vecinos of a barrio. And a barrio is to some extent the urban equivalent to village. Here the word "vecino" has similar connotations as it has in a village.

The neighborhood movement is said to be a movement "of the barrios". The activists of the movement constantly refer to barrio people, barrio activities, barrio life, and so on. The word barrio is both an empirical referent and an ideological marker. For instance, at a political meaning, someone who wants to express a different opinion might shout to a speaker, "You have no idea about life in the barrios!" and the speaker might answer, "What I defend is precisely barrio action."

Outside the movement, too, the word has obvious connotations beyond the basic reference to place of residence. For example, it is not unusual to hear acquaintances that meet by chance at a bus stop downtown saying to each other, "So, we are going home to the barrio!" This is not just a factual remark; it is a reminder of something that constitutes a tie between the two persons. It means approximately, "You and I now meet here, downtown, but we belong somewhere else, and that means that we can talk to each other."

The English word for barrio might be ward, quarter, residential area, urban area, neighborhood... But there seems to be no totally satisfying way of covering the culturally most significant meanings of the Spanish word. Not even the incorporation of the word barrio into North American English, meaning an area where speakers of Spanish are dominant, comes anywhere near what the word means in Spain.

What does it mean to talk about barrio life, barrio activities, barrio people, and so on? What are the emotional, political and rhetorical charges of the word, and how are they used in what contexts by whom?

Castells (1986) finds it convenient, for some analytical purposes, to distinguish between a barrio in the sense of a territory, delimited by more or less objective markers, and a barrio in the sense of community, people who have a sense of belonging together. But the emic Spanish definition is definitely a mixture of the two, and it is the very mixture of the two that gives it its full meaning.

The authors of an article on Cordova define barrio as an urban area that is separated from other urban areas by some clear spatial markers, within which there is an overlapping of functional specialization, a feeling of belongingness among the inhabitants, some cultural characteristics and

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13 To mention just a few well-known ones from among a wealth of studies of Spanish villages, studies which all coincide on this point and usually emphasize it: Brandes 1975, Freeman 1970 and 1979, Lisón Tolosana 1977, Luque Baena 1974, Sánchez Pérez 1990, Velasco 1988. Gilmore 1980 stresses class differences. Villages vary, however, as to the physical presence of persons from various classes; often the landowners do not live in the villages from which their income originates. There may be other divisions, e.g. ideological ones or enduring conflicts and alliances, but the general point still holds.

14 If one can be "from" a village without ever having lived there, only because one's parents came from the village, then kinship seems to be the overriding criterion. On the other hand, however, people can be named "children of the village" (hijos del pueblo) as an honorary measure, when they do something for a village, even if they have no kinship ties to it. And having parents from the village may not be quite enough to be "really naturally from" the village – witness the custom of emigrated women to come back to the village to give birth in order to ensure the child's tie to the village.

The key lies in the overlapping of various possible criteria. It is the fact that they do overlap (albeit to varying extent) that gives the barrios of Spanish cities their vitality and makes the idea of barrio a charged symbol.\(^\text{15}\)

To *hacer barrio*, to make or construct barrio or barrio life, means mainly to foment social interaction and build up organizational structures in the area. But it can also mean to give signs of identity to a barrio: agreement on name and other terminology, establishment of festivities, generally recognized borders, and so on.

When neighborhood activists talk of "*hacer barrio*" then, they mean that the thickness of the symbol "barrio" does not quite correspond to the number of overlapping layers in the real barrio in question. Reality does not correspond well enough to the cultural concept, so reality has to be changed. A barrio that has little cultural specificity must be given some new symbols of identity to make up for it. A barrio of recent construction, with no cultural specificity at all and little feeling of belongingness, but probably clear spatial markers, must be worked on, people must get together and do things, the space must be filled with social meaning. Social heterogeneity is acceptable in barrios with other kinds of cultural specificity – for example, the authors just quoted are thinking of some of the "historic" barrios of central Cordova. The barrios constructed during the great wave of urbanization in Spain, the 1960s and 1970s, were planned for certain income levels, so there was no problem with social heterogeneity to begin with. But with the passing of time, things happen: people move socially and spatially, new urban developments raise or lower property values, and so on, so heterogeneity enters the picture. This may mean the end of togetherness, perhaps even the end of the neighborhood association.\(^\text{16}\) But it may also be that people do not want to leave their barrio, they would rather stay in cramped apartments below their economic possibilities than rip up their social roots. Or they may improve and repair their apartments, endlessly, and perhaps buy the one next door and combine them into one larger one. This happens especially where the *hacer barrio* project has been successful, so that social belonging wins over income barriers.

The slogan *hacer barrio* may be the most central one of all the key symbols that are important for all members of the movement. It is not at all controversial. On the contrary, it is so common and so accepted that it may not even be seen as a slogan any longer. It is no longer even a metaphor, it is just what one does. It has lost much of its original emotional charge, but it is still meaningful in a very positive way.

\(^\text{15}\) To complicate matters, there is also a derived word, *barriada*. It usually connotes a barrio of lower standing and/or a smaller unit (not a subunit of a barrio but a separate but small barrio). It is legitimate simplification, I believe, to avoid the word *barriada* in this study. I will only use barrio. But just to indicate the rhetorical potential inherent in these words, let me tell an anecdote: A friend and neighbor of mine in Madrid, many years ago, once said that he admired people like me and my husband who lived in "*barriadas*" without really having to. But he then went on to say that our conditions of life were nevertheless not the same as his, because we would probably move out sooner or later. Until he said this, I had never thought of our barrio as a *barriada*, much less as an undesirable place to live. Our discussion led to a wider debate among our friends about what the words *barrio* and *barriada* meant and what sort of thing was the area where we lived. For each person who took part in the debate there must have been at least two or three different opinions. There could be no conclusion, but people enjoyed the arguing because the issue was culturally interesting. What was clear was that most people thought of our area (which was a working class subunit of the nowadays clearly middle class Alameda de Osuna) as a *barrio*, but it was appropriate and effective to call it a *barriada* when you wanted to devalue it rhetorically. When my husband and I answered our neighbor, we protested that we lived in a *barrio*, not in a *barriada*. For me, at the time, that was just an exercise of vocabulary; for my husband it was probably a way of warding off what he (and I, too) felt was an exaggerated compliment. Our friend was then upset; somehow our saying "*barrio*" when he said "*barriada*" erected an ideological barrier between us, as if my husband and I were blinding ourselves to social realities, perhaps trying to fool ourselves that we were better off than we were. *Barrio* is not only slightly higher on the social scale than *barriada*, or more neutral as to hierarchy; it is also a term with more positive than negative connotations. *Barriada* has overtones of closeness, too, but the negative connotations (of precariousness, danger, social failure) are much stronger.

\(^\text{16}\) This seemed to be happening to one of the emblematic neighborhood associations in Madrid, that of Malasaña, in 1995. The social mixture of that barrio had changed radically and become shot through with barriers high enough to impede solidarity and largely communication. These changes continued to worsen the possibilities for neighborhood activism until in 2002 very little was left of this once very active and successful association.
A barrio is a place where people know each other, or know about each other, more or less. It depends on size, of course, but networks of interaction are always denser within a barrio than between them, almost by definition. A barrio is a place where I feel at home. Crossing the borders between my barrio and the outside world, I feel I sally forth into something less comfortable, and conversely, coming home, I can relax when I cross that line again.

The word barrio can be used about urban areas where people of means live. One of the most elegant areas of Madrid is called Barrio Salamanca. But in contemporary everyday usage, a barrio is usually a working class area, and the word connotes something common, normal, unpretentious.

It is a residential area in a literal sense, i.e. a place where people live, but the Spanish expression *área residencial* is something very different from barrio. It is often used by housing promoters about an area in order to give it a flavor of high social standing, in order even to avoid the word barrio. The word barrio sounds good when you talk about friends and about being at home, but it does not sound good when you advertise housing. There is also, definitely, a class flavor to these words. Middle class people prefer to say *área residencial*, because barrio sounds a bit dirty or pre-modern to them, while *área residencial* sounds cold or ridiculously pretentious in working class ears.

Then again, even if a barrio is a place where people live, as opposed to a central business district or an industrial area, it is seldom purely residential, so the expression residential area rings false for that reason, too. The word barrio conjures up a place of apartment buildings, and it evokes an image of people in the streets, going in and out of stores, walking children to school, greeting shop-owners, going to their corner bar or to their music lessons or to the premises of some local club. It is an image of noise, crowds, accessibility, whereas the expression *área residencial* suggests trees, silence, privacy, and perhaps one-family homes.

Today, barrio is mostly an urban word. If a place is too small to be socially subdivided, it cannot have barrios, since barrios are parts. But most villages, even small villages, have their social divisions, and they are often spatially marked. If a village has nothing else, it will have one central, more prestigious area, and one barrio. But basically, barrio is an urban word. Towns have several barrios and big cities have many. And big city barrios are somehow more clearly barrios than those of smaller municipalities. The present meaning of the word has taken on many big city connotations: far away from downtown, bad public transportation, population of rural origin, low educational level, low incomes or at least not above medium, probably drug problems and petty crime, probably cheaply built housing, lack of public services, lack of "green spaces", etc.

Barrios come in many different sizes. In general, big cities have big barrios and small towns have small barrios. In Madrid or Valencia, barrios of 20,000, 30,000 or even 50,000 inhabitants are not unusual, but places like Elda or Linares, with totals of around 50,000 – 60,000 inhabitants, have fifteen or twenty barrios each, so they are much smaller.

When barrios grow, they may subdivide. But this is a slow process, and often painful or conflictive, since feelings of identity are involved. I know of one barrio in Valencia that has grown to four or five times its size since the 1970s. It is still conceptualized as one barrio and it has only one neighborhood association. There have been several attempts to launch other neighborhood associations in it. To me it seems as if that would be a logical step, even necessary, but the efforts have so far failed, for different reasons but always with much local and personal tension. It is not a matter to be resolved in a cool rational manner.

Barrios have names and more or less recognized borders. It is possible to paint them in different colors on a map and count them. Sometimes they coincide with municipal districts, but usually there are several barrios to a district. Neighborhood associations usually cover one barrio each, but there can also be various associations in one barrio, and some areas, especially central and upper class districts have none. Elda, for example has four districts but some twenty barrios and seventeen neighborhood associations. Cordova has eleven municipal districts, each district has between five and ten barrios, and there are some sixty neighborhood associations in all.

There can of course be different opinions about numbers and borders. They can be manipulated and they can be used as arguments in conflicts.

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17 *Or arrabal*, an approximate synonym, common in villages, never used in cities.
The barrios are differentiated from each other in various but overlapping ways. A "natural" border, like a through street, a streetcar line, a river or an industrial area usually sets a limit to interaction. People do not cross them to go shopping, to go to the bar or, usually, to see their friends. They also prefer to find schools for their children as close to home as possible and in a place of easy and safe access. Since people tend to cluster according to approximate social class, and since promoters tend to build housing of a quality and price that fits with the area, because it would otherwise be difficult to sell, each barrio is usually defined within an approximate range of incomes. Since students and teachers try to settle close to institutions of higher learning, since artists and prostitutes and office workers also try to live close to their respective places of work, and so on, many (but not all) barrios also have a specific life style, visible in the types of bars and stores in the area and the clothes people wear in the street.

In the big cities to which the migrants from the villages flocked during the intense era of urbanization, some barrios were defined according to the places of origin of the migrants. In Madrid and Barcelona there are many barrios with a definite Andalusian flavor. One barrio in Madrid has a sizable proportion of people originating from one single village in the province of Jaén (Molina 1984). Benituria, the barrio I studied in Valencia, was more representative in that it had received immigrants from all over Spain, but Andalusians dominated, and in the second largest category, Castilians, there was a sizable contingent from one province (Thurén 1988).

Once a barrio obtains a reputation as being of a certain kind, this works as a self-fulfilling prophecy, attracting more people of that kind. As the Spanish saying has it, "God creates them, and they get together." (Dios los cria y ellos se juntan.) Meaning: There are many different kinds of people in this world, and they all tend to find others like themselves, no matter how peculiar they are. It is a saying that can be interpreted as a recommendation of tolerance, but it also reflects the tendency to search for social homogeneity. And perhaps a micro-ethnocentrism: "The world is full of strange people who are not like us!"

Of course no barrio stays the same forever. On the contrary, in recent decades of city reorganization, most barrios have a social history. And these micro-histories depend, of course, on the history of the town or city in question. There are examples in the chapters on Elda, Linares, Vigo and Cordova. In chapter 4, Carmen's story includes hint of changes in two barrios.

I have already mentioned the word reivindicación (claim, grievance, demand, vindication, etc.). In Spain, it is the common term, in all political contexts, for what one wants to attain. It can be used in a way similar to the English "issue". It also belongs in the same family of ideas as ideology. The adjective, reivindicativo, is used to describe an action or an organization, meaning approximately "related to demands, related to struggle, critical, oppositional." It can even be used about an individual to describe her as committed. It has overtones of assertive or determined. Its opposites would be soft, tame, duped, harmless. For instance, "Carmen used to seem shy, but that was only for lack of experience. Now she is very reivindicativa."

Reivindicación is a key word today, especially in the discourses I have called revolutionary. It is used to distinguish this type of activist from others whom they consider precisely too tame. But it is a key symbol for other activists, too. It is a constant in the history of the movement. A person who feels that reivindicación is a wholly negative word probably does not stay in the movement. Where I described, above, how the issues of the neighborhood struggles have changed over time, a Spanish text would have said reivindicaciones instead of issues. Activists of a reformist bent protest if they are accused of not being very reivindicativos, at the same time as their discourse includes criticism of a too reivindicativo style, which they consider old-fashioned. In saying this they think mainly of methods such as demonstrations, occupation of offices and other more or less violent protests. To simplify, one might say that the reformists are the ones who believe in reivindicaciones as issues and goals but not in being reivindicativo as style or method.

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18 This is evidently the result of a historical process. For a theoretical analysis of such processes in capitalist societies, see Harvey 1979. Spanish cities have gone through this process recently and in a short time, which means that they are usually not so clearly subdivided according to class as in most other European countries. In my study of Valencia in 1982–83, I found that many barrios were socially mixed (Thurén 1988:9–10). Today they are much less so. The process continues.
Sociables have less of a relationship to this symbol. But they might well pepper their discourse with the word carencia. It means lack, deficiency, problem, shortage, need. It is related to the verb carecer, which means to lack, to not have. Carencias were what barrios suffered from, the reason for the movement to exist, and the reason for many individuals to join; it was what the associations analyzed, pointed to and worked to overcome. Its connotations overlap partially with those of reivindicación, but whereas the latter has to do with the struggle aspect, carencia has to do with the need aspect. An extended meaning might be injustice. Carencia is a negative passive term, reivindicación is the positive and active thing, it is what you do about a carencia.

Carencia is a more acceptable word than reivindicación for sociables and for people outside the movement. It sounds objective, while reivindicación sounds political, ideological. But for all movement activists, carencia is a key symbol along with the others. When people talk about the movement's history, for example, they stress that it was born out of need, because the barrios used to suffer from so many carencias, or that people join when they become aware of the carencias of their barrio or when they realize that carencias are not natural and eternal.

Inquietud, a noun, or the corresponding adjective inquieto / inquieta, are common words people use when describing their own motivations. The root is the same as in quiet, plus the negative prefix. Inquietud is the opposite of calm and quiet, it is something that stirs inside and moves a person, and when a person does not feel like being quiet, still, stay in one place, but on the contrary feels like doing things, moving around, speaking up, then that person is inquieto/inquieta. These words can be used in many contexts in Spain, for example about unruly children, but in political contexts they have positive connotations. Inquietud is similar to political consciousness and initiative and critical-mindedness, all wrapped up together. However, it does not refer to having taken a specific position. The word is not usually used about others, but about self. "I was very inquieta," says a woman to explain why she gravitated to leftist opinions in spite of being educated in a conservative family. "I had a lot of inquietud," says a man to explain why a good job and a happy family life was not enough to fill his life. The word can also mean dissatisfaction and be used to explain for example why a person leaves one political context, e.g. a party, and finds another one, e.g. a neighborhood association. And it can be used to mean political opinions/interests: "Young people today do not join neighborhood associations, they have other inquietudes."

Reformists and revolutionaries usually associate the word with some sort of political energy whereas sociables may mean only that they are bored if they do not get to meet a lot of people.

Key symbols that separate

All the symbols mentioned so far are rallying cries, valid for all activists, even if the exact meanings vary. Let us now look at some terms that are also commonly heard and also heavily loaded with meaning, but that are positive for some, negative for others. They mark distinctions between different discourses within the movement and they are given different references and evaluations, according to the discourse a speaker subscribes to.

I have already alluded to rationalization, modernization, and similar concepts. In one sense they are shared and highly valued by all activists. Along with freedom, justice and democracy they were key symbols of the whole anti-Franco movement of the 1960s and 1970s.19 They were key symbols for persons who called themselves – and still call themselves, although the word is no

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19 They were then, and to some extent continue to be, used in a very different sense from the current neo-liberal one of pointing to the advantages of market economy. Since the Franco regime was considered "rightist" and had promoted a brand of "wild capitalism" (starting in the late 1950s), rationalization and modernization became leftist words which placed capitalism in the irrational box and pointed to the need for planning and redistribution in order to make modern amenities, like effective health care, workable. Undogmatic thinking was seen as the epitome of freedom and the only guarantee for justice, against tyranny. In today's hegemonic neo-liberal discourse, words like "tyranny", "dogmatic thinking" and "irrationality" are used to refer to the supposedly leftist dictatorships labeled communist. In Spain they were used to refer to a rightist dictatorship and the version of capitalism it presented as "natural" and good, while promoting overall anti-modernist discourses. In Spain today, there is a confusing clash between these two discourses, as the memories of the Franco regime and the discourses opposing it recede from living memory and new, globalized discourses take over center stage.
longer the fad word it used to be – progressives. In another sense, however, they have become key words in one specific discourse within the movement, the discourse of reformist doers and especially of PSOE sympathizers.

In this discourse they are used together with terms like *gestión* (administration, management), *organización racional* (rational organization), *técnicas de organización* (organizational techniques). This discourse argues that the movement needs updating and implies that the grass roots ways of doing things are inefficient. Another common word in these contexts is *profesionalización*. The literal meaning is professionalization, but it is not usually used to argue for employing experts. That is evidently beyond the economic means of the movement and would probably be ideologically doubtful even within this discourse. What is meant is rather something like upgrading of knowledge, *formación* (education) of activists.

Related to this is a discourse centered on volunteer work and service. The PSOE sympathizers tended to be the ones who used it, while most others, except some sociables, opposed it. According to this discourse, the core idea of the movement had always been to serve society, and for that to continue to be so one must adapt to changing times; in the 1960s what was needed were schools and housing and civil liberties; what is needed today are new things and the methods to obtain them must also be new ones. The time to oppose the state because it is the state is past; now is the time to collaborate in harmony for a better life for all.

The central term in this type of discourse is *voluntariado*. It is derived from *voluntario*, volunteer, and means any organization or field of action where people work without pay. It also refers to the category of volunteers. For example the phrase "the voluntariado of this town has grown a lot recently" can mean either that the number of volunteers has increased or that the area of volunteer activities has been enlarged. The word is most commonly used to refer to social work carried out by religious charity organizations, or the Red Cross, Unicef, and similar.

In some federations it had become fashionable to speak about the movement as a movement of volunteers, a movement in the service of society, an organization of people willing to give of their time to whatever needs to be done in their community. One must do things, not just ask that others do things. Demonstrations are necessary, sometimes, but much more energy should be devoted to courses, festivities, anti-drug campaigns, procuring practical help to the elderly, and so on.

When the *reivindicativo* discourse argued that this was co-optation or neutralization, or that it would turn the movement into an old-fashioned charitable organization, similar to parish work, the voluntariado discourse rebutted that a civil society must have secularized voluntary services; if you let the Church monopolize them, it gets too much power. When the *reivindicativo* discourse argued the need for political opposition, vigilance of democratic institutions, and struggle for increased and participatory democracy, the voluntariado discourse had it that such things are better taken care of by political parties and that the neighborhood movement cannot take a political stand, anyway, because it has no ideological unity.

Activists who did not participate in the voluntariado discourse often felt insulted by it, overlooked, neglected, despised. These were the grass roots that knew they were grass roots, people with little schooling. Usually they felt great respect for such words as *formación*, but they knew it was not meant for them.

A more elaborated opposition to the discourse of rationalization originates in a construction of it as opposed to such values as *reivindicación*. The "rationalists" may say they are in the same

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20 Analyses of this discourse, its opposition to the discourse of traditionalism and its relation to Enlightenment ideas can be found in two previous books of mine: Thurén 1988, throughout but especially chapters 6, 12 and 14, and Thurén, forthcoming, chapter 4.

21 Cf. the example of José Luis, above.

22 One example is the story of Carmen, chapter 4. When the PSOE "placed their boy" in her association, she felt she was no longer as valuable for the association as she had been. She could not find quite the right words to express what happened, she called it just "this thing that happened later," but she was sure that it had hurt the association. Likewise, she was put off when the municipal office started requiring written documents. She herself could not produce them. But in this case she did not interpret the change as contempt for her type of person; instead she saw it as a sign of cultural change, away from the pleasure of conversation, towards bureaucratic "cold" techniques. Others associated the requirements of written documents with the dictatorship and attempts to control the movement.
struggle, but their discourse undermines it in practice, was the argument. That discourse concentrates energies elsewhere and devalues the central human values expressed in such key words as *participación* (participation, activity), *convivencia* (being together, sociability), *solidaridad* (solidarity) and *ambiente* (atmosphere). These are key symbols for both revolutionaries, reformists and sociables albeit with slightly varying interpretations, so this rebuttal is effective.

*Participación* can refer to a specific, rather intellectual, political idea, related to consciousness raising and democratization. It is often used in the same context as *democracia participativa*, participatory democracy, an important idea for many of the movement leaders, but little used and perhaps not well understood by the rank and file. It refers to developing the idea of democracy and present political structures, to bring decision-making closer to the people and thus transcending parliamentary democracy.

*Participación* can also mean simply to be active in the movement, to get out of your house, to meet other people, to do something for your barrio. Its opposite would be passivity, individualism, selfishness. In this sense the word is used above all when talking about women or youth and when discussing efforts to make people understand what the movement is all about.

*Convivencia* and *ambiente* are commonly used Spanish words and concepts of generally positive value. They are both related to the cultural appreciation of sociability. 23 *Convivencia* refers to people getting together for any purpose or for no special purpose at all. To be alone is synonymous with feeling lonely, according to this cultural logic. The intimate companionship of one or two friends, or a few family members, is certainly positive, but a person also needs to surround herself with a larger number of others every so often. When a sufficient number of people get together, *ambiente* is created. *Convivencia* is getting together; *ambiente* is the good feeling that is born in the togetherness. *Ambiente* has connotations of plenty of people and good vibrations. There are overtones of "the more people the better" in it (Thurén 1988:222, Brandes 1975).

In the neighborhood movement, *convivencia* is a term often used together with *hacer barrio*. It is seen as a precondition for solidarity and political consciousness to arise. *Convivencia* is necessary to create *ambiente*, and *ambiente* in turn means, among other things, a good amount of occasions for *convivencia*. A barrio without *ambiente* is not a real barrio, it lacks personality, it must be socially "made". The absence of *convivencia* is seen as an important *carencia*. So it is a central value for all.

But the revolutionary and reformist discourses also criticize the sociable type of activist for stressing *convivencia* at the expense of struggle. "Some people just want to have fun."

*Solidaridad* means solidarity and has approximately the same connotations as in English. And just like in political discourses in other parts of the world, no one opposes it, but there are differences in how often one pronounces the word, what importance it is accorded as a goal or as a tool, and so on. *Solidaridad* is a key symbol for the neighborhood movement as a whole, but not as specific to it as most of the other symbols mentioned here. It is rather a symbol and value that unites all anti-conservative forces in the Spanish political field. It is felt to be a key mark of "left" ideology, thinking and feeling. A discourse that downplays solidaridad is not a leftist discourse. That is one reason there is widespread unease in the neighborhood movement about the rationalist discourse.

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23 In another context, I have analyzed this as a disposition, in Bourdieu's sense, and called it *philia*. I argue that it is a widely shared disposition in Spain and other Mediterranean societies to appreciate friendly communication in contexts where many persons participate. It is usually called friendship (*amistad*) in Spain, but it is not to be confused with the Northern European concept of friendship as something intimate, having to do with long term trust and a certain social exclusiveness in the relationship. Such friendship also exists, but what I am referring to here is rather a special form of integrative behavior, a cultural habit or principle. It is not a cultural concept, since it has no specific term or any emic description. It is culturally emphasized as valuable, but interpreted as human nature. It is enjoyment of human presence. It is a principle that makes the differences between various kinds of alliances, such as friendship, kinship, neighborhood, godparenthood, etc. unimportant. It has an instrumental aspect, but it cannot be reduced to instrumentality, because it is built on choice, individuality, personal sympathy. Simplifying, it is a disposition to take for granted that human companionship is satisfactory *in itself* (Thurén 1988:218–223).
The key symbols of the gender order: "home-street" versus "persons"

The key metaphor, the basic figure of thought for the gender order in Spain is: women:home :: men:street (la mujer es de la casa; el hombre es de la calle) (Del Valle 1985, Del Valle 1997, Durán 1988, Enders and Radcliff 1999, Harding 1975, Sánchez Pérez 1990). It is contested. But it is old, widespread and strong. Without it, it is hard to understand anything at all that is said about gender in Spain.

I can foresee that Spanish readers of an expansive bent will protest this statement, saying that this figure of thought should be criticized, not reinforced by presenting it as ethnographically central. But one must distinguish between a political discourse (what I want) and a descriptive one (what there is, or I seem to see). Feminist analysis must try to deconstruct dichotomies that underpin gender orders, and the first step in that direction must be to describe them. The separation of social spheres into public and private has been the object of a very large number of feminist analyses, especially when it comes to topics that have to do with politics and especially in the Mediterranean area.24

Radical Spaniards have rejected the gendered meanings of the home-street-metaphor for over a generation now, and that has not been without some practical effects, and naturally I agree that it is important for critical reasoning to oppose such a profound and profoundly conservative metaphor. The criticism of it is a clear example of expansive discourse pushing at the limits of doxa. But it is useless to pretend that the gendered meanings of home-street have disappeared. Those meanings are still there in the sense that everyone understands them, and for many they continue to be important explanations of how reality works. And as long as the dichotomy itself is taken for granted, it will be hard to cleanse it completely of gendered overtones.

Women in Spain have never been totally confined to their homes in a literal physical sense. There is a spatial base in the dichotomy, a concrete and easy to understand image, but then, as metaphors usually function, the figure of thought uses that base to make more subtle, abstract matters appear self-evident (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Ortner 1973, Sacks 1980, Sapir and Crocker 1977, Thurén 1997a, Turner 1974). As I understand it, and as most analysts agree, and as most everyday conversations imply, the dichotomy is about separating two domains of activity. One could be called the private one (but that is also a metaphor) and concerns the home, the household, all reproductive activities that have to do with family life, and, since this domain has been gendered female, by extension anything that women are and do. The other one could be called the public one (also a metaphor, of course) and concerns social life beyond the family, e.g. money, politics, friendship outside of kin relationships and, since this domain has been gendered male, by extension anything that men are and do.

The fact that women sometimes work for money does not in itself invalidate the genderization of the dichotomy. Women can "help" earning money, when that is necessary for family well-being, just as men can "help" with domestic chores in emergencies.25 Women can also participate in "political" activities as long as they conceptually stay within the "home" sphere, for instance

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24 The relevant literature is too extensive to list here. Even if we limit ourselves to feminist anthropology, it is overwhelming, having been a central topic for debate ever since Michelle Rosaldo launched it thirty years ago (in Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974). I could not even begin to summarize it here. Some interesting ideas and cases concerning the topic in various Mediterranean versions are found in Ardener 1981, Beltrán and Maquieira 2001, Cowan 1991 and Shami 1997. A short but useful overview of Marxist and feminist uses of the concepts is found in Poluha and Rosendahl 2002.

25 For an interesting interpretation of the "traditional" women's role as very flexible, see Masur 1984. According to this study of Andalusian village women, their lives are certainly centered on private life, but that includes work for money, whenever needed, just as it includes agricultural labor. I find it more fruitful to interpret the flexibility in the light of a gendered division of labor according to the spheres of main responsibility. "Work" is "public", so it is mainly men's responsibility, but women can, should and will "help" if necessary. They must always adapt this "work" (for money), however, to their primary responsibility, "domestic duties". This is so even where women work full time as a matter of course, as in Elda (cf. chapter 9).
defending their husbands' jobs or working conditions. The main responsibilities in the division of tasks are still clearly defined in gendered terms, and the home-street metaphor is often reproduced in new forms within each domain.

What is happening today is something more radical. Today, very many Spanish women, probably a large majority among the younger ones, take it for granted that an important aspect of their life project is working for money, even having a "career". Politics, too, is a field that is considered to be just as accessible for women as for men, according to present hegemonic discourses. Fewer women than men are attracted to it, and those who are will usually discover that there are gendered obstacles. But even so, in discourses of an expansive kind, it would sound contradictory, perhaps even reactionary, to stress such problems. What is usually stressed, instead, is the fact of change, the fact of widening opportunities, the fact of at least partial degendering of the whole field and strong degendering of some sectors within it.

But the old metaphor is still there. Many persons of expansive bent feel contempt for it, but no one can deny its existence. And in the neighborhood movement, where academic feminism is unknown and activist feminism is not very well known, the old metaphor is usually used to interpret the new trends. For example, the most common expression for women's participation, whether in the labor market or in politics, is that women are now "coming out of the home" (están saliendo de casa). 29

In the neighborhood movement, most debates on women concern women's participation and are phrased in terms that vary this theme. "We must get women out of their homes!" "Most women still prefer to be in their homes." (Plenty of examples are found in chapters 5–12.)

Both women and men in the movement express themselves in this way. Some people (men or women) consider it an important thing just to get women physically out of their homes, to come to the association, even if it be just to do things they might just as well do at home, e.g. handicraft. At least they get to know each other and lose their fear of physically going to such a politically defined place as the association premises, is the argument (cf. especially chapters 8 and 11). For others (women or men), that is no argument, it is just a new way of doing old things and will change nothing, because, they say, women in handicraft courses are still "actually" "in the home".

The old metaphor seems to point, too, to an irreducible difference between women and men. At the same time, the dominant "progressive" discourses insist on the importance of not separating the genders, because "we are all persons" (todos somos personas).

This has been a major issue in Spanish feminism (cf. chapter 5 and note 13 in chapter 1), and inside the neighborhood movement it could poison debates once in a while, not because participants referred to feminist debates, which they usually did not know much about, but on the contrary, because the cultural terms were such that the contradiction between similarity ("we are all persons") and revalorization ("women are just as valuable as men") was sometimes inevitable, and therefore cropped up here as well as in feminist contexts. The issue can be very confounding, whether or not you are familiar with the theoretical debates around similarity-difference. When it came up in neighborhood associations, people would usually give up after a short while, shrug and abandon the debate with comments like, "Whatever you say, as a woman I know that I am not like a man," or "Let's just stop talking about women and men all the time – we are all persons!" This confusion was

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27 Schematically put: A is to B as Aa is to Ba and as Ba is to Bb, and so on, along ever smaller divisions. Cf. note 25 in chapter 5.

28 Since social services to alleviate domestic duties have not increased in the same degree as the cultural change would require, and since domestic duties have not been degendered to any substantial degree, and since younger women have begun to refuse a heavy double or triple burden, one solution is for them to decide not to have children. Cf. Oeveraas 2003, who sees this not just as a practical matter but also as a rigidity in the construction of motherhood as self-abnegation; she says that there is no room for such motherhood in the model of womanhood that young urban women subscribe to. Whatever the reasons, the statistical fact is that the fertility rates of Spain are now among the lowest in Europe.

29 This is true in general, not just for the neighborhood movement. Cf. e.g. Forum de Política Feminista 2001:13–14 or Nuño Gómez 1999:155–156.
reproduced on an organizational level when the neighborhood movement instituted a "women's structure" (cf. chapter 5).

From the point of view of Spanish feminists, the discourses on gender in the neighborhood movement are unforgivably timid. From the point of view of most neighborhood activists, feminism is a largely unknown set of ideas but probably not applicable to "real issues" or "vecinal issues" or "working class issues", and therefore not relevant for the neighborhood movement. The word feminism produces unreflected rejection in the minds of many. Other activists think that they are actually doing feminism, or that the neighborhood movement as a generally "progressive" movement can and should embrace feminism just as it embraces issues on the environment, peace, anti-racism, etc. – but they will usually qualify such statements with references to the common negative reactions to the word feminism. For instance: "We can work with feminist issues, but we must call them something else, or we won't get anywhere."

In this indirect way, the feminist movement and its discourses and politics form part of the context of the debates on women's issues inside the neighborhood movement. The ambivalent relationship between the two movements is further explored in chapter 5, and chapters 11 and 12 offer ethnographic illustrations.

I have described all these key symbols as connected with varying intensity to the three main discourses: revolutionary, reformist and sociable. I hope it has become clear that they are possible to adapt and manipulate as circumstances require. This is so because they are all, in varying degrees, common to the movement as a whole. Members usually prefer one type of discourse and tend to use the symbols associated with it more than the others, but the whole set must be seen as a repertoire that can be used creatively.

When it comes to the modes of management of meaning there is less flexibility. Since the movement as a whole is permeated by an expansive mode of management of meaning, creative use of symbols and discourses is common and stimulates more of the same. Not all activists are wholly comfortable with expansivist thought habits, however, having been educated in a more doxic world and often taught to be cautious because of the repressive society they grew up in (dictatorship, tight social control of villages, Church moralism dominating all formal education). Contrasting habits of management of meaning can lead to just as complicated conflicts as ideological differences. But I interpret the ubiquitous references to "learning" as being in part about training in expansive modes, practicing the art of pushing at the limits of the universe of discourse, opening up doxa for critical scrutiny.

After three chapters of general description, it is now time for an encounter with a real human being. Carmen is a revolutionary and quite representative for the type of activist who joined the movement in the early years.