

Sónia Dantas-Ferreira

Women's Experiences: Memories of Portuguese Revolution

In this article I attempt to analyze the social memories of wives of soldiers in service on April 25th 1974, through the methodology of analysis recommended by Adele Clarke (2005), using data collected in 11 interviews conducted between 2005 and 2008 under a PhD project. As a conceptual framework I adopt the perspective of social memory in the tradition of Halbwachs (1992) and following Marc Augé (2001) and Paul Ricoeur (2004), which emphasizes the social and collective memory and points out the dynamic role it plays in building a meaning to the world. This analysis takes into account the dimensions of work, family, education, politics and social life, social and economic conditions and the expectations and dreams on which the interviewees draw comparisons between 1974 and the present and also produce judgments.

Keywords:

social memory; revolution; women's experiences

1 Introduction

In 2014, the Revolution of Carnations turned 40 and, exactly as on the 25th and 30th anniversaries, there were many celebrations and more or less mediated moments, with new and old actors, rediscovering - directions, (un)spinning memories and stories. This commemorative impetus lies in the need to make sense of the past as a way to understand the present and think about the future, both individually and collectively. This is why people always call on their memory in this ongoing process of world meaning-making and identity building.

April 25th, as an event recorded in the Portuguese collective memory and therefore subject to different representations in the current political-ideological framework, is therefore established as a *place of memory*. In this paper, I attempt to analyze the social memories of wives of soldiers in service on April 25th 1974, through the methodology of analysis recommended by Adele Clarke (2005; 2006), using data collected in 11 interviews conducted between 2005 and 2008 under a PhD project.

The method suggested by Adele Clarke (2005) has its roots in *Grounded Theory*, and like Charmaz's (2000) works, seeks to apply the methods of *Grounded Theory* as flexible, heuristic strategies in which attention to meaning allows for a more interpretive, constructive, insightful understanding of the phenomena in question (Clarke and Friese, 2007).

This is a process of flexible reflexive analysis since the categories of production process and subsequent construction of the interpretative framework is permanently exposed to the examination and comparison of data, and the emergence of new, divergent or contradictory elements, may lead to a

reorganization of categories and even resizing the questioning of the phenomenon. This form of analysis and interpretation of data thus also contributes to define the qualitative nature of the study, since it assumes an analytical description of the data (Maroy, 1997) according to an analysis grid drawn from the content of the interviews (Silverman, 2013)

Our goal is to make sense of the experience of these "women of April 25th", from the point of view of the meanings they attribute to the revolution and to what extent these change and organize their knowledge and relation with the "world", linking them to the broader processes of political, economic and social changes both in Europe and all over the world, resulting from the increase of globalization.

2 Memories of April: Between the singular and the collective

Studies of memory, as a transdisciplinary and theoretically diverse field, seek to answer questions related to how social memory is associated to the rationale of celebrations, of forgetfulness and remembrance of remarkable collective moments such as the revolution of April 25th (Olick, Vinitzki-Seroussi & Levy, 2011)

The concept of *collective memory*, referring to Halbwachs (1992 [1952]), emphasizes the social and collective character of memory and assumes it plays a central role in the construction and maintenance of social identity. However, it is important to acknowledge the fact that Halbwachs (1992 [1952]), though shifting the study of memory (until then considered as a purely individual act) to the field of knowledge of the social, makes the action of the subject that recalls (which is also the person who forgets) dependent on social determinism and considers social identity as something stable and constant in time. But despite the social and collective memory, different social groups (and different individuals) share different memories of the same event, giving them a meaning that runs between the individual and the collective, the personal and the social.

When considering that memory has a dynamic role in the production, reconstruction and forgetfulness of the world (physical, social and symbolic) where the subject moves and without which the subject does not recognize himself or herself, here one considers memory as a cultural system of assignment of meaning (Olick and Levy, 1997), allowing the connection between individual

Sónia Dantas-Ferreira is a PhD student at Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra under supervision of Professor José Manuel Mendes. The PhD project was financed by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT) through a doctoral Grant. Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra Avenida Dias da Silva, 165 3004-512 COIMBRA, PORTUGAL Email: sdantas@vodafone.pt



experience and construction of meaning of the world, by reference to a common conceptual map which is shared by a group (Irwin-Zarecka, 2007).

Thus, memory allows the recollection of the past through the look at the present and gives meaning to the world, to social practices and gives thickness to identity(ies). As Ricoeur (2004) states recognition of something as past is a privilege of memory and in that process there is a collapse of past / present and future time. Memory is then presented as knowledge, being a dynamic process of (re)creation and (re)meaning, whereby, over time, not only is the group identity kept but also it is reconstructed in a process that adjusts to change, thus getting close to the Bourdieu's conceptualization of *habitus* (2002 [1972])

This shared memory is shown in socio-cultural practices of a group or community (celebrations, monuments, political speeches, artistic activities ...) and is built from a game of inclusion / exclusion, remembrance and forgetfulness that translates the relationships of power (domination) among the social actors in a given place and historical time.

April 25th, as an event recorded in the Portuguese collective memory and therefore subject to different representations in the current political-ideological framework, allows a multiplicity of discourses and memories that reflect the complexity of social relationships between different actors in an ongoing process of conflict and negotiation between hegemonic politics and against memory (according to Foucault's concept, 1980 [1977]). It is interesting to see how in this *memory redemption* process for the public arena, which fills the commemorative logic of the 40 years of the revolution, the female perspective, the women's voices, has assumed a prominent place as a result of a seizure process of the discourse of an excluded/made invisible by the dominant speech(es) group.ⁱ April 25th 1974 is the only time in the social-historical path of Portugal with repercussions both at political, social and cultural practices levels, and regarding the construction of identities, discourses, imaginary, narratives and memories that still allows the direct listening of the meaning constructed by certain social actors.

3 Women's voices: Between the revolution and the present

As part of my PhD project I have conducted several qualitative semi-structured interviews to women who, by April 25th 1974, were in a love relationship with military men, in order to find out aspects related to identity as far as its articulation with the construction of the memory of the Portuguese revolution.

The interviewees belonged to one of three groups considered in the research project: women of career officers; women of militia officers and women of sergeants and enlisted (militia or career), thus allowing to carry out a comprehensive analysis of the strongest aspects / dimensions in each of those groups.

From all the interviews I conducted, this article focuses on 11 of them, and the interviewees have different

features in terms of place of living, education, occupation, socioeconomic status and age, as well as the military situation of husbands / boyfriends at the time of April 25th.

From the analysis of all the respondents we can see that they are between 52 and 66 years, the majority belonging to the age group 50-55 years. It is in the group of wives of professional soldiers that the average age is higher. Moreover, most of the respondents currently live in the same town where they lived on April 25th, though not always their town of birth. On the other hand, there is a great diversity of situations in terms of education, as well as the socio-economic and job level of the interviewees. Most interviewees has a job in teaching, but some do not have a paid job and others have low-skilled jobs (supermarket cashier, maid, textile worker). As far as education is concerned there is also the same diverse pattern; from illiterate to an interviewee who has a PhD.

Most of these interviewees are in some way linked to education, due to methodology (method "snowball"), to my own family and social condition (a teacher among several generations of teachers) and to the extraction of the interviewees' class (in which the women with relationships with officers of compulsory military service they themselves attended university and the women with relationships with career officers are mostly primary school teachers). The fact that I use a selected sample has several implications. For example, for most of these women, their work experience takes place in the school and the analysis they made of the changes perceived are related to different dimensions of teaching.

Despite the uniqueness of the individual experience, path and experience related by each of those participants, it was possible to find a pattern, both in their personal experience and memories of April 25th and the revolutionary period and in the way those experiences are / were included in the construction of their personal and social identity.

In this article, I present only partial results of the analysis I carry out, focusing my attention on the categories related to perceived changes in Portuguese society from April 25th 1974 onwards and on these women's dreams and expectations (fulfilled and unfulfilled), which thus shape the assessment they make of the current situation of the country.

2.1 The wish to end the war

The war, the colonial war in which the country was involved, is present in every speech. On a personal daily level, like the air we breathe, a veil that covers everything.

Guilherminaⁱⁱ: I was very happy when I learned that the soldiers who would give independence and come back, were no longer going back. We thought April 25th was a good thing, considering the war ... My two brothers had been there...

In 1974, the colonial war was going on for over a decade and set the time and living of Portuguese people. In close relationships – family, friends, co-workers and student colleagues, dating – there was always the army issue, the compulsory military service in a war context,



determining wishes and options, sowing anxieties and fears, defining paths.

Joaquinaⁱⁱⁱ: That anxiety, it was as if we were saying: "oh, they [the soldiers] are coming back earlier..." and I said "Yes, I wish!" ... That's it, that was the only goal! And there was nothing else! (...) And then the war situation was very complicated, wasn't it? That, too, for me, as I say, made me live and feel the war itself a little... not directly! I lived through two situations: my brother's - who is also in the navy- and my uncle's, who were navy officers.

Therefore this issue keeps coming up in the interviews, not so much as a critical thought on the "war issue" but more as a condition inextricably entwined with the unraveling of each of these women's personal history, which cuts across the socio-economic, cultural, political and geographic contexts in which they move.

Xana^{iv}: And the fact that there was no war, we had the children and then we began thinking that they would be going to war, like, "Oh, I had to have two children" ...

Sónia: And boys for that matter...

Xana: And boys ... "poor things, in a few years they'll be fighting this war" ...

2.2 Living politics in public arena

During the revolutionary period, public sphere became an important setting, a political arena where people demonstrate and stand for their ideas.

Sónia: ... You still used to go there to general meetings, to get information ...

Berta^v: Yes, yes, I used to go to all of them, I was just beginning to participate, I began participating, didn't I? That's it and I was ... and I personally was very happy and very calm and ... that's it and I think most people ... might feel just like me, but there were a couple of minorities that were afraid, because they had other ...

But apart from the commemorative side of the demonstrations, there is also a more cautious assessment, before the explosion of initiatives and the immense diversity of social and political movements.

Sónia: And in Viseu, in general, do you think anything has changed?

Joaquina: See, I even think ... Quite honestly, I don't want to be talking about the present now, but doing an analysis, I think people - how should I say? - got out of control ... (...) It looked as if they didn't even care about the state they were in! Some of my friends who were close to the end of their pregnancy went up to the crowd gathered in the barracks ...

Sónia: And then there were demonstrations?

Joaquina: Exactly! Much euphoria, people, many movements ... But if I could change my path and avoid those places ... Perhaps to be on the safe side, to avoid getting overexcited. I was never very ...

The political debate, as a method of social and public participation and living becomes a major issue in the daily life, it becomes a common shared social practice.

Sónia: Do you think that at that time, people spoke more about politics ...?

Berta: Much, much more ... They spoke ...

Sónia: It was a current everyday subject ...

Berta: It certainly was.

This debate is based on the possibility of access to information regarding the situation within the country,

provided by the media, among which radio plays an important role.

Gabriela^{vi}: Exactly. Well... news, we came home and everyone wanted to listen to the news, whenever there were no news everyone was disheartened because we got used to having news every day.

And this information without prior censorship and diverse according to the different points of view present in the political scene of the moment, feeds the political debate and feeds itself on it.

Sónia: *But the information, you read a lot of information on newspapers ...*

Josefina^{vii}: *Yes, more detailed and free, that's for sure, yes ... More detailed and free, because we, before April 25th, the information we got was ... It was chopped, wasn't it, therefore, the information was not enough for us to be really well informed, so ... And after April 25th, I think so, I mean, that part ...*

But the political intervention that crosses all interviews, far beyond the ideological and political positioning of the participants, refers to voting; to participation in elections which begins at this point and lasts to this day.

Joaquina: *After that, I joined in in terms of elections. Never failed one, either with or without him [husband]. As I told you, I would go alone giving no explanation to anyone [laughs].*

2.3 Changes in family relationships

When we think about the perception that the respondents have as far as changes in family relationships are concerned we can find some aspects that already reflect a positioning of the policy dimension prior to the revolution. In a strongly Manichean context, families nestled for the *establishment* or for the *opposition* and thus at home in family life either the rule of silence, prohibition based on fear that prevailed before April 25th,

Quitéria^{viii}: Because ... And I attended ... high school in a religious school, and in my family, a boarding school run by nuns, and therefore I only was in the family home during holiday periods, in my family there was no talking about politics, it was the typical family where no one spoke, because one could not speak and because one was afraid to speak, and so it was an absolutely forbidden subject, wasn't it?

or even subversive opposition transgression gave way to political debate also in the family environment, with a strong impact in family dynamics and representations, questioning the (till then) unchallenged parental authority.

Gabriela: And so on a daily basis, home relationships between family and so there was much talk about politics, but I ... My father always liked to talk about it at home, though ... It's funny that my father before April 25th, used to comment under the counter, didn't he? ... Then with all these changes later he turned out to be ... much more rightwing than what I expected, he began saying ... he began thinking that it was already an exaggeration..

Sónia: People began taking sides ...

Gabriela: Exactly and it often ended in an argument! In a respectful way, but ... we often ended up arguing because he was also starting to get closer to one side and I thought we were at a time when these ideas should already have been set aside and he was still very conservative, wasn't he?

Another dimension of family relationships where we can account for changes is the relationship with/education of children, both in the relational dimension between parents and children, in educational practices, in communication but also in the access to education opportunities.

Sónia: And, for example, think about your girls education. Do you think it was very different from what you had?

Sofia^{ix}: It was different ...

Sónia: Why do you think it was different?

Sofia: In my time I didn't have the chance of going to school and they did, didn't they?

Sónia: But beyond that, besides the possibility of attending school?

Sofia: There wasn't so much talking ...

However, the perception of change is, in the words of many, linked to more negative dimensions as the *lack of respect* resulting from too *much freedom* that holds up a vision of a post-revolutionary Portugal as a chaotic and disruptive country.

Sónia: In terms of relationships with the children, for example, do you or don't you think something changed with April 25th ?

Joaquina: If my answer goes back to till 10 years after April 25th, I'd say they haven't changed much! We were able to pretty much balance things! But from there on there was a very big change. There started much lack of respect, I think too much freedom, a lack of connection between parents and children ... [children] who have come to see that there was an independence: "April 25th, let us also become independent from family"! That's a totally different thing! And I think that this is still happening today. I realize that things are already starting to change again ... But I think people began giving their fifteen, sixteen year-olds - even then - tremendous freedom. [They would say] "You are already living in a free world!" But, no way, we were not living in a free world. There are many ways we can break free. I think, as I said, that in those early days it was natural for parents to loosen the leash a bit and all that. But ten years later I began to see everything was out of control, even at school level.

Last but not least, changes also cross intimate relationships, expressed in part on changes in practices and behaviours in dating, in which once people maintained (an attempt to) a social control on intimacy and romantic relationships that claimed sex as only acceptable after marriage.

Sónia: How did you use to date?

Guilhermina: [sigh] Look, at that time before he went to Angola, I had my little sister who used to chaperon, that thing of protecting, right? It wasn't proper for young couples to wander by themselves. That's the way things were then ... I also did it, I also used to accompany my sister [name of elder sister] and after all ... I wasn't much of a guardian and she [younger sister] also did not guard me much [laughs].

2.4 Changes in the workplace

Most of these women have or have had a job, mainly in education, as I said earlier. And since in schools several social practices (from organizational logics to relationship dynamics between different social actors, conveyed through the ideology and the teaching / learning methodology) are brought together it is interesting to note that these women identify the workplace as a changing place at different levels.

A change gale runs schools. Changes in the way how they are run, with the headmaster's authority being

challenged and the participation of all being strongly on the agenda.

Beatriz^x: And I thought "this isn't going to be so [that easy]" and the man did not go away even then the man ended up having to be really ...

Sónia: Discharged ...

Beatriz: Discharged, I mean then it was so, the army were very strong, weren't they? So eventually they ended up going there.

Beatriz: ... Oh, and then meanwhile, - when the headmaster left, the oldest person was appointed, because it was the oldest person, the one working in the school the longest, and then ... it was a long time before routine ...

Sónia: Of course ... It was a bit ...

Beatriz: It was a bit tricky, but much has changed, really changed.

However, this change in the practices of decision-making and authority is not always well accepted, showing the permeability of the working world to the revolutionary process and the inevitable (re)positioning of people regarding this process, at a time when politics pervaded the whole social life.

Sónia: And at school, were there many changes at school?

Josefina: At school ...?

Sónia: But classes went on at school, or ... Because there were some which stopped classes at the time ...

Josefina: I have no idea, I cannot remember, I don't remember ... I know we began having meetings, there were meetings for everything, people gathered, debated, and ... funny! There were four or five couples at school who took very extreme positions, kind of very leftwing, right? And they managed to frighten the rest of us, who still did not know very well where to stand ...

Changes in school were mainly in the relationship between the different actors, especially co-workers and students.

Sónia: And what can you remember of that time and the following days at work, had much changed?

Gabriela: Big changes, many general meetings of teachers ... and with students, general meetings of students, and we sure did things then that today I think no one dared to do ...

Gabriela: At school there were a lot of changes, school has changed a lot ... relationships with students and co-workers and all that ...

These changes were also embodied in the way the teaching / learning process came to be understood, in the way the school "education" comes to be assessed: the university, for example, becomes a place of access to the "working classes".

Quitéria: ... Among older teachers, I think there was a great eagerness for change and practices that actually changed their paths, let's say traditional,... In our relationship with students, there were also unforgettable and very, very stimulating things ... The years following April 25th, when I started my career, we used to teach at night till absolutely unbelievable hours, we used to teach all day long on Saturdays and it was ... it was a very rewarding very exciting experience, there were real student-workers, something which is not common nowadays, and when there are it is often a disguise, isn't it? And there were - we were also very young, weren't we? - And so there was a ... - we ourselves were learning a lot, even the subjects we were teaching, and all that - and that's why it was a really exciting time ...

And also there was change in the way school as an institution is linked to the social and political context in which it operates: there was an outside control over the

pedagogical practices, showing once again the permeability of the working world to revolutionary context.

Sónia: What about school, were there any problems at school, weren't there many changes?

Xana: At school, there were many ... It was very funny, because I was working with this colleague who was very strict and I remember that as early as the second day, there comes a lady and that tells me so: "Look now Mrs ... "- I was going to say the name of the colleague but I no longer recall, it is not important -" ... now she cannot beat the kids, it is now banned from this school "[laughs] . Look, it was the funniest thing I remember from the school [laughs], "now she cannot beat the kids, because it's forbidden "[laughs]. And I told her "Look, you have to be careful, because I was told this."

2.5 Changes in the country

Beyond statistics that indicate changes in the living conditions of the Portuguese (Barreto, 2000; 1996), how are changes in the country over the years perceived? Some of the changes relate to the socio-economic conditions, changes experienced in terms of purchasing power, the material conditions of life, reflected from the experience of these women's world, their world.

Sónia: When you look back, do you think your life has changed a lot with April 25th?

Guilhermina: Well, for me, I'm in a better situation. My situation ... I'm better ... because I think when I was a little girl there was more poverty, we were many brothers and sisters...

Sónia: And overall, in the country, have things changed?

Guilhermina: Well, oh Ms Sónia, I don't understand things very well, I don't know, but as far as I can see I think people live better now. People have four TV sets, one in each room, as is my case. I own a car., I think I live better now than when I was single [and lived] with my parents. (...) I think that life is better now than when I was very young. It was true poverty, I didn't even have shoes to wear! I think that in those days it was terrible! My mother also says that there was only one sardine for I don't know how many to eat. Jesus! Now we eat sardines and even gives some to cats! [laughs]

When accounting for changes that April 25th produced, interviewees often have as a time reference for this comparison the time of their childhood, a pre-revolutionary time, since it is already as adults that they all live April 25th.

Diana^{xii}: Because there was hope that people's life would really improve quite a lot! And it did and it did! There's nothing to do with today's poverty with the poverty I knew in my childhood! Nothing to do! It is true that it improved a lot! Now everything is far better! In my village there were so many barefoot...People walked around in rags, barefoot, ehh, only the third grade was compulsory in my time ... I remember that barefoot children were going to school ... I was attending the third or fourth grade, I don't quite remember, when the Ministry of Education or the government or I do not know who sent a compulsory rule that children were required to go to school with their shoes on.

But changes are also perceived from the work conditions (again, in education), through the social value that work is granted in the revolutionary context and the consequent amendment of compensation statute.

Xana: Wages were soon raised three times ... We went just from four thousand escudos to for twelve thousand! Even the support staff..., I remember, later, however, I came to Vildemoinhos, I was getting nearer ...

Changes in the country are also perceived at mentality level, stuck in the "cultural revolution", of which television is an example, a reference.

This change is expressed through greater intervention of people, once *fear and shame* were overcome, enhancing the joy and communication.

Sónia: What do you think the country gained?

Sara^{xiii}: It gained, the country is different ... today we can say no, we can say that as far as culture is concerned things are bad, that people are really consumerist, that people are different, that they are not supportive, there is much that can be said, but I don't agree! I think there was a very big change of mentalities, of ... I think ... one can see! Just watching TV programs, before and after April 25th, there is a huge difference! The sadness, I know they were black and white and this adds to the sadness, doesn't it ?. But I think all this ... I think people are happier, people are more outgoing, people ... I remember the first time I went to a union meeting! I remember it was held here at school Gomes Teixeira, the first time I went to a union meeting. Exactly when I began working in [school name] in 75. People were not used to talking, people were not used to speak up ... This is over! Today people have their views, have their rights, they can actually speak up. We, the ones who were born before, we were afraid. We were ashamed, so in this regard I think it was very positive.

Changes in the country's development – one of the programmatic areas of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA)^{xiii} program – are also valued in a diachronic and also socio-spatial (rural / urban) comparison.

Sónia: Do you think the country today is generally better than it was before April 25th?

Sara: It is! Even with all this crisis, I think so, just go to the villages, for example, at local level there were changes, really huge changes. I think one of the great advantages of April 25th was precisely at local level, although we can say, "well, only when there are elections do local authorities do this or that" ... but no, I think there was a big change, small towns grew, people changed ... the way they dress, the way they behave, the way they talk ... no, I think Portugal is not the same any longer! It is not my Portugal, no it isn't!

The starting point for the assessment of *what* and *how much* the country developed after April 25th is, again, the experience, the life path of the interviewees is used as a reference matrix of change.

Diana: Now that the country has improved, greatly improved! I used to have a five hours travel between Coimbra and Viseu, by train! The third class carriages, which students and military used to travel in, had wooden benches! Exactly the same as in Public Gardens! It took five hours! ehhh, transport was a nightmare. Roads were - I threw up a lot on the way to Penacova and the roads there to Mogadouro and all that, there were a lot of turnings - and that's it, now it's all far better! In my village there were so many barefoot people ...

2.6 Between expectations and a Future waiting to be fulfilled

The expectations that these women had as far as the revolution is concerned are intrinsically related to the hopes and dreams of each one, reflecting their social and political place at the time and their life path to the present.

Therefore, this review of expectations refers to a confrontation with who they were then and who they are now, a moment in which they see themselves fully and seek meaning for their identity.

From all the fulfilled expectations, freedom appears as a common denominator, presented in different ways (freedom to speak, freedom to vote) in all the speeches.

Sónia: But now, looking back at what it was like at the time, you told me that it was a joy, your expectations and reality, how do you assess them today, seen from this distance ...?

Berta: Oh, I think ...

Sónia: Do you think it was positive, negative ...

Berta: I think it was positive ...

Sónia: What are the most positive aspects ...

Berta: Oh, freedom, freedom ... and democracy, to vote, the power to say what you want, whether bad or good, you know? I think so, now ... of course I think there's still missing ... Because we are still very young, it doesn't seem so, but we still have a [young democracy] ... And, indeed we haven't learnt all we should learn ...

Sónia: In terms of democratic experience?

Berta: Yes, yes, I think so ... I think ... responsible freedom is a very complicated thing, you see ...

And beyond this collective dimension of freedom, shown in the opportunity(ies) of publicly expressing one's views and in political participation, there is also the more subjective dimension of the experience of freedom, the possibility of building a civic consciousness, which guarantees a critical look at the changes elapsing in Portuguese society.

Sónia: And do you think that the expectations you had then ended up being fulfilled?

Quitéria: Largely, yes I think so. I also think that today it is also an issue that has much to do with the individuality of each one of us, what each one of us was able then to integrate in his/her life, isn't it?, today the somewhat radical speeches that at that time made sense, don't today. But I think it was good that it happened, and great that it happened when I was twenty years old! Because those who were children at the time didn't quite understand many things, even those who were taken to the demonstrations and such [laughs], but for the people who were twenty years old and who got involved in anything of the sector they were in, I think it was an absolutely key experience and that made us have a very strong judgmental awareness in relation to all forms of regression of things we consider essential, and which today, around us, are found everywhere, and in all sectors, aren't they?, I think it does not make any sense the nostalgic speech "poor fellow and I don't know what," it also doesn't make much sense telling in much detail what really happened, because people don't want to know, because the practice of having a living memory wasn't a common thing, something that I, personally, I am sorry for not having.

Despite the unanimous assessment that the country is better and the certainty that the country earned a future with April 25th, there remains a bitter taste for that future that was never fully completed, evident in the analysis of current conditions in the country.

Sónia: And what about the expectations you had at the time?

Gabriela: The expectations I had ... I mean, in many ways, I think there is no doubt that we are much better, is there? But in other things, I think we are falling back into that "routine" again, that "Just some are in charge" and the others are just here and it's all facade in many things, isn't it? By the end of the day, we cannot, after all, make what is fair, what is right win because we come across those lobbies that control everything and then we don't get to change many things that are wrong, do we?

An analysis that is all the more judgmental as social transformation expectations were higher, as the interviewees questioned more the direction the

country has taken, consider themselves more part of the "losers of November 25th"^{xiv}.

Sónia: and now when you look back at what the expectations of the time were, what do you think ...

Diana: I feel it was ... There was a coup ... and then, as Vasco Gonçalves^{xv} used to say, "either revolution or counter-revolution!" That's it! We entered the counter-revolution! Then many tried to take advantage of the situation! Many people registered in certain political parties, well, each one chose his/her best situation. But we can see a lot of corruption ... and news are coming through, aren't they? This time it was a lady working in the town hall in Porto, but news keep coming about some or others ... We can see that there was much opportunism, many people who entered a political career just to make money or just to gain power and it was ... It is a complete disappointment! For me, it is! But, but, that's it, lots of money came from grants and such... Where is it? And inequality, for God's sake! I earn far better than many people, don't I? There is no money for pensioners, for poor people ... who have a tiny raise of two or three thousand escudos... when these raises actually go ahead, but that's nothing compared with the increase of the cost of living! And yet no one ever questions the big salary raises that ... or the huge salaries that some people have ... well! And then there is the accumulation, the accumulation of very well paid positions ... someone is this company's CEO and also the minister I don't know of what ... This is a shame! ...

Sónia: Don't you think that concerning the expectations you had ...

Diana: No! Not for me, no! I was very disappointed with the progress of the democratic process. I think that for democracy and the people's right to vote, some people were given the right to exploit the people!

But the feeling of bitterness is also present in a more conservative view as far as the transformation of habits and the use of collective and individual freedom.

Beatriz: And above all, I think ... there is now ... I think it shows, and it is no longer just these last few years, it has been going on, some exaggeration in the way you use this freedom! Freedom is the freedom to say whatever you feel like, to treat people as you fancy, so I think ... that there was a loss of values ...

But and in spite of everything, "democracy is the worst of all systems except for all the others.", as it is sung by Sérgio Godinho^{xvi}.

Sónia: Do you think the country is better now? Is it worse?

Gabriela: I don't think ... We usually say that the country, sometimes in some respects, the country was in need of another April 25th [laughs] but in the aspect ... the aspect in which there ... we can see, it is well known there are things that are wrong in the country, aren't there?

And now the situation, as it is a democracy, it is impossible we get here and say: "Look this will end from now on ... and let's get this all straight again, shall we?"

3 Further thoughts

Though April 25th is the frame matrix in which all the interviewees see themselves and freedom is its founding act, the fact is that none of these women considers that "April was fulfilled," even if freedom has been. And whatever the degree to which honey turns into gall, the fact is that social inequality, the gap between the richest and the poorest, the exercise of political power further and further away from people's participation and outside their control, the political influence games are issues set out by the interviewees, issues that reflect a critical point of view regarding the direction the country has taken

which, in that sense, does not match their ideals at the time.

Beyond the timeline of the revolution, where the things that stand out are the end of the war (permanent, but not as fast as expected) and the absolute achievement of the D of Decolonization (which ended in 1999 with the independence of East-Timor), there is the outline of a Future with changes experienced in social practices: in living conditions, in relationships within the family, in the work world. A Future made of a changed country, in which the interviewees permanently make a pre-revolution past talk with the revolution period and with a present turned into Future.

These changes, and as far as values are concerned, reflect the individual and collective experience in the field of education, politics, practice of freedom. People question citizenship, political practice translated into "petty politics", school as a difficult place to manage, the exercise of individual freedom without collective responsibility.

The methodology adopted to listen these women's experiences and memories is in itself a process of production of sense and meaning, a moment of informal education for the respondents themselves and making them aware of significant moments of their lives.

The fact of working with a specific group of respondents involved in teaching also allowed memories and records of experienced transformations in the educational field, particularly in school education.

The meaning of the past is always a meaning shaped and dialectically re-shaped by this present on behalf of a possible Future. And in this sense, these women's memories draw a present resulting from a postponed Future in a past in which the promises to come shone brighter than the light they throw to Now. Portugal is now a country like many others in the developed world, but, somehow, this doesn't fulfill these women's expectations. They expected a differentiated path for the country, which began with the promise of a revolution. Because, as Sérgio Godinho states in a song called *Freedom*: "There is no freedom for real with no freedom to change and decide" and that Future was Now.

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Endnotes:

ⁱ The publication of the book "*Capitães de Abril*" from Ana Maria Fonseca and the TV series "*Mulheres de Abril*" produced for RTP are examples of this process.

ⁱⁱ 52 years old, housewife, her husband was in the army (as private) on April 25th

ⁱⁱⁱ 53 years old, accountant, her husband was in the navy (as seaman) on April 25th

^{iv} 60 years old, teacher of 6-10 year-olds, her husband was a career captain on April 25th

^v 54 years old, teacher of 12-18 year-olds, her husband was a Second Lieutenant on April 25th

^{vi} 54 years old, teacher of 12-18 year-olds, her husband was a second lieutenant on April 25th

^{vii} 60 years old, pharmacist, her husband was a career major on April 25th

^{viii} 53 years old, Full Professor, her boyfriend was a second lieutenant on April 25th

^{ix} 67 years old, housewife, her husband was a Corporal on April 25th

^x 56 years old, teacher of 12-18 year-olds, her husband was a second lieutenant on April 25th

^{xi} 58 years old, teacher of 12-18 year-olds, her ex-husband was a second lieutenant on April 25th

^{xii} 66 years old, teacher of 6-10 year-olds, her husband was a career major on April 25th

^{xiii} The Armed Forces Movement (MFA) was an organization of lower-ranked left-leaning officers in the Portuguese Armed Forces which was responsible for the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974

^{xiv} After the military coup in Lisbon on April 25, 1974, Portugal went through a turbulent period, commonly called the *Continuing Revolutionary Process* (PREC), marked by constant friction between liberal-democratic forces and leftist/communist political parties. This phase of the PREC lasted until 25 November 1975, the day of a leftist coup followed by a successful counter-coup by moderates.

^{xv} Vasco Gonçalves was prime-minister during the Continuing Revolutionary Process (PREC). He was connected to leftist/communist political parties.

^{xvi} As a reference to the song lyrics by Sérgio Godinho, who is poet, composer, and singer and is one of the most influential popular musicians in Portugal.