Working Paper

Concrete Utopias in Marseille (France): When the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) inspires.

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Concrete Utopias in Marseille (France): When the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) inspires.[*]

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Abstract

The field of the social and solidarity economy (SSE), institutionalized in France by the law of 2014, has its roots in the 19th century in the tradition of the associationism movement, marked by autonomy and emancipation through work. The organizations and the meaning of the work associated with them seem to be driven by the values intrinsic to the collective project deployed, the practices associated with it and a vision of social transformation. From WISE to multi-stakeholder organizations and salaried entrepreneurs, new organizational models and forms of work are emerging as inspiring objects that hold out the promise of emancipation and alternatives. They constitute workplaces with a utopian aim (Desroches, 1991) - often in the context of social micro-experiments (Paquot, 2020) - which reflect a specific relationship with the territory. From this perspective, how can we observe and analyze these new forms of work both from the point of view of the organizations that support it and the meaning of the work associated with it, both at the level of the organizations and the place of the acting subjects? And what role do forms of creativity that promote emancipation play in the organization of work? What are its spaces and the conditions for its emergence and perpetuation? Are its promises being translated into sustainable alternatives and at what cost? These questions take on their full meaning in a context where aspirations to transform society are being reaffirmed (Coutrot, Perez, 2022; Frère, Laville, 2022) in the face of the challenges of necessary transitions. We adopt a qualitative analyze built on 5 case studies in Marseille.

Keywords: utopias, SSE, governance, work, emancipation, territory

JEL Codes: B55, L31, 035

Introduction

The field of the social and solidarity economy (SSE), institutionalized in France by the law of 2014, has its roots in the 19th century in the tradition of the associationism movement, marked by autonomy and emancipation through work. The organizations and the meaning of the work associated with them seem to be driven by the values intrinsic to the collective project deployed, the practices associated with it and a vision of social transformation. From WISE to multi-stakeholder organizations and salaried entrepreneurs, new organizational models and forms of work are emerging as inspiring objects that hold out the promise of emancipation and alternatives. They constitute workplaces with a utopian aim (Desroches, 1991) - often in the context of social micro-experiments (Paquot, 2020) - which reflect a specific relationship with the territory. From this perspective, how can we observe and analyze these new forms of work both from the point of view of the organizations that support it and the meaning of the work associated with it, both at the level of the organizations and the place of the acting subjects? And what role do forms of creativity that promote emancipation play in the organization of work? What are its spaces and the conditions for its emergence and perpetuation? Are its promises being translated into sustainable alternatives and at what cost?

These questions take on their full meaning in a context where aspirations to transform society are being reaffirmed (Coutrot, Perez, 2022; Frère, Laville, 2022) in the face of the challenges of necessary transitions.

To try to answer this question, in 2022 we conducted comparative research on five SSE structures located in the Marseille area (South of France), based on four dimensions:

1) The modes of governance to understand how and to what extent they impact both the work of the organization and the activity and creativity of the employees.
2) The organization of work and the choice of management or self-management adopted by questioning its capacity to distance itself from the dominant models (from the liberated company to the individualization of work and its performative dimensions).
3) Opportunities for self-building/emancipation in the workplace through creative expressions of autonomy, forms of cooperation and mutualization.
4) Territorial anchoring in relation to the three previous dimensions by crossing the spatial and political level, i.e. the registers of governance and democratic participation approached in the framework of local development; the cognitive level, which questions the issues related to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge and the behaviour of actors; the axiological level, which is interested in value systems as a constructed discourse

structuring strategies or conditioning practices (Colletis, Gianfaldoni, Richez-Battesti, 2005).

We begin by recalling our theoretical framework by pointing out the choice of anchoring our reflection in real utopias and characterizing utopia from below, through experiences as they exist. We then present our method and the fields on which we base our reflections. Finally, we present and discuss our main results.

I. Theoretical framework

We considered utopia as a gap between the present and the future (Duverger, 2021), we approach it through practices and through the accounts given by the actors who have become authors on this occasion, which allows us to deconstruct the myths and to reveal the contradictions and conflicts (Blin et al., 2020). Through these concrete utopias, it is a question of shaking up the relationships of domination and dependence, authorizing or preventing autonomy and the power to act, opening 'concrete possibilities of thinking and doing differently so that work leaves more room for freedom' (Donaggio, Rose, Cairo, 2022: 242), producing or not anticipations of emancipating futures in the here and now of action.

Lallement (2022) emphasizes the extent to which, in each upheaval in society, countertrends in the form of utopias emerge: the industrial revolution and Fourier; the scientific organization of work and community developments; the digital revolution and the hackers. Thus, utopia is an object of history, at once political, economic, social and cultural, in order to better understand global changes (Bouchet, 2021), but from a local, sectoral, unique, ephemeral scale and often in social micro-experiments (Paquot, 2020).

Utopia can be characterized by different dimensions: it is spatial because it takes place in new places that it shapes; it is temporal because it is expressed in a contextualized moment; it is a principle of action by proposing alternatives and 'cobbled-together experiments' (Lallement, 2022). Finally, concrete utopias can be understood as 'counter-spaces', 'absolutely other spaces', heterotopias in the sense of Foucault, spaces that have different roles and functions in each society and that are transformed, resorbed or accentuated according to societal changes.

However, we can question the open or closed nature of the space in which utopia unfolds. Is it a closed and protective space or an open space that intends to disseminate and spread its ways of doing and being? How should targeted,

local projects and societal horizons be arranged? As Foucault wrote: "We are in an era in which space is given to us in the form of relations of location" (Foucault, 2001, p. 3). (Foucault, 2001, p. 1573). It is from this observation that he speaks of heterotopias "real places (...) which are kinds of counter-places, kinds of effectively realized utopias in which the real places, all the other real places that can be found within culture, are at the same time represented, contested and inverted, kinds of places which are outside of all places, although they are nonetheless effectively locatable" (p. 1574). Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. The function of heterotopias is both to create a 'space of illusion that denounces as even more illusory all real space', within which human life is compartmentalized, but also, on the contrary, to create 'another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged' as opposed to an ordinary space that is 'disordered, poorly arranged and messy'. Heterotopias produce interstitial transformations as Erik Olin Wright (2017) would say: emancipatory alternatives within capitalist society.

If utopian work experiences occupy concrete and real spaces and are characterized by the need for change and the desire for viable transformations in the present, it remains to be seen how and under what conditions the tuning between governance, economic model, organization, sense of work, relationship to the territory, balance between individual and collective sphere is produced.

II. Method and Fields

Method

Our approach is qualitative. Rather than "investigating on, we investigate with" (Madec, Monchatre, Selek, 2019) within the framework of a comprehensive and pragmatic methodology (Dewey, 1938). We retain the principles of action research characterized by a dual purpose of knowledge production and social transformation (Mesnier, Missotte, 2003; Allard-Poesi, Perret, 2004; Ballon, 2020). It is also about drawing on the theoretical and methodological framework of the ergodisciplines (Gaudart, Rolo, 2015) which posit the gap between prescribed and real as fundamental and paramount to understanding and transforming work (Guerin et al., 2001) as a creative activity. In this sense, action research can also be defined as research-intervention. What is observed, debated and invented is not a moment of collecting materials which will then be used by the researcher to verify his or her previously constructed hypotheses, but already an act of research in the making. (Cairo-Crocco, Félix, 2019).

We investigated five research fields and completed our information in public and collective working sessions. We have thus developed a multiple case study.

We rely on interviews conducted in 2022 and a longitudinal follow-up of the organizations and their projects for some of them since their origin. We then compared these different local experiments within the framework of a multidisciplinary approach. This consisted in crossing our views on the different fields and debating our striking observations or our astonishments among ourselves. We also shared and discussed our observations with representatives of the organizations and other researchers in open discussion forums. The results we present are the fruit of these different iterations and constitute a corpus of salient elements.

Fields

The five experiments selected in the Marseille area are characterized by their varying sizes, status and social purpose, without claiming to be emblems. Rather, the fields of investigation are the result of significant encounters that stimulated our 'curiosity' (Lebrun, 1995: 654), particularly about the relationship between work and freedom. These five experiences are in the field of education, integration, training and culture, and agri-food. They allow us to question some of the invariants of concrete utopias in the cooperative and associative field:

- a company recovered and organized as a cooperative society (Scop) which makes explicit in a particularly visible way a collective trajectory in which the relationship between work and freedom has led to a fairly radical reinvention of the structure, organization and meaning of work;
- an educational space, comprising a primary school, a leisure centre and a social centre in the same space and with the same living and learning systems offered to children (and adults) during school or leisure time;
- a cooperative society of collective interest (SCIC) which defines itself as a factory of art and culture and a living space and which is one of the oldest third places in France;
- a WISE which focuses on the restoration of built heritage as a means of integration and training and as a link to the territory;
- an association for popular education aimed at supporting artists.

In these different fields, we sought to understand how the relationship between work and freedom is thought, acted upon and questioned. We are interested in the genesis of the project, the organization of work, the way in which the relationship to work and freedom is experienced in the daily life of each worker, volunteer, or user. This implies questioning the political dimension, the forms of democracy, the circulation of power and freedom in these experiences, both by analyzing their internal functioning and by exploring the partnerships and the relationships with the outside world. In doing so, we focus on the project

and its values, as well as on the possible theoretical, political and experiential references that would have guided each singular utopia in its break with the existing, in the critical analysis of the present, in the way in which each experience tries to think of its contribution to the advent of another world through a modest experience in the form of prefiguration.

III. Main results: browsing through utopian experiences

We trace our main results in table (1) below. We show that the diversity of the projects coexists with a certain number of invariants which confirm the interest of our analysis grid. These invariants concern:

- the stakes of a project 'against' and the emergence of an alternative. It is a question of giving an account of the transformation project by pointing out both what is being opposed and the ambition for freedom,
- the narration of the project: emancipation through the narrative and its staging on different occasions,
- a governance that is always in the process of trial and error to respond to the necessary adjustments of the project,
- the importance given to places in their different dimensions of living space, creativity, sharing, production and exchange,
- the central dimension of work as an exercise in the tension of working together.

Table 1: Comparative approach of the five case studies: double movement of emancipation and self-exploitation

	Scopti	La Friche Belle de Mai	Les Têtes de l'Art	Bricabracs	Acta Vista
Origine of project Search for an alternative	Subsidiary of MNE	Former tobacco factory	Association for popular education, supporting artists	Educational areas (school, leisure, coeducation, training)	Association, WISE, No one should be left by the wayside
Project (myth or utopia) The meaning of work, Innovation, transforming Narrative and utopias storrytelling The heart: freedom	Creation of the Scop in 2014 after 1336 days of struggle against Unilever Making quality tea and local herbal teas	1992 Cultural third place at the service of its users, cultural rights Territory factory Permanent experimentation	1996 Participatory artistic practices and accompaniment of artists Association as a project	2015 Alternative for another education. Individual (child, adult) in a collective. No freedom without constraints. Rules recognised as viable by the community.	2002 Integration through patrimony restoration. Training through action Adaptation of training reference systems to real work
Governance allways in adjustement	SCOP, working governance, extended steering committee, board of directors and concentric circles	Work on governance Cooperative orientation shema (SOC) co-constructed 2020-22 But the challenge of putting it in practice	Participatory governance Board of competence Creating a link between employees and board	Associative status but based on a cooperative model. Giving power to employees. Link between employees, volunteers and users essential but not decisive in the final analysis	Independant association, then a subsidiary of the SOS group. "Establishment" training
Territory: the importance of places	Territory of the struggle Territory of supply	Between openness and closure The work of the territory Conflicts of use	Anchoring in its territory through its governance, through its activity	Anchoring oneself in its territory through the activity (educational and cooperative). Building future together.	Anchoring in the territories according to the needs identified Building public and private partnerships
Work and freedom	Work in chains But pride in work Organisation of work: the choice of making. *Liberating yourself in and through work*	Paradox of enclosure Reopening: internal and external dialectics Tensions over use *Liberating oneself in and through work*	Learning together, participating *Liberate yourself in and through your work*	Project to be maintained despite the fragility of the economic model *Freeing oneself from work*	*- Freeing oneself through work (temporary employees) - Freeing ourselves through work (permanent employees)*

Source: authors

In a transversal way we have identified four main results that we develop below.

From a project "against" to the emergence of a viable alternative?

“I chose to create this educational space in order to continue doing my job, which I was no longer able to do in the state public service, and to cure myself, as the state public service had put me in a depressive psychological state. I needed to clean up all the devaluation, to find that I could do this job with what I wanted to experience, it was not the desire to go to yet another public school. It was primarily a personal choice to continue doing my job and to experience a space where education and instruction were not separated.”

This is the response of a teacher who decided to create an educational space to continue working and to follow his desire to transmit and educate when the framework for exercising his profession had become "impossible and unbearable" (Schwartz, 2007). In our surveys, we note that a project with a utopian aim emerges, first, from a necessity, from a refusal of an unbearable situation for a person or for a group that finds itself in a deadlock affecting health and freedom. It is from the ashes of a singular battle that an impulse towards the possible and a different way of doing things is reborn, sustained by a kind of vitalism. However, since it is a question of tracing a path of independence and freedom, this strength to go against, to pose an alternative, to escape from a situation of confinement, needs to be accompanied by resources, means and competences allowing the construction of a project which cannot concern only an individuality even when the starting idea is based on a person. A utopian project is not the undertaking of a visionary but a proposal that starts here and now for oneself and for society as well. Change and transformation are envisaged for as many people as possible.

First, recourse to the imagination, to political and literary legacies, and even to other forms of concrete utopias is indispensable. For example, the educational space - Espaces Éducatifs Bricabracs - builds its construction by reinvesting utopian traditions in education, notably from the new education and the principles of Célestin Freinet more specifically, but also from experiments in social pedagogy established here and elsewhere. In this way, this space aims at an emancipating pedagogical approach for all: children and adults alike.

Also, in its beginnings, the Acta Vista association (WISE) for integration and training had a double challenge: heritage restoration and employment. Its experimental dimension aimed at the possibility of putting at the service of these stakes the skills of trades stemming from a history and tradition of transmission

(companionship) to rehabilitate an endangered heritage and make employment possible for those who were further away. Experiences of popular education, observed in French Guiana, are at the origin of this bet, which still remains at the heart of this structure, which has since evolved considerably in terms of governance, organization, workspaces and meaning.

For its part, Tête de l'Art, an artistic association for popular education, builds its alternative project precisely on the collective support of artists as a form of education and collective emancipation. The aim is to make the public creative, but also to consider that this cannot be done without training the artists.

The cultural third place, the Friche de la Belle de Mai, puts the cultural rights of its users at the center of its project - for example, by opening a place where the programming is in the hands of the inhabitants - and makes permanent experimentation its mode of existence - various facets of the opening to the territory being an illustration of this.

The recuperated company, ScopTi, bases its action on the need to keep jobs, certainly, but by drawing inspiration from the struggles of other previous experiences (LIP, for example) and by inspiring other struggles in turn, such as that of Après M in Marseille. They build a narrative carried in different ways, in alliances with researchers, journalists, but they also stage this narrative in a music group "Los Fralibos" and in a play (1336, paroles de Fralib, by Philippe Durand).

The link between concrete utopia and experimentation runs through all our fields. In each of them, the utopian dimension of the project is accompanied by trial and error, a search for new procedures and renewed links. This intersection between utopia and experimentation is a hallmark of the projects we have analyzed. The trial and error may concern the way in which governance is conceived, the way in which work is organized or even the link to the territory.

Concrete utopias versus experiments?

The experiments we have observed have a utopian dimension to their relationship with work and freedoms which leads them to experimental forms of governance, even if legally defined. These include cooperatives and associations that do not cease to reflect on the organization of power and the alignment between political project, time, space and roles in reflection and action. For example, the Bricabracs educational spaces have made choices in terms of governance and work organization based on the cooperative model, even though it is an association with two employees. In addition to the co-presidency, which is held by two volunteers who are legally responsible, there is

an "operating council" made up of three colleges: volunteer guarantors, employees and parents' representatives. The employees have a fundamental role in the day-to-day decision-making process and in the longer-term orientations. Since they bring this experience to life every day, they assume and claim both the freedom to build it as it exists and the power to manage the related constraints.

For its part, Tête de l'Art has chosen to integrate local actors into their governance and to have them interact with the employees, with a view to anchoring the cultural project in the area.

La Friche de la Belle de Mai has gradually strengthened its link with the area. It has created a college for residents in its governance, which it has gradually expanded, and it has also opened a space for artistic programming to residents.

In ScopTi, the link to the territory and to the activists is via the association, which continues alongside the cooperative, while governance is adjusted over time to meet the challenges of maintaining democracy and rapid decision-making within the framework of concentric circles that are tested by practices. Thus, even if in the cooperatives, the exercise and circulation of power seem to be better defined, it is not easy to assume the role of decision-maker (member) and worker at the same time, particularly on issues of improving working conditions.

Finally, the WISE Acta Vista, has chosen to join a large national social economy group, which has radically changed its mode of governance. The strategic development orientations are established by the general management of the national group to which the managers of the association studied must report regularly.

These examples show why it is essential to analyze issues of governance and democracy when trying to imagine alternatives. (Petrella, Richez-Battesti, 2013).

Reinvesting space and time

The need to do things differently, the desire for transformation and the search for a favourable framework are fundamental elements in the construction of an alternative, but they are only the starting point, because everything must be built and time and living space have to be reinvested, as well as the places that one wants to transform or recover. Each of our surveys illustrates this. For example, Scopti emerged from a desire to reinvest the means of production that a powerful firm wanted to take away from the employees. After a 1336-day struggle, the employees reappropriated the space and time of the company, of employment and of labour relations and freedom between workers and vis-à-vis the market. This dynamic is built between the enthusiasm of the struggle, the imagination of a more rewarding future and the obstacles to be overcome

in the internal organization and in the relationship with the market. Production (of goods or services) is thought out and elaborated in the conviction of occupying an 'absolutely other place in the economy, a kind of contestation at once mythical and real of the space in which we live' (Braconnier, 2013: 66). This is the case, for example, in the choice of a commercial line and an organic and local supply chain for the cooperative or in the search for a fairer price for the users of the school and leisure center in the educational space surveyed. The relationship with time and space is fundamental in the production of value. This is also a central issue for the Friche de la Belle de Mai, which promotes cultural events, and for the Tête de l'Art, whose main objective is to reexamine the way shows are produced and the role given to the public, thus contributing to the development of cultural rights in the working-class neighborhoods of Marseille.

For its part, the Bricabracs association, choosing to designate itself as an educational space, states that its project is carried out in a space, itself broken down into different areas: a small den, the built-up area of the school, a large park with a garden, a henhouse... an outdoor space shared with other associations, adults and children. The layout of the educational space and the organization of its temporalities materialize the requirements of a place designed to develop cooperation and autonomy for children and adults in a territory.

Moreover, the genesis of each experience and its moments of crisis in the successive phases of consolidation seem to be in the register of kairos: the intensity of time and space of life are totally filled by the conception, implementation and search for solutions with regard to the utopian experience, almost forgetting everything else: the affects, the family, everything that happens outside. Now, how can we maintain political intensity and commitment without trivializing the nascent or consolidating experience, or over-investing in a cause that risks disturbing the time and space of the life of the project and of all those who find themselves, closely or remotely, involved in this experience? How can one avoid self-exploitation when one has sought to escape alienation? If these utopias seek a different relationship to time and space, through a different relationship to work and freedom, how can we avoid them coming up against work times and a self-restriction of freedoms? These questions run through all the experiences, with a variable intensity that seems to be proportional to the scale of the initial struggles or to the difficulties in sustaining the project.

We can therefore observe the diversity of the arrangements of these utopian experiments, their instability and the constant trial and error that characterizes them. The alignment (Eynaud, 2019) between the social project, governance,

economic model and working conditions is in permanent tension, constantly being called into question collectively. Seeking this alignment can also mean considering all the possibilities, allowing oneself to stop an experiment, to put things on hold, in a society where the time for reflection on action is increasingly limited. It is a question of experimenting, of groping, if the utopian participates in the transformation of oneself, of others, of spaces in a territory.

IV. Discussion: The inspiring power of SSE, limits and challenges

The organizational support of the SSE: from refusal to collective transformation

The choice of the status of the structure or project, which supports these concrete utopias, is generally voluntary and considered. There is, in fact, a strong correlation between utopian experiments and the legal conditions of possibility of their existence. Associations and cooperatives seem to be particularly favourable forms because they allow a decentering of the logic of individual entrepreneurship - towards which our contemporary societies invite us (Cukier, 2017; Draperi, 2013; RIUESS Group, 2021; Paltrinieri, Nicoli, 2017) - through the legal status and principles of a-capitalism, democracy (one person, one vote), and autonomy from the state, which define them. We find this dynamic in all the experiences we have followed: their founders do not think of themselves as entrepreneurs, even less as enlightened dreamers, but rather as creators of collective solutions for which the SSE seems to be a suitable receptacle.

However, while the political and organizational model is fundamental, the organization of power, despite the democratic frameworks and modes of governance chosen, is extremely fragile and complex. The role required and expected of volunteers, employees and sometimes users is subject to tensions. This is precisely because of the demands and constraints that the exercise of democracy and freedom requires and the delicate balance between political project, reflection and action.

A territorial anchorage here and there: situated narratives, localized imaginaries

We are dealing with utopias embedded in the present and in the territory, in places that we want to transform or recover. From this point of view, these utopias are territorialized, they play on the inside and the outside, pointing to the importance of the relationship with the outside, from which one wants to preserve oneself or towards which one wants to open up, according to particular and often reinvented intensities and uses.

These concrete utopias, while occupying a real place, convey a process that is built in uncertainty, but in the necessity and desire for transformation. This is particularly visible in the forms of narratives (narratives about the making of their experiences but also about the instituting and instituted choices in their organization and from the socio-political contexts and gaps they wanted to fill) and in the imaginary represented by the place made for utopias and utopians of the past who inspired them in their proposals for transformation.
In this sense, it questions the potential for dissemination of these projects marked by situated imaginaries, which people come to observe, which they imbibe but which seem to be little reproducible, shaped as singular experiences. "People come to see us, they examine us, they inspire us, they show us that it is possible, but at the same time, we see that it is our story", says one of the members of Scopti.

Work between self-exploitation and self-restriction of freedom?

The freedom claimed in these utopian projects is accompanied by forms of self-exploitation in the workplace. Utopian project leaders do not reject work or the constraints that accompany it. They live in the intensity of the time and space of the project, moving towards a kind of self-exploitation, whereas the aim was to liberate them from work as alienation, which implies a self-restriction of freedom. However, if these "adjustments", these "strategies" are accepted in the short term, they become unbearable in the medium term. Can the organization of work not therefore be seen as a response to protect oneself from oneself, and from the risk of losing oneself in the "us"? Working time goes beyond the framework of employment by showing that a concrete and real utopia requires total commitment, almost a gift of self, with the risk, for the utopians, of forgetting themselves, of forgetting the initial aim of constructing a livable and possible experience of work and freedom. To contain these excesses, the role of the collective is fundamental, but often insufficient.

SSE between permissive and restrictive framework

The SSE is generally perceived by utopians as being permissive and flexible. However, its constraints are underestimated, both from the point of view of the question of the economic model that underlies it and the organizational work required to involve and sustain the democratic organization, or the management tools to be introduced to manage the work, the collective and the commitment. The issue of alignment between the project, governance (expression of democracy and collective participation), the management method (participation, meaning of work, etc.) and the socio-economic model (constrained freedom) is central. But not only is it never permanently acquired,

but it is the subject of tensions and power struggles. From this point of view, the imaginary linked to the SSE is sometimes out of step with the concrete exercise of the organization. The challenge is therefore to preserve and protect the demand for freedom, to contribute to emancipation, while preserving an economic model that is seen as indispensable today.

The SSE as a "groping management" of the dissonances specific to utopian projects

Paradoxes (Smith, Lewis, 2011) specific to utopian projects are expressed at different levels. How to enable emancipation while protecting oneself? How can individual leadership be considered while carrying out a collective project? How to preserve freedom without restricting its use? These dissonances and the tensions they express appear to be a driving force for creativity, feeding the work with a utopian aim within the framework of differentiated, never stabilized models. This is a promising research program in a context marked by the challenge of thinking about and building transitions.

Conclusion

Utopian experiences sometimes reinvest traditions and draw on heritages that they often discover along the way and a posteriori. They are inscribed in the present - which is not only the contemporary - and in relations of spatial location with a system of opening-closing, constraint and freedom which, at the same time, designates ruptures and shows other possibilities, other spaces. The experiences we are observing are kinds of counter-spaces (in education, culture, community life, management of work and means of production) that welcome or propose an alternative project, seeking its viability and pursuing a process that is built in uncertainty, but in the need and desire for transformation. All this does not always happen in a peaceful way - even if the concern for health, beauty and pleasure are at the origin of these experiences - but in a form of daily struggle both inside and outside these counter-spaces. "We have to fight" - the actors repeat - in order not to give in to the resignation of the mantra there is no alternative - a mantra that talks as much about political strategies as about individual behavior.

As Erik Olin Wright reminds us, 'the construction of real utopian alternatives does not simply demonstrate that "another world is possible", it also creates the practical frameworks within which ordinary people engage in transformative practices' (Farnea, Jeanpierre, 2013: 242).

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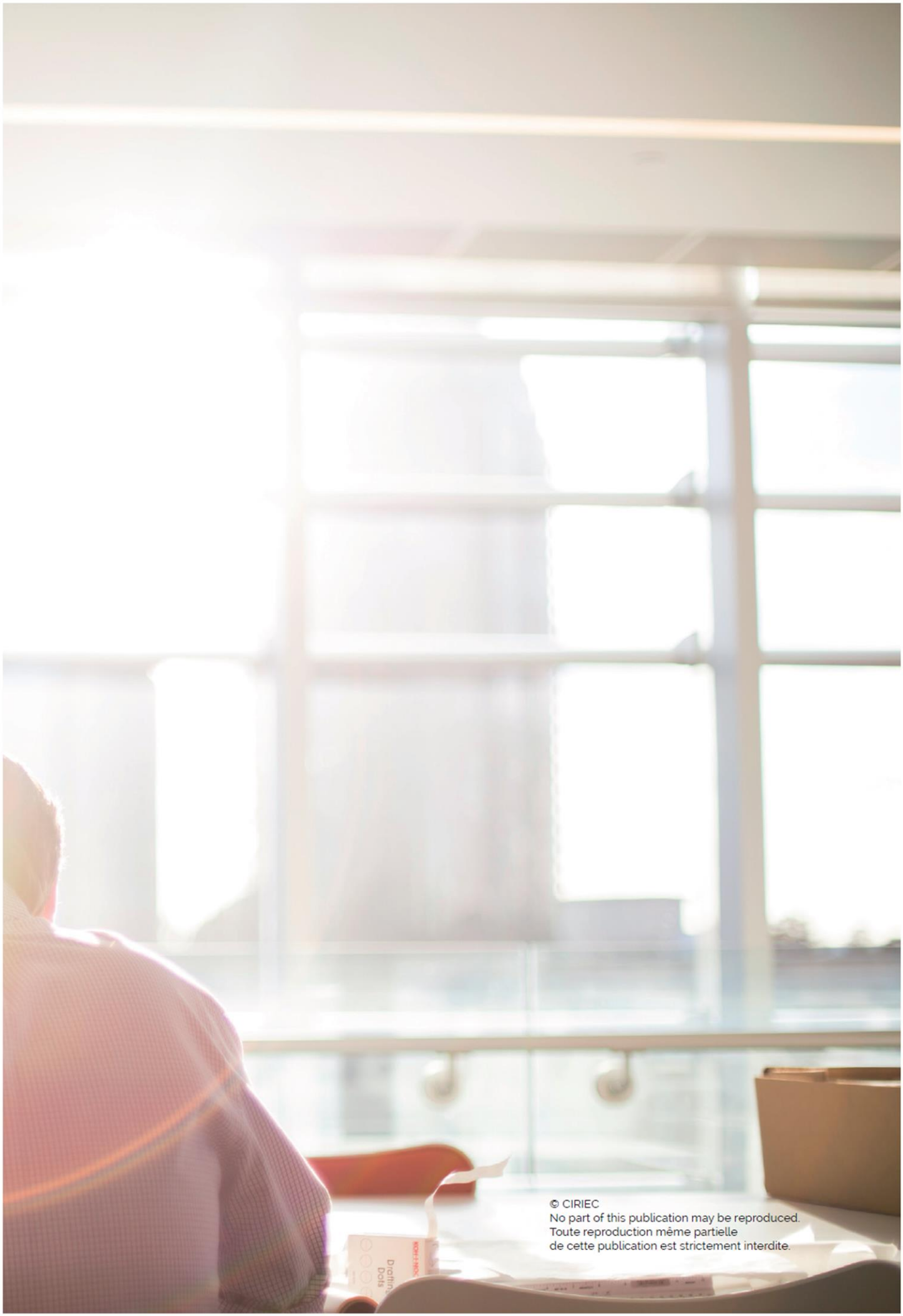

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