PART B

This report, the result of three years of research and more years of engagement with municipalism in Barcelona -and to some extent also the broader Spanish state- was written in a period of changing political climate. It aims to trace some of the collective and subjective processes that marked the emergence and first four years of 'new' municipalist politics in Barcelona and Spain, that is to say, the positionalities, tensions, learning processes and social reconfigurations that municipalism means. Its focus is micropolitics, as a way of speaking of the relations between movements and institutions from an embodied, relational and situated perspective. The institutional relation to movements is not a matter of morality or nostalgia, it is a vital strategic matter determining social and political processes and outcomes. My analysis, coinciding in this sense with the contexts municipalism emerged from, draws heavily on feminist and autonomist concepts and experiences, and it proposes the following argument: that municipalism must be seen within a broader political turn from a more pure politics of autonomy in social movements to an embracing of notions of heteronomy and interdependence as basis for political subjectivity and action. I thus try to understand what this means in terms of experiences, concepts and political practice, across the institutional and grassroots levels.

6.9. Micropolitics and the new Spanish municipalisms (2014-20)

6.9.1. Introduction

In 2014 in Spain -following the 15M movement of 2011 that demanded real democracy and an end to austerity and corruption- a wave of grassroots municipalist candidatures emerged and won elections in a considerable number of cities (see introduction and appendix B). This has implied vast changes for the political, social and urban landscape in Spain. The present text sets out to give account of a specific aspect and area of these changes, to trace learning processes and subjectivities within and across movements and institutions, as they emerge through a time as intense as that of Spanish municipalism between 2014-20. The interplay between autonomy and heteronomy plays a strong part in my analysis, not least as I trace the processes of alliance and differentiation that mark the different phases of subjectivation through municipalism.

I have tried to shed light on this complex question of learning and subjectivity formation by dwelling on experiences and lessons articulated from within institutions as well as within movements, focusing particularly on the labors and lives that connect them. One of the core expressions of intelligence of municipalisms during this time was the notion that learning must happen across these levels. The words of Malagueño social center activist and architect Kike Navarra –'The problems of representation are well known and detestable, so is the ingeniousness of certain forms of horizontal organization that leave many things out and sometimes look inward too

much' (Navarra 2019; my translation from Spanish)– thus resound with those of lawyer and politician Jaume Asens –'Social Movements have certain limits, institutions have others' (Barcelona en Comú 2016)– leading to a fruitful climate of reflection and reflexivity. In this dynamic, 'movement' and 'institution' are both seen as sites of struggle, constituting the poles of a potentially fruitful tension that can bring forth new political forms and practices.

In my research, I have found this notion of a productive tension to be accurate. The phase of municipalism I refer to is perhaps best described as a metastable socio-political climate that is very conducive to processes of living learning (Dokuzovic 2016). This understanding of different limitations does not imply equidistance, however, or a relativity or indeed universality of knowledge. It means to concede different sites of struggle with their specific lessons and limits, and to investigate common knowledge across those. My trajectory as researcher-activist has shown me this tension between different playing fields, rules and possibilities, as I went from experiences in different social movements to be an active participant in Bcomú from its beginnings in 2014 until 2017, in the local participatory as well as international aspects of the electoral campaign (see Zechner 2015; 2016a and 2016b, as well as Shea Baird & Roth 2017; 2017b, Delso & Zechner 2017), then into maternity and back to movements, whilst keeping in touch with Barcelona en Comú and reactivating my participation for the electoral campaign in 2019.

In focusing on the relation between movement and institutional dynamics and actors, this report seeks to address the key problem of

> how to prevent the reassertion of top-down rule and homogenization over and against egalitarianism, collective participation and open plurality boils down largely to the challenge of how to rein in centralizing, vertical and bureaucratic lines of force in the hubs of coordination, the centers of counter-hegemonic strategy, and the institutional interfaces of a heterogeneous network of actors toiling for a historical transition towards a commons-based world (*Report 1. The Political*: 246).

It is important to note, as I have already done in the introduction, that the idea of movement-institutions -later often termed 'institutions of the commons' (Radio Reina Sofia 2011)- underpinned the municipalist turn towards re-making institutions from below, based on the claim that institutions and cities could be for everyone: municipalism thus partly emerges out of an imaginary of grassroots institutions.

The Heteropolitics project set out to map out different ways in which this plays out across contexts and geographies. In the present case, focusing on Spain's new municipalisms of 2014-20 (particularly Barcelona), I follow the mixed lineage of autonomous and feminist movements and their instantiations of what we might at times identify as autonomous-feminist politics (as in the work of Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar or Silvia Federici), as an ethics and politics of care within and beyond the institution (Pérez & Salvini-Ramas 2019, Tronto 1994), and as a feminization of

politics (Roth & Shea Baird 2017a; 2017b). In the many pages that follow, we will witness how these currents mix, mash and clash.

My report draws out tensions and new articulations between the politics of autonomy and heteronomy (see also Zechner 2011 and 2013). The autonomous movements come from affirming a strict distinction between movements and institutions, advocating movement institutions and the need for 'governing whilst obeying,' drawing on Zapatistas, Latin American progressive movement-government dynamics, autonomist-influenced thinkers such as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. Feminisms, which are key to municipalism, affirm care and heteronomy/interdependence as the basis for a new politics, from where new attitudes, practices and strategies of working within and across movements and institutions arise. I will identify three main strands here:

- The *autonomous feminist* approach, with protagonists such as Raquel Gutiérrez and Fundación de los Comunes, (tilting more towards feminism and autonomism respectively), advocates that the desirable relation between movements and institutions corresponds to the 'gobernar obedeciendo' approach, empowering movements over institutions. This posture has been learned from popular movements in Latin America, in their struggle for rights and autonomy. Gutiérrez, as a movement historian of sorts, analyses the Bolivian water wars, as well as different Latin American social movements' way of dealing and negotiating with progressive governments. Key documents here are Galindo and García-Linera (2014) and Lugano and Gutiérrez (2016). Autonomy here means autonomy from the state as purveyor of patriarchy, primarily.

- The approach of a *politics of care* within and across institutions as found in a new sensitivity to interdependence and an emphasis on listening –the 'gobernar escuchando' approach, embodied by Ada Colau in Barcelona, also found in different strands of institutional analysis (in the work of Fernand Deligny, Jean Oury, Félix Guattari, Franco Basaglia) and institutional care experiments such as those of Saint Anne and la Borde Asylums in France, Franco Basaglia's healthcare cooperativism in Trieste (Salvini 2018). This theory and practice are also rooted in care feminisms –which range from ethical approaches (Tronto 1994, Puig della Bellacasa 2017) to critical economic approaches (Perez Orozco 2014, Knittler 2016)– and posit a shared vulnerability and interdependence across movements and institutions as the starting point for politics. Autonomy here means autonomy from hegemonic meaning-making and subjectivity-production, found in a similar way in the autonomy of migrations (Papadopoulos, Stephenson & Tsianos 2008) approach.

- The '*feminization of politics*' is an approach towards changing political cultures within the institution and party based on the protagonism and inclusion of women, attempting to adapt feminist demands and practices to institutional architectures, at times through a radical feminist politics of care, at times with a

more liberal feminist 'glass ceiling' approach, empowering women as a way of addressing broader inequalities. This approach follows in the tracks of more liberal demands for inclusion, centered in identity, in so far as they generally posit female (or for instance black or poor people's) presence in the institution as motor of change, sometimes without addressing state power and systemic mechanisms. But it is also based in a politics of care, which emphasizes cultural rather than numerological shifts, and seeks to include women and care at all level of politics. Examples are the 'Canalla en Comú' childcare spaces of Barcelona en Comú, or Bcomú's internal gender analysis report (Institut Diversitas & Barcelona en Comú 2018), which seek to make political spaces more broadly inclusive.

We will follow multiple synergies and tensions across those three approaches, as well as some histories that inform them. Generally, I understand those as tendencies, not positionalities strictly speaking, as a person or group can adopt any of these approaches at different times. I would propose to map them out as strategic and tactical matters, of relevance and usefulness to movements, rather than matters of the correct line or ideology.

Autonomist movements in Spain had introduced the horizon of the commons via the notion and practice of a new type of social center as 'institutions of the commons,' a political practice and vision that initially inspired municipalism (radical councilors came from the Casa Invisible and Ateneu Candela social centers in Málaga and Terrassa respectively, for instance), but from which municipalist politics increasingly came to differ, turning from the principle of transversality to a more populist interpellation of the people as a unitary subject. Critiquing the fact that autonomist thought does not shine much light on progressive government, Alexandros Kioupkiolis says: 'Hardt and Negri's ''disjunctive conjunction,'' on the other hand, does not heed the need to contrive different forms of organization also for the more ''institutional'' actors or for those who exercise leadership functions (coordinating organs or 'general representative' bodies)' *(Report 1. The Political*: 247).

This certainly holds true of the Spanish autonomous movement's engagement with grassroots institutions as 'monster institutions' or 'institutions of the commons, which are concerned with the bottom-up crafting of forms of organization, positing social movements as principal actors. The same movements have, however, set up platforms and fora for connecting and articulating those institutions -social centers, occupied spaces, cooperatives- with municipalist politicians and platforms, via the MAC encounters or the Instituto DM (Democracia y Municipalismo), for instance. There was indeed an autonomist strategy for influencing and checking municipalism in these encounters and networks, providing a counterweight and indeed counterpower (the 'C' in the MAC acronym) so that municipalist governments could obey to the people: a mission that could only be possible if there were strong social movements, this much was clear to all.

In the following pages we will thus trace some of the ways in which the relation between movements and institutions unfolded, identifying some of the important factors that shaped this relation, and narrating some breaking points therein, in accounts both personal and collective. At the discursive level, this includes the shift away from the more transversal narratives of the 2014/15 electoral campaigns, which stemmed directly from movements (the translation of Bcomú's initial electoral flyers into a dozen minor and major languages is a playful example of this bursting-open of the political space of signification and subjectivity),[37] towards more unifying populist interpellations of neighbors, citizens or people. We witness a shift from multitudinous enunciation, where movements essentially interpellate and reference themselves as a subject that can infinitely grow and include, towards a more centralized enunciation coming from the party or institution, who interpellate an outside, and a specific one at that. For, as in ancient Greek democracy, 'citizens' today does not mean everybody, it means those with rights. This is perhaps an inevitable consequence of the key dynamics of professionalization and institutionalization that come with inhabiting highly formalized spaces and processes. All this means that the communication and relation between movements and institutions becomes a crucial site for politics, indeed its determining factor. The neighborhood is a crucial dimension of this relation. As we have seen in relation to childcare (in the final section of the childcare report), neighborhoods are powerful sites of commoning as well as struggle, and as such key political interlocutors, in Barcelona.

All of the above entailed vast learning processes and processes of new knowledge productions, many of them singular articulations of situated and tactical, sometimes strategic knowing. The learning processes at stake involved personal experiences and the reconfiguring of relations as well as getting to know institutional politics as a playing field with very different limits from those of social movements: official roles, competences, processes and the media played key parts in this new field, as we shall see below. Naive notions of institutional politics -as all powerful, internally unified, and so on- showed themselves to be untrue, as both movements and municipalists needed to adapt to the new complexity revealed by the 'institutional takeover.' I try to emphasize this aspect of learning in order to avoid giving the impression of closure, or determinism. Telling of this phase of municipalism is to tell of experimentation and invention. This is an account in time, not just because it maps out chronological phases and moments but also because it is marked by its moment of writing, 2020, and the learning that has been done by then.

In a text of December 2019, ex-councilor Gala Pin expresses the same concern that drives my research, though people like her have another task of narrating institutional municipalism from within. 'I'm worried … that we don't politically, humanly and philosophically reflect on what the step into the institutions, as well as the experiences of power of some political formations (mine, the electoral commons formations [els

[37] They were translated into Catalan, Chinese, Guaraní, Romanian, Portuguese, Esperanto, Persian, Italian, Urdú, Greek, German, Finnish, English, Arabic, Turkish, Ucrainian, Russian, Berber and French.

comuns], but also Syriza, the CUPs [nodes of the radical left independentist party], the governments of Latin America…) meant, because I think that in this reflection we could find some tools for intervening in the current context' (Pin 2019b; my translation from Catalan).

The questions of 'what learning? Learning how?' run through all the pages of my work here, as I try to grapple with how knowledge is produced -from my situated position, one with a certain level of inside knowledge but also more than one foot outside the municipalist political projects. It is not always easy to see how and what knowledge is produced, and it is often easy to mistake a repetition of facts for a production of knowledge. While learning also implies reading and revisiting, I am particularly interested in the kind of knowledge that is not already out there, that has not already been digested and absorbed. The kind of knowledge that sits at the tip of our lips for months and even years on end sometimes, which produces subjectivity, rather than producing facts or data. This kind of learning is uneasy, confusing, uncomfortable, and bears no absolute truths. In this view, subjectivity and action are constantly co-produced. As Neera Singh points out: '…contrary to the expectation that actions follow beliefs, actions –such as participating in the governing of the environment– often lead to new beliefs and, thus, new subjectivities' (Singh 2003: 190). The same applies to governing at the level of political institutions. So, how do we understand the differences this experience of governing makes?

One crucial aspect of this learning concerns the imaginaries of power that inform politics. There has been a major shift in understanding power, since municipalism rose to power. Rising to power, just like taking power, sounds like a relatively simple matter, of having a lot of decision-making capacities conferred upon -at an early stage of municipalism, during the electoral campaigns particularly, this was the imaginary of many. 'If we have the capacity to imagine another city, we have the power to change it' was Barcelona en Comú's slogan. The reality soon showed a complex set of functions, limitations and rules that made power all but a simple thing to 'have.' In many instances, such as housing or healthcare, cities turned out to have neither great legislative nor budgetary power, since those depended on the autonomic government of Catalunya and the Spanish state. In organizational terms too, it turned out that decisions needed not just to be taken, but also to be induced, processed and conveyed. Participatory process, in particular, turned out to be something far more complex and twisted within given institutional architectures than social movements had initially imagined.

For those inside as well as outside of municipalism, modes of relating to power often changed, and with them tactics and strategies. In the face of limited competences, cities like Barcelona turned to the invention of local schemes and dispositifs that operated as social as well as political machines, from housing or migrants' cooperatives to neighborhood-run cultural centers, in a myriad of experiments of situated participatory local politics. Those implied genuine experimentation, risk-taking and learning on the side of both the city administration and social as well as

neighborhood movements, negotiating cooperation, limits, opposition, critique and visibility in new ways. Barely anyone of the agents in the generations of municipalism had an experience of this kind of political shift. But what many did have is a sensitivity to 'institutional analysis' in the sense of Félix Guattari, concerning

> a domain that was neither that of institutional therapy, nor institutional pedagogy, nor of the struggle for social emancipation, but which invoked an analytic method that could traverse these multiple fields (from which came the theme 'transversality') (Guattari 1996: 127).

The way in which this expressed itself most succinctly in Barcelona en Comú is around debates on gender and care. In 2017, the party tasked Instituto Diversitas with doing a study of gender dynamics, matters of care and inequality within the organization, a document of 112 pages that shows a deep concern for the creation of another kind of political culture. This is the most 'micropolitical' official document I have come across in my research, yet from interviews and fieldwork I know that despite the failure to create more formal and durable commissions for care and micropolitics, the very relations, forms of power, communication and care matter a great deal to municipalists. The account that follows is nourished by self-critical analyses and reflections of those who engaged more intensely with institutions as well as those around them. 'Institutional analysis,' for better or for worse, has mostly only these kinds of dispersed, dense kinds of documents to speak for it. Processual and analytical documents hidden in drawers or on hard discs that remain invisible to larger narratives and histories. Yet these labors matter, as multi-context, inter-disciplinary, open-ended analytical experiments for producing knowledge around institutions, from a viewpoint of movements, participants, users. They can allow for insights and, indeed, also a politics very different from those of an organization's leadership, party lines and strategic documents. It is this kind of knowledge that I have dug through in order to try to understand municipalism and its micropolitics.

6.9.2. What is micropolitics?

Connecting to the need to *remember* and *pass on* in social movements and commoning, we get to the term 'micropolitics,' a term coined by Félix Guattari, working in tandem with philosopher Gilles Deleuze and a host of collective and institutional arrangements, in the 1970s. *Micropolitics* in this context –one marked by ideological positions and mots d' ordre, at a turning point after 1968 and emerging postmodernity– was a way of referring to the politics that happens in groups, in relations, in institutional configurations and organizations. Drawing on a range of psychoanalytic and clinical approaches, micropolitics was developed by Guattari in close proximity to schizonalysis, as a conceptual toolkit inherently oriented to practice, both learning from experimental practice and aiming to feed into new practices.

In their book on the *Micropolitics of groups*, David Vercauteren, Thierry Mueller and Olivier Crabbé (2007) –drawing in their turn from experiences and elaborations as the

Belgian ‘collectif sans tiquets’– note the importance of social movements establishing and cherishing ‘cultures of precedents:’ ways of knowing, telling and passing on their experiences, stories, tactics, lessons, ways of doing. They note that activist cultures often pass and forget too quickly, drown out failure and evaluation in new activity. Concerned with ways of learning and remembering, they wrote a book of micropolitical concepts they found to operate in much collective work in social movements: *meeting, deciding, power, roles, silence, self-care, subsidies*…and so forth. In line with Guattari’s thought, they aim to give account of a process and to develop new concept-tools for thinking social-political practice, in tune with the affects, (dis)encounters, needs, contradictions, hopes and horizons, and bodies it is carried and marked by. A way of looking at collective psychic and systemic processes without separating the ‘subjective’ from the ‘objective.’

Cultures of precedents do not leave it up to historians to tell the story of collective experiments and trajectories, they oppose the distant knowledge and judgements that academics or journalists may produce about social movements. Rather, they draw on different figures within groups –just like Starhawk, the authors of the ‘micropolitics of groups’ elaborate on specific roles and group dynamics.

> Once upon a time, in groups, there lived a figure whose name varied between different territories. Here it was called ‘the ancestor, there, ‘the one who remembers,’ even farther away ‘the caller to memory’…Often inhabiting the periphery of a group, this person tirelessly told small and big stories. They were sometimes situations, sometimes ‘[slippery] slopes,’ dangers into which the group had gotten, like many others before and around it, sometimes successes and inventions that had allowed for the gathering of collective forces. The ancient also transmitted pragmatic ways of building a common becoming (Vercauteren, Mueller & Crabbé 2007, 7; my translation from French).

The question of a common becoming is at the heart of my endeavor here, writing about processes of (child)care and municipalism in the Barcelona of 2015-20. Commons, rather than just matters of material resources or given identities, are matters of becoming: what is shared in commoning is not just relations, things or knowledges, but fundamentally also the production of subjectivities, as Guattari and Deleuze called it. This means that collective ways of inhabiting, knowing, moving, embodying, communicating and so forth are established, which make qualitative differences for politics, for how politic feels and moves, irreducible to quantifying sociological categories or anthropological descriptiveness. Commoning then is, as with the post-Heideggerians Esposito, Nancy or Agamben, a becoming-other and becoming-with-others rather than a starting from given identities or things (see *Report 2. The Common*: 44-47).

6.9.3. Why care about micropolitics?

My writing here thus starts out with recognizing the importance of recording, analyzing, discussing and transmitting 'ways of building a collective becoming,' and sets out from both my participation in and my reflections on municipalism's relation to grassroots practice. The questions of affect and care in collective organizing (Zechner 2013a; b), becoming and subjectivity in municipalism (Zechner 2016b) and on the city as horizon for radical democracy (Zechner 2015), particularly regarding migrations and citizenship (Zechner 2016a), are some of my key starting points here.

Much has been written in about recent Spanish municipalism, its genealogy, outlooks and policies (Rubio-Pueyo 2017, Izquierdo-Brichs forthcoming), in a myriad of disciplines and areas[38] and in English too: from urban dynamics (Charnok & Ribera-Fornaz 2018), looking towards macropolitical dimensions of party-formation and populism (Kioupkiolis 2019), techno-social configurations (Gerbaudo 2018, Toret Medina 2014), political ideologies and traditions (Ordoñez, Feenstra & Frank 2017), and so forth. Much of this writing attempts to trace contradictions, sometimes also networks and conflicts, in rarer cases also relations and affects, yet it often draws on research that is short term and non-embedded.[39] A research project that wants to address micropolitics and trace collective organizational processes from up close needs to engage the lived social and political dimension with its conflicts, commitments, interests, encounters, dynamics of trust, complicity, ambivalence, hope, fear, stress and becoming. Hence, I set out here not merely to interpret some materials but to draw a narrative and a sense out of a more widely collective lived process, as concerning the relation between social movements, parties and political and public institutions.

My micropolitical approach to commons can broadly be said to set out from what Kioupkiolis (*Report 2. The Common*, chapter 2.4) identifies as anti-capitalist commons theory, as seen in the works of Massimo De Angelis, Silvia Federici, George Caffentzis, etc., which emphasizes that change has to come from society. The micropolitical approach consists in emphasizing that change has to come on the basis of subjectivity, not of ideology (see Rolnik & Guattari 2006), meaning that it matters if and how actors in society inhabit, embody and practice change, not just whether they have 'consciousness' but also whether they find modes of subjectivity, and by extension culture, to make this change inhabitable and sustainable at the individual as well as collective level. Thus, with micropolitics we can say that change has to come not just from society, rather than the state or market for instance, but also from subjectivity as the singular and living modality of politics, rather than from ideology or rules merely. This view affirms commoning as a practice that must inevitably be experimental, open to change and transmutation, creating thus living systems that are metastable in the words of Gilbert Simondon. In this sense, I would posit that

[38] As member of the international commission in Barcelona en Comú 2015-17, I witnessed just how many interview requests came in from PhD students and postdocs every week, the most common area of interest being housing probably. The publications emerging from these studies are now slowly appearing.

[39] In municipalist platforms themselves the predominant fly-in, fly-out aspect of academic research is often criticized for its proto-colonialism and extractivism.

micropolitics is a vital part of all commoning, if by commoning we understand self-organizing and self-governing systems that function horizontally and deliberatively.

6.9.4. Research questions and hypotheses: municipalism and micropolitics

There were different sets of research questions that guided me along the way of this 3-year drifting exploration –indeed such temporalities allow for drifting (Precarias a la Deriva 2014) and snowballing not just to follow but also to establish and even consolidate some tracks, though participatory action or militant research (see the present report, section *Militant Research between Institutional Critique and Feminist Epistemologies*). One of this set of questions concerns the social, affective and relation shifts, dynamics and qualities that come with a shift from grassroots activist registers to political platforms or parties and furthermore to institutions. This continuum, circle or cycle, and the pathways between and across it, have been a key interest in my interviews and observations, preceded by a question of how people imagine this constellation.

There are series of discourses and imaginaries that operate across different moments and registers of speaking about municipalism. For example, positing a binary between movements and institutions, or a differentiation between movements, parties and institutions, or breaking things down further into movements, political platforms/organizations, parties, political institutions, public institutions and public spaces in a perhaps more cyclical or transversal vision, and so forth. I will attempt to follow up on some such imaginaries and discourses in a brief discursive analysis below, as they are key to understanding subjective engagements and attitudes around municipalism. Generally, my analysis of municipalism is informed by a (post-) Guattarian notion of micropolitics as well as Foucauldian notions of the microphysics of power. Subjectivity, subjectivation and power are key terms in both these currents (for a detailed analysis of differences in Guattari's and Foucault's notions of power and subjectivity, see Zechner 2010; 2013a).

The various diagrams, tropes, figures of speech, debates, gestures and practices I will be tracing throughout this writing correspond to rough viewpoints or dispositions in speaking and thinking about the political situation and municipalism, but they are flexible, open-ended, in progress, living processes. I will not try to settle on any truth in them but rather I am interested in understanding them as expressions and functions of municipalist imaginaries and stakes, in the same way Foucault speaks of the author-function, for instance. This means seeing imaginaries in terms of subjectivity (Zechner 2010), as contested and lively, rather than in terms of ideology and a search for the right model or truth. It also means situating imaginaries, discourses and strategies in the muddy and giddy terrain of the everyday, or relations and collective articulations. Micropolitical inquiry is about seeing and understanding the relations and dynamics of becoming and power that operate in a given situation and context, in relation to other powers and processes.

This difference between subjectivity and ideology is the basic tenet of Guattari's concept of micropolitics, by which he means politics that obeys to dynamics that are not primarily ideological but relational, social, affective, ecological, and psychic. In Guattari's notion of micropolitics, which emerges at the margins of a poststructuralist turn, subjectivity, the psyche and desire play a key role. ' "Micropolitics" is the name Guattari gave to the strategies of desiring economies in the social field' (Rolnik 2007), the micropolitical level is 'precisely that of the production of subjectivity' (Guattari & Rolnik 2006: 78), and 'micropolitics, a molecular analysis that takes us from power structures to the investments of desire' (Guattari 2009: 222). In the context of international reappraisals of Guattari after the 2000s, in contexts of culture and activism particularly, the notion of micropolitics came to serve as a conceptual tool linked to a myriad of experiences, practices and stories of collective organization and struggle. As in *Micropolitiques des Groupes* (Vercauteren, Mueller & Crabbé 2007), micropolitics came to stand for a way of valuing (and caring for) knowledge produced collectively in movement and struggle. The publication of Guattari and Rolnik's memoirs of a journey through the Brazil of the 1980s –containing notes and conversations with movements, analysts, artists and even politicians like Lula– documents and reflects on the relations between traditional institutional politics (unions, parties) and new movements (lesbians and gays, the indigenous, students, anti-psychiatric currents).

The notion of micropolitics leads us into specific research questions on municipalism, such as: *How did the relation between movements, parties and institutions unfold in the course of the first five years of municipalist mandate (2015-20)? What key dynamics do different actors see there, and what phases might they correspond to? What were the predominant actors, affects, dynamics and events in the different phases of this municipal legislature?* This leads us into a temporal mapping that allows us to distill some qualities of different moments, as we explored in a research workshop with activists and city councilors in Malaga's Casa Invisible social center in 2018 (more on this below).

Interested in the lived experience and living knowledge of municipalism as a matter of micropolitics, we may further ask: *How do people involved with municipalism at different levels, as social movement or neighborhood activists, municipalist activists, party members, municipal councilors or consultants, or indeed politicians, negotiate the tensions between ideology and subjectivity?* Or perhaps in other terms: *how do people involved with municipalism at different levels negotiate the tensions between social movement ways and institutional ways? What are these ways? What are differences along the movements-institutions spectrum in terms of habits, expression, relations, embodiment, horizons, orientations?*

These are very basic, yet key questions that I have spent a bulk of my time exploring, in order to track and map the basic qualities of these different modalities of politics. In a micropolitical sense, this means looking at *how these different modalities of politics make us think, feel and respond, per se and in relation to one another*. And from

there, with Spinoza, *what capacities to act do these modalities and spaces of politics confer upon us?* And, I would add: *how is subjectivity produced and articulated within these spheres of politics, as well as across them?*

In relation to municipalism, this means *looking at the ways in which municipalism has altered the relation between movements and institutions, as well as how it has affected relationality and subjectivities within institutions, parties and movements. When and how did municipalists change standard ways of doing politics, beyond a pure antagonism between movements and institutions or, conversely, the subsumption of movements by institutions; beyond classical party politics; beyond traditional logics of government and opposition; beyond the traditional divisions of labor and competency of mainstream politics?*

This latter question points us to a crucial aspect in my research, which is a transversal approach, looking across the different phases and places of politics, asking how they relate and respond to one another (see also the second part of the childcare commons chapter for this). Whilst I initially approached this matter with a more linear vision in my mind, with time –partly due to my research process, but in large part also due to the evolving processes that came with the municipalist government in office, entailing learning and consolidation– this gave way to a more transversal and complex imaginary in my mind, as in the minds of many of my interviewees and actors I observed across different political spaces. With Barcelona en Comú entering and maintaining office, it emerged out of a first phase of consolidating itself as an organization and within the halls of power -a time when the focus lay with those spaces. This gave way to a more informed focus on ways of creating transversal articulations after 2018, I would argue, the result of which can be seen in the preceding chapter on childcare commons.

My approach is based on an ethics of storytelling and conveying experiences, on the micropolitical sense of processing and passing on (see above), on the conviction that the world –academic and otherwise– does not need another list of policies, of cities, of votes, or similar. Speaking from my singular and situated position, I am certain that it would be both useless and boring to attempt to provide a complete account of sorts, or to reach any kind of closure on the ambivalences and complexities traversing this moment in history and in place that is municipalism. Hence, I opt for this narrative approach, whereby we will move in and out of local stories and broad dynamics, recurrent themes and contradictions, without positing an all-encompassing grand schema. This does not mean withholding analysis and critical thinking, but it does mean restraining judgement and grand claims in favor of a vivid understanding of genealogies, dynamics, tendencies, events, actors, affects and effects.

Last but not least, it is important to define my entry point into the specific sites, trajectories and networks of municipalism at stake here, and to trace the research questions that stem from there. My entry point into questioning the relation between social movements, institutions and parties is one defined by autonomous movements broadly speaking –where the notion of micropolitics has also been circulating most

vividly in Spain and beyond. Autonomy is not ideologically pure or even explicit therein, unlike in the *Autonomia* movements in the 1970s. Rather, it is expressed in a myriad of positionalities within, beyond and against the state. I will be focusing particularly on autonomous politics that has taken up the commons as practice and horizon, working towards proto-institutional dispositifs. This can be seen in the trajectory from social centers (okupas) to 'monster institutions'(Universidad Nómada 2008) or 'institutions of the commons '(Negri 2008), in the PAH housing movement and its 'Obra Social,' in the 15M movement and its spurring of new cooperative movements as well as campaigns and alliances, such as the 'Plan de Rescate Ciudadano' and the early grassroots electoral experiments like the Partido X, Partido del Futuro and Guanyem.

There have been some crucial agents of articulation and mediation between movements and institutions, in this autonomous commons-based dynamic. The Fundación de los Comunes as an umbrella agency, specifically and its Instituto DM as well as MAC forums, as well as the Traficantes de Sueños publishers/bookshop and Hidra cooperative, for instance. These latter agencies have been key sources and channels of speculative, critical and analytical thinking in relation to municipalism and specifically the tension between institutions and movements. I will be referring largely to knowledge produced in this context, as one where analytical and organizational tools that address the movement-institution conundrum were most rigorously implemented. The weight of these efforts is not coincidental but stems from the crucial part that these autonomous political projects and their people played in formulating the horizon of new municipalisms initially.

My account here mainly focuses on Barcelona, and to some degree on Málaga and Madrid, because these are key urban nodes of the aforementioned experimentation and reflection, having seen a series of political efforts at shifting from autonomous movements to commons and institutional dispositifs. During my research I was based in Barcelona, the origin as well as the main continuing metropolitan stronghold of municipalism (as well as the birthplace of the PAH), its success story with the famous mayor Ada Colau. This city constitutes the core of my examples here. Málaga gives a contrast, as a city where the Casa Invisible social center had permitted the articulation of commons and institutions, and where municipalist campaigns led into the political opposition and down a road paved with deceptions; a place I also had knowledge of and ties to. Madrid is a third pole that I will refer to once in a while, as the site of Spain's central government, tormented by power struggles at multiple levels, from movements to parties and the state as well as private capital. Here municipalism saw a myriad of configurations and splits, marked by wider state politics. Madrid is where the Fundación de los Comunes most strongly emanated from, and with it a wealth of debates and publications concerning municipalism, social movements and institutions. While I will not closely analyze political dynamics in Madrid, I will be referring to its knowledge productions frequently.

In this section, we will go through a broad genealogy of phases of municipalist micropolitics, as concerning its relation to social movements principally, in Barcelona and to some extent also Málaga and Madrid. Starting with the social movements that provided the base for mass politicization and the formulation of demands after 2010 and continuing into the vibrant electoral campaigns of 2014/15, where political imaginaries, hopes and proposals were articulated in unique ways, we trace the foundations of municipalism and its particular potentials and powers. We then move on to look at the years of the 2015-19 mandate of municipalist platforms, a period marked by general political turmoil, repeat elections and the Catalan independence movement: our gaze however goes to internal and micropolitical dynamics. Mapping out the first two years of governments from 2015-17, we find a *steep learning curve, vivid collective experimentation, struggles to situate oneself, a tension between confluence and unity, beginning professionalization, as well as engagement with the public sector and its workers. Looking at the period 2017-19, where some thrived and some faltered, we see consolidation, hierarchization, activist drain, further professionalization, internal power struggles, splits, message control and new municipal electoral campaigns as key dynamics. We arrive thus at the municipal elections of 2019, which brought a decline of many municipalist candidatures and opened new challenges and lessons for those still more amply represented in town halls. Their aftermath, which is when this research terminates, brings a new maturity and the possibility to see programs through in places like Barcelona, whilst in others like Málaga it is marked by the closure of the municipalist cycle and the attempt at reorienting energies within movements.*

6.10. Phases of municipalism and its micropolitics, Spain 2014-19

6.10.1. Exponential emergence of social movements, 2010-13

The movements that prepared the ground, the 15M movement, the PAH (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, an anti-mortgage eviction platform), historical republican municipalism, and several others -a series of collective processes and practices laid the ground for an 'assault on the institutions' ('asalto institucional' as running for the elections was widely referred to, see Subirats, Ertör & Ortega 2015, Fernandez Patón 2019). The 15M was primary amongst these fundamental movements as it focused on the corruption of the political system, and it channeled energies towards reimagining politics and democracy from below, in urban space, from the streets to the squares and into the neighborhoods. The emergence of the PAH (before 2011) and the period of the 15M (2011-2013 roughly) marked a time of highly intense mobilization, grassroots experimentation and everyday political debate. As these movements and debates matured, they went into neighborhoods. The big 15M assemblies first differentiated into thematic, then into neighborhood assemblies (see also Pastor 2012) and began to increasingly campaign around specific public services and sectors. The Mareas as proto-unions were movements around public health, education, migration, cuts, unemployment, water…(Pastor Verdú 2013). This involved a learning process around making specific demands regarding the public sector, its

governance, funding and management, allowing the movement to spread as a self-learning process into different places and areas (Pastor Verdú 2013).

6.10.2. Initial electoral experiments (EU elections), 2013-14

The initial electoral experiments in the context of the 2014 European Elections, prepared the ground for the wave of municipalist campaigns: the Partido del Futuro, later Partido X (Zechner 2013c), that emerged from pro-democracy hackers of the 15M in Barcelona, and Podemos, which started in Madrid with 15M-inspired 'circulos' and demands. Both Partido X and Podemos were initially tested in the European Elections of 2014, for which the former gave the latter technical support (Jímenez & Vargas 2014), and wherein only the latter obtained seats. Key slogans of the moment were about 'Converting popular indignation into political change' (slogan of Podemos, see Podemos 2014) and 'Democracy, full stop' (slogan of Partido X), interpellating 'citizens' ('Solo la ciudadanía puede cambiarlo', slogan of Partido X) and 'popular' classes or power (Pablo Iglesias, Podemos). They picked up directly from the 15M in calling out corruption, using assemblies and 'Wikidemocracy' (the 15Mpedia is an impressive example of wiki-based organization), and continued the PAH's slogan 'Si se puede' (rendered also as 'Claro que Podemos').

6.10.3. Municipalist electoral campaigns, autumn 2014-May 2015

As the time of the municipal elections approached (May 2015), and as the first lessons of the EU-campaigns were learned, a combination of social movement actors in major cities (Barcelona initially, then Madrid) as well as medium-sized cities and villages decided to form municipalist candidatures, employing a host of experimental and radical methodologies (Zechner 2015, see also Zechner 2013c). After a lively period of gathering energies and signatures (in Barcelona 30.000 people signed the initial support letter in 2014), came a time of negotiating alliances -'confluencias'-, which were eagerly distinguished from coalitions, and fixing names. Many candidatures stabilized around the mottos 'ganemos/guanyem,' 'en comú(n)' (in common) and 'ahora.' In Barcelona, for instance, the initial candidature was called 'Guanyem' but then officially registered as 'Barcelona en Comú' (see also Riveras 2015). These electoral campaigns were highly transversal and experimental, an extension of social movements or perhaps social movements in their own right, keen to differentiate themselves from traditional parties. 'We are not a party' was the reply any journalist or researcher got when interpellating these formations as 'parties' in this phase. Though alter-politics was not a concept they employed, their claim was clearly to transform and reinvent politics (along the lines outlined in the *Report 1. The Political*). This moment brought a lot of democratic debate and a genuine opening of the political space to a vast array of people and groups, vitalizing the political space in unforeseen and often stunning ways: a time of both 'turmoil' and 'boldness' (Pin 2019a).

6.10.4. Elections and coalition negotiations (municipal and beyond), May-December 2015

The municipal elections then decided the fate of each of these candidatures, with many winning the chance to form governments in big and small towns alike, many others entering into the opposition, and others failing to win representation. This phase lasted some weeks past the election date and is where trajectories and phases begin to differentiate between places, leading some platforms into government and others into opposition. It is important to note that at this, as well as at other moments during the 2015-19 municipal legislature, a series of other elections had a strong impact on local processes and negotiations, such as the general elections in December 2015, where Podemos, strengthened by the municipalist success and support, obtained over 12% of the vote, and the autonomic elections of 2015 and 2017 in Catalunya, relevant for all of Spain and particularly for Barcelona.

6.10.5. First phase of government/opposition work (2015-2017)

In this initial phase, nascent municipalist formations grappled with the ins and outs – most notably perhaps with its limitations and rigidities– of the institutional political system and municipal administration, with the fierce power struggle between parties (a political culture very far from trust-based movement habitus), and with ways of negotiating the dialogue and sometimes also antagonism with movements, a big challenge for people and formations that still strongly identified with social movements, yet now spoke and acted from another place of power. Ada Colau said of this initial phase:

> In the first year it took us some time to situate ourselves and get started with the administration because we were new. We almost needed a year to properly understand how the administration functioned: it's one thing that you decide to do something, and another that it gets executed. In order for it to get done, one needs to have the capacity to manage and to know the procedures (Colau, Spegna & Forti 2019; my translation).

In this phase there was probably a first realization within the institution –that perhaps did not transpire into social movements fully– that government and policy-making is also a matter of technical skill, as councilor Gala Pin says 'the left(s) [izquierdas] have a very dangerous habit, they think that because they are from the left they are the good ones and they'll do things well, that's part of the human conditions but it's an error' (Pin 2019a).

The initial learning process was marked by a grappling with the very space and architecture of the town hall –its thick walls, long corridors, closed offices and doors, embodying a series of political and work cultures foreign to the municipalist activists; and with the workers therein, their ways of relating to tasks and hierarchies, which were all very different from the previous environments of associations, cooperatives and social movement cooperation most municipalists had come from. In this phase, attempts were made at forging a new climate of cooperation with municipal public sector workers, where Barcelona en Comú activists asked people to participate in a number of private seminars to address relevant problems of the institutional

infrastructure. Some three sessions in groups of 15 people, a total of about 50 people, out of thousands municipal workers, where organized to discuss topics such as privatization and externalization, the relationship between citizens and workers, the relationship workers/politicians, and so forth.

The new municipalist administrations started out to transform the very culture of town halls, towards climates of listening, collaboration and a more feminist understanding of power, relations and spaces. Repeatedly, during this period, women of Barcelona en Comú commented on the way meetings were male dominated and how they found it challenging to get respect from 'over-40 males in ties' (Pin 2016), resulting in their launching a call for a 'feminization of politics' (Shea Baird & Roth 2017a; 2017b). In 2016, women of Barcelona en Comú started a Telegram group of women in the city hall, with some 25 participants, that became an important space for pinpointing discrimination, mutual support and exchanging analyses (Pin 2019a).

In these first years of government of Barcelona en Comú, we can identify thus a series of learning and relational processes in and through institutions that bring forth new perspectives and tactics in official municipalist actors. This translated and trickled down into the municipalist platforms to different degrees, along increasingly vertical lines, as the platforms themselves consolidated some into more formal roles that also implied hierarchies. The learning processes from within institutions affected thus and transformed the party, as Bcomú shifted from platform to party, consolidating internal organization and rules, particularly its more official and core members. At the base of the party, these new insights and decisions already got lost somewhat, since they could not be transmitted personally.

For the 'ejes' -the thematic and neighborhood 'axes' that had drafted Bcomú's program and were vital to the candidature and campaign– the news and proposals from city hall often came via a series of mediators and translations, filtering down across the emergent flat hierarchy[40] and causing a myriad of debates, misunderstandings, internal struggles and exits. I experienced this in the migrations axis, which was in the unfortunate condition of not having a councilor respond to it directly, seeing thus most of its proposals and efforts frustrated by a lack of interest and attention in the city hall's corresponding areas. The group struggled for 2 years and then dissolved. Where the relation between councilors and axes worked well, the latter survived and could do good work. They, too, had to get used to a new role after 2015, which largely came to be understood as one of connecting with the grassroots and social fields, channeling critique and proposals, exercising thus some form of radical pressure on councilors whilst also absorbing social and movement critiques of

[40] In 2015, after the 'confluencia' phase of making electoral pacts, Bcomú entered into its 'Phase D' as an organization, consolidating spaces and rules. The outline of the different parts of their municipalist project is as follows: Institutional Spaces (city hall municipal team, city and district councilors); Spaces of Bcomú: eleven large permanent spaces of participation (registered members, the plenary, the political council, the general coordination group, the sector-based coordination groups, the technical coordination commission, the coordination of territorial assemblies, the technical commissions, the thematic axes, the neighborhood groups and the district assemblies). For more detail, see Barcelona en Comú 2015a.

government and taking on different forms of popular pedagogy, or, in unfortunate cases, also demagogy, around policies and issues in their area.

In these first years, we see thus the learning and relational processes of municipalists in the institutions and the movements diverge, in an often unbridgeable way that led to the disengagement of some activists.[41] Bcomú's activist core has seen a certain level of replacement of activist types with more professional types, leading to a professionalization of the organization and, by consequence, also of its politics. This often meant that strategies of mobilization and communication came to be more focused on a general (voting) subject seen as 'normal' or 'citizen' (see also Zechner 2017), repeating certain white middle class 'common sense,' as opposed to addressing and listening openly to the specific constituencies or affected persons that movement and neighborhood activists would address. There is, thus, a subtle displacement of political register, towards a more neutral, and by virtue thereof, also paternalistic approach to people and groups as populations. In electoral terms, this kind of political professionalism is effective to a likely high degree, yet in terms of movement-building it has its limits. If anything, it attracts and reconfirms mainstream political agents and their hegemony of common sense. Whilst the party supporters, some 15 000 people termed 'El Comú' in Bcomú's organigram, who initially registered in Bcomú's online voting platform (Participa) and can vote on broad decisions, remained mobilized across the first mandate, with participation in fact increasing over the years,[42] the activist base was rather stagnant, if not shrinking in real terms.

Málaga councilor Santi Fernandez Patón notes in relation to the professionalization that made itself notable in the way the electoral program of 2019 was drafted: '…the institutional takeover was now a war of maintenance, a scenario where we already knew –so we thought– how to move, when in fact we only knew its functioning, which is not the same; …Once more we had thought that doing things well internally guaranteed what we might call external success' (Fernandez Patón 2019: 40). The tension between micropolitics and macropolitics is not such that one follows from the other. This is a lesson that many social movements, particularly those of autonomy perhaps, had not fully learned.

A crucial macropolitical factor in the processes of (dis)engagement that marked Bcomús' two years in office, entailing processes of alienation at the institutional, party and movement level, is the escalation of the independentist struggle. In 2016, on 1st October, a people-driven referendum for Catalan independence was brutally repressed by the central Spanish state, leading to an escalation of political conflict between the autonomic government and the Spanish state. In 2017, Bcomú voted on

[41] While it is not easy to put numbers to this, we can say that this concerned particularly the people who had come from social movement or NGO activism to support Bcomú but did not take up any office or defined role. There were, in 2017, around 1000-1500 people registered as 'activists' of Barcelona en Comú, as opposed to members generally, where it is 15 000. These have different voting rights on the Participa platform, for instance (Shea Baird 2017).

[42] In July 2015, for example, 2148 people participated in the election of local councilors (Barcelona en Comú 2015b). In 2017, 3795 people voted on breaking the electoral pact with the PSC (Franch 2015). In 2019, 4042 people voted on entering a new coalition with PSC (40% participation; see Sust 2019).

breaking its coalition pact with Catalan socialists (PSC) over the latter's support for repressive legal measures on Catalunya (the infamous paragraph 155). This moment was marked by a myriad debates and growing distances between different parts of the municipalist alliance, which brought together both pro-independence, neutral and anti-independence councilors, activists, supporters and voters.

Gala Pin remembers October 1st, 2016 as the end of a phase in municipalism, marking the sharpening of conflicts and divisions and an ever-growing weight of the independence issue over politics. Since then, this stalemate between Catalunya and Spain came to determine media and electoral discourse almost entirely, bringing with it a period of political instability and elections (general elections on December 2015, June 2016, April and December 2019; Catalan elections in September 2017 and December 2017) that led to a strong expense of energies for municipalism too. For Bcomú's councilors, the binary and nationalist capture of political discourse was very hard to deal with, not just internally and externally but also at the level of policy, since debates on public policy –as well as failings of state and autonomic governments– were increasingly and, for the latter, conveniently overshadowed by the question of secession/unity. Internally to Barcelona en Comú, recounts Pin, the pro-independence process increasingly 'mined' an organization that had been very friendly and open: 'people that were allies in thinking the city stopped being allies for thinking the national level' and 'the question of how Catalunya en Comú[43] positions itself affects municipal politics more and more' (Pin 2019a).

Social conflict rose to high levels of intensity during those years, peaking with the October 2016 referendum and its brutal repression, as well as with the harsh sentences given those who organized it, in October 2019 during Bcomú's 2nd term, and the riots that followed across Barcelona. Bcomú's position remained one of conciliation and refusal to give in to the polarization of politics, made increasingly difficult.

2017 may be seen, thus, as a moment of inflection, macropolitically as well as micropolitically. At the state-wide level, the third MAC gathering on municipalism, government and counterpower in A Coruña brought forth many analyses and debates across municipalism and social movements, with position papers from different cities (Barcelona, Madrid, Málaga and Aragon).[44] At the micropolitical level, certain reflections and conclusions on government, politics and power became more articulate and public. Around the same time, certain new concepts had been brought into play–from the feminization of politics to municipal disobedience and remunicipalization- marking the beginning of a new phase of debate and relationality.

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[43] Candidature of Podemos and Comunes at the autonomic level in Catalunya, launched in 2016 to replace 'Catalunya si que es pot' and 'En Comú Podem.'

[44] Debates and workshops focused on (re-)defining common goods, economic recuperation and municipalist movements; on policies in culture, mobility, sustainability, on debt audits and remunicipalization broadly; on the state of Europe and the rise of the far right, technopolitics and municipalism, freedom of movement, rent, and feminisms; on citizen-run centers, public bicycles, as well as on the problem of organization and municipal disobedience.

Barcelona en Comú released a short documentary called 'Two years later' in 2017 (Barcelona en Comú 2017a), featuring reflections by members of its cabinet. In this film, which follows in the footsteps of the 'Alcaldesa' documentary of 2016 (Faus 2016) that had accompanied the everyday of Ada Colau (who used to work as an actress, amongst other things, and is quite captivating on screen), yet it decenters our gaze towards other agents of the government –we witness people narrating their experience and its contradictions. In this vein, Jaume Asens (deputy mayor for citizens' rights, participation and transparency) says about going from movements to institutions:

> It's like a clash of identities, there is a point when you confront yourself, who you've been and who you are now –I think that's how we experience this very differently from professional politicians, who I guess experience this in a much more compact and gentle way because in most cases they haven't been on the other side (Barcelona en Comú 2017a, 15').

Asens, who was a lawyer before entering politics, probably still knew a lot better what to expect of the institutions than many of the more straightforward activists that entered government.

In Málaga, in a non-public reflection on this period in the context of a workshop with both city councilors and activist remember in Casa Invisible in February 2018, a myriad of dynamics and sentiments were described, in a style less polished than that of the many videos, articles and interviews of 2017. Both social center activists and councilors remember the initial phase of being in the opposition as one marked by

> [the] tension between [logics of] confluence and unity; a sense of being cheated; realpolitik; internal tensions [in the Izquierda Unida party]; … the creation of a new type of activist/militant in Málaga Ahora, between the movement and the institution; [that] the decision of rupture was taken very much in the style of a political party, very much according to the principle of realpolitik; micropolitical rupture; that the rupture [split within Málaga Ahora] was a key moment and was mishandled; a becoming-bloc; feeling the electoral support as strength; people leave, groups stop functioning (neighborhood councils, etc.); total disillusionment, rupture with one's brothers…(Notes from Málaga-Workshop 2018)

These notes give a more complex and messier image of the happenings of within and beyond municipalist platforms in their first years, in the honest and sometimes brutal tone of people who recognize they have failed to a large extent, both on the side of the movement and the institutions. Movements failing to organize to pressurize the new municipalist councilors, the latter eager to push for change but requiring popular pressure to make it happen. This interdependence between streets and city hall was clear to municipalists from the start, and they developed a series of pedagogical approaches to make the relation between movements and institutions fruitful, as we shall see below. Thinking the relation between movements and institutions in terms of

interdependence marked a feminist as well as, to some extent, ecological shift in seeing the relation between movements and institutions, one that constitutes an epistemological and subjective turning point.

Soon after taking up government, in a majority of places, municipalist councilors put forth a key motto for the relation with social movements: that institutional change can only come through thorough pressure from outside, from movements. 'We want to be in tension, that movements keep interpellating us, and we need them to accompany us because otherwise our changes won't transform into profound changes' (Barcelona en Comú 2017a, 23.28') This enabled the positing of a de facto sharing of power between institutions and movements, positing two different kinds of power (institutional vs. popular) and affirming a necessary link between the two. In Barcelona en Comú, it was clear and proclaimed from the outset. Without social movements, this candidacy and government is nothing. 'Municipalism is thus an empty word without the practices and the transformative power of republican cooperativism, of social struggles, of the feminist movement and of the associative and neighborhood fabric' (Forné Aguirre 2019; my translation from Catalan).

While this functioned as a rallying cry and point of cohesion at the outset of the legislature, it took on a less romantic meaning as time wore on, with many people realizing their fundamental dependence on social movements for being able to make progressive policies. The institutional relation to movements is not a matter of morality or nostalgia, it is a vital strategic matter. And it implies at least two consequences, as the sociologist Ferran Izquierdo-Brichs writes:

> 1. If BComú stops behaving like a social movement and constrains itself to political and electoral competition instead of fighting for their goals with mobilization campaigns, it will lose its strength in the face of political, economical and mediatic elites, and will not achieve its goals.
>
> 2. If BComú doesn't keep its social movement dimension, their leaders will get into the elitist dynamics of a classical social democrat or centrist party upon losing the pressure of popular mobilization, and then ally with other elites in a purely electoral and slightly reformist game. If they don't get caught up in this dynamic, the result will still be the same since when weakened, the party will become marginal and its leadership elite will lose its place in the political game (Izuquierdo-Brichs, forthcoming).

With the 2019 elections approaching, this realization intensified as polls increasingly pointed to municipalist candidacies losing seats. Outside pressure would likely be ever more crucial for enabling transformative policies.

6.10.6. Second phase of government/opposition work, 2017-19

Between 2017 and 2019, we may say that the political and institutional work of municipalist parties like Barcelona en Comú became more mature and consolidated, with actors slowly ceding to the inevitable interpellation as 'party' and

accommodating themselves with different levels of un/ease to the hierarchies that imposed themselves. In the political platforms or parties themselves, this phase was often marked by a consolidation of hierarchies –in Barcelona en Comú this meant organigrams being redrawn slowly but surely, internal divisions of labor and decision-making formalized. The main spaces of Barcelona en Comú, according to internal informative videos of 2017 and 2019 (Barcelona en Comú 2017b; 2019) were as follows:

- Neighborhood groups (19 in 2017 and 2019)

- The thematic axes and commissions (18 in 2017 and 2019)

- 4 specialist working areas: organization, communication, administration and logistics, participation and transparency

- The institutional area: the municipal group and district councilors, and teams of temporary projects

- The committee for democratic guarantees

- The activist base (1500 in 2017 and 2019)

- The 'comú' as in registered members (15000 in 2017 and 2019)

By then, initial activist communications channels, at the level of thematic 'ejes' particularly, had been remodeled to permit more oversight, at the same time as more centralized channels of organizing and communications were inaugurated -in this process, message control was increasingly imposed as the municipal elections 2019 approached. The experience of fierce attacks from political opponents, including a considerable amount of dirty campaigning and fake news driven by established parties and lobbies, made activists more tough and pragmatic when it came to safeguarding the organization and enabling another electoral win in 2019. Without anyone's specific intent, a set of external and internal dynamics led to a decreasing potential for experimentation, invention, free organization and bottom-up decision-making in the organization.

Formalization is an inevitable part of building an organization out of a movement, and to be sure BComú did rather well at making this process a relatively open one. Indeed,

> [i]t is not the distinction core-base itself, allowing for various tiers of participants between extremes, which is undemocratic, oligarchic and hierarchical in itself. Rather, the specific ways in which the lines are drawn and the relationships between different layers of participation are played out, as well as the particular modes in which the directive power is laid out will, or will not, beget standing divisions, rigid hierarchies, top-down command and the concentration of power in the hands of few (*Report 1. The Political*: 246).

The ways in which these lines are drawn differs greatly between spaces and groups in BComú, and there will be examples to both testify to hierarchization and lack of

transparence, as well as to successful participatory process (see the section on participation for a further discussion and an example). It is impossible to make an absolute evaluation, however it is important to acknowledge that the configuration of directive and decision-making power substantially changed between the movement-phase of municipalism and its more consolidated institutional phase, making thus for a very different kind of politics. To speak of municipalism as social movement no longer quite makes sense.

In Málaga, in October 2017, the assessment of the first two years of municipalism was mixed, as can be seen from the document prepared for the MAC meeting in A Coruña.

> On the one hand, institutional presence permits us: access to information; time and means accessible for processing this information;… for spreading this information, and at the same time for questioning the model of the city, engaging debates and proposals; contacts and the possibility of establishing ties with diverse processes and everyday conflicts of citizens…; resources and means…for evaluating…and introducing public policies; to introduce new modes of political action in the institutional sphere, stemming from the social movement and 15M tradition… While on the other hand, the institutional presence has provoked: the diminishing of activity in social movement environments; the inevitable dedication of time/energy to institutional labors that are of little use, which persist though experience reduces them; the entry into alien environments, close to power and to the forms of old politics (parties), which attracts subjectivities, dynamics and practices that scare away the subjectivities of the 15M, of social movements, feminists, etc.…; personal and political ruptures in local networks occur due to this process…; institutional work its means wear [us] out due to the enormous personal and temporal availability it requires… (MAC3 Málaga 2017).

This document is an example of the careful exercise of a double perspective and evaluation, taking into account both the movement and institutional side of the municipalist process, and as such it is exemplary of the extraordinary politics of articulation and experimentation that marks the new Spanish municipalisms. It undertakes a balancing act of evaluation and envisioning, concluding that

> Barely two and a half years later, the conflicts, the wearing down of people and networks, as well as the ruptures, make it difficult to believe in the possibility of sustaining these spaces, unless this is done at the cost of sacrificing the model of democratic municipalism (autonomous and horizontal) initially laid out (MAC3 Málaga 2017).

In Málaga Ahora, this period came with a third split (involving a court case) and an increased disillusionment of activists from the movement side of the party. As in a myriad of other cities and towns, the splits occurred between the newer movement-based parts of municipalist platforms and the more established and traditional leftist parties they had formed coalitions (‘confluencias’) with in 2015: Podemos and

Izquierda Unida. These splits were often nasty, happening in ways activists identified with traditional politics, as betrayals driven by electoral speculation, power struggles, personal aspirations.

Here we find a faultline and key lesson in the new municipalisms, concerning the possibility of doing politics differently within the existing system, of transcending the politics of personalist calculus and electoralist betrayal that characterize not just right but also left parties. The betrayal through careerist individualism is a recurrent theme within and across movements and institutions, of course. In movements, political careerism is met with outrage and sometimes even serves as a blanket condemnation of anyone choosing to associate with institutions (in anarchist circles particularly, this is seen as selling out). Those who went from movements into institutions generally characterized careerism and backstabbing as a miserable but common form of human condition (Pin 2019a, Delso 2017, Fernandez Paton 2018) -an acknowledgement often marked by sadness or defeatism rather than (out)rage. Careerism and lack of collective solidarity are no doubt a dynamic very common to party politics: the need for a 'feminization' of politics, and a politics of care and trust, also arise in relation to this.

On the other hand, beyond the frustrations of new municipalist activists unaligned with the logics of the bigger parties, grassroots activists from the social center la Casa Invisible in Málaga –which had been a key pole for the formation of the municipalist candidacy– were frustrated with their ex-comrades that now took to the municipality with Málaga Ahora. Some of them, who went from the social center to Málaga Ahora and then split off with Podemos, felt doubly betrayed. Social center activists lamented a lack of radicality in the municipalist visions of management of the commons, whilst the new municipal councilors lamented the lack of strong pressure and organization on the side of movements and the social center. A climate of disenchantment and disappointments ensued thus, which left the previously united municipalist movement fragmented, and reinforced divisions along several lines: grassroots movements/movement municipalists and movement municipalists/leftist party actors. A climate of increasing fragility and broken social ties (betrayal by people previously perceived as comrades weighed very heavy) seemed to point the way to the inevitable outcome of upcoming electoral defeat in 2019. No way to persist or govern in a state of fragmentation and fragility, particularly for those who refuse to overcome this alienation by orienting themselves towards party lines and state-wide political priorities, as was the case with Podemos particularly.

Frustrations with the modalities of governance became manifest in cities like Málaga or Madrid around 2017, often channeled through social centers and their claims, and dominated movement sentiment well by 2018-19. The government of Ahora Madrid also went through a series of splits and purges since its outset, and strong personalist and uncollaborative tendencies in the politics of Manuela Carmena alienated both fragments of Ahora Madrid, as well as social movements.

In May 2017, grassroots activists occupied a large municipal building in central Madrid, naming it 'La Ingobernable' -'the ungovernable'– and making it a hub of new movement activity that looks beyond the electoral promise and the institutional logic. Rejecting the political games and splits that municipalism in Madrid had produced, a vibrant social center was established in the tradition of autonomy and a radical politics of the commons. The Ingobernable in Madrid, just like the casa Invisible in Málaga, remained a model of movement-institution (Úniversidad Nómada 2008) or institution of the commons (see Radio Reina Sofia 2011), as previously theorized and put into practice by key agents of the 15M. The gap between the two notions of institution and commons again opened, after having been successfully articulated in municipalist campaigns that drew on 15M. Now, it became clear that the 'común' of municipalist governments could not be the same as that of the social centers.

> …the new kinds of social centers are experiments of new institutions. In this sense, obviously without overestimating or fetichizing them, they generate answers for the current social movements. They are institutions that, like those in other fields, generate new spaces of autonomy, and their potency lies in their capacity for collaboration, for cooperation with the struggles that happen at present: today it is for the access to housing or for the rights of migrants. And tomorrow, for other [struggles] that will come, that are emerging in the context, let's call it terminal, of neoliberal capitalism (Sguigla, Sánchez-Cedillo, Carmona and Herreros 2008; my translation from Spanish).

The idea of movement-institutions, later often termed 'institutions of the commons,'[45] underpinned the municipalist turn towards re-making institutions from below, crucially the claim that institutions and cities could be for everyone, just as the movement-institutions hypothesis insisted on the precariat and the subaltern as political subjects: 'an *institutional dispositif* (a form of *movement institution*) that has already shown itself to be valid and in a way irreversible for the politics of subaltern subjects in the metropolis' (Universidád Nómada 2008; my translation from Spanish). The question of the political subject remained crucial. The municipalist platforms soon adjusted their claims towards 'citizenry' in general, a notion and politics that per se excludes large parts of the subaltern, those without papers or citizenship, lacking the right to vote amongst many other rights.

The grassroots institutions of the commons set out from the key claim to lift up those who were kept out, off and invisible, those who lacked rights, be they labor, social or citizen's rights, whilst institutional municipalism -affected by repeat electoral campaigns- veered inevitably towards addressing subjects of rights: voters and citizens rather than just inhabitants. A key category of municipalist discourse was and is 'neighbors' ('veins' in Catalan; in Barcelona this notion is very strong), a more inclusive category in theory, yet one that is also difficult to detach from autochthone undertones, and difficult to broaden in practice since local Catalan and Spanish

[45] In the context of texts, gatherings and colloquiums such as Museo Reina Sofia & Fundación de los Comunes 2009.

communities tend to be quite separated from international migrant communities. Progressive discourse in Barcelona insists on calling migrants and non-whites neighbors too, yet this insistence is contradicted by the various institutional exclusions those neighbors face. They have no representation in the halls of power, and their organizations barely have any weight in public and political terms; only the radically political struggle of undocumented street vendors makes it into the news occasionally. At worst, migrants are seen as helpless victims, at best as people to be integrated as citizens, but rarely as people and communities in their own right and richness. The 'City of Refuge' policy of Barcelona reflects this, as despite improvements to services and the best of intentions it ended up reproducing a discourse of migrant victimhood and Catalan benevolence, which on top ended up asserting the contentious differentiation between refugees and economic migrants (see Ruebner-Hansen 2020 for details).

This is the limit of the notion of democratization itself: a notion that largely serves those entitled as citizens, inherently based on exclusions, of woman and slaves in ancient Greek democracy, of subaltern and migrants in contemporary democracies. Indeed, democratization can also lead to an affirmation of divisions along lines of class, as the Barcelona node of the Fundación de los Comunes affirms in their assessment of municipalism in 2017:

> Improving infrastructures, or implementing plans for urban participation, even improving the sociability of a neighborhood, can generate perverse effects. If urban conditions improve thanks to public intervention, the price of land can go up and give rise to the expulsion of those who can't afford higher rents. More urban improvement or more participation aren't always synonymous with more equality. Democratization doesn't always imply redistribution. The property developers and stock markets of financial capital know this very well… (MAC3 Barcelona; my translation from Spanish).

Critical elements within municipalism –in this case the Hidra cooperative, who put together this analysis, and from the ranks of which participation officer Laia Forné also came– diagnosed this limitation of municipalism to certain classes, and lamented the focus of its politics on producing narrative ('relato') instead of organization (MAC3 Barcelona). A differentiation along class and racial lines had more or less thoroughly affirmed itself by the second phase of government around 2017, with working classes becoming less visible as protagonists of politics. In the 2014 municipal elections, the poorer 'barrios populares' had been key, whilst in the 2019 municipal elections the same more peripheral neighborhoods were largely lost to other parties, and migrant and subaltern subjects, too, had to some degree disappeared from the political stage of municipalism, particularly as actors.[46]

[46] The case of Huma Jamshed, elected as councilor of Ciutat Vella district, tells a peculiar and complex story. Jamshed was expelled from Office for mismanagement/corruption in 2016, and in turn accused Barcelona en Comú of racism (as she wrote on Facebook or in an article for the right-wing platform 'El Español'). This case is no doubt complex and Hamshed's account has its contradictions. It is however

There is likely a considerable degree of opportunism in Jamshed's moves, but whether or not her claims about direct racism are correct, her case reflects the failure of the new municipalist candidatures to integrate subjects from outside the traditional white spectrum of citizenship. A failure that certainly cannot be attributed to individual failure by municipalists but is down to the persistence of systemic inclusions in the architecture of institutions and democratic rights. Despite a myriad of progressive discourses and anti-racist campaigns (see for instance the guide for inclusive communication, Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2019), the political project of municipalism within western democratic frameworks showed itself to be rather more capable of representing the already-established citizenry and its social movements than the subaltern that were at the heart of movement-based visions of institutions.

2017-19 showed, thus, the limitations of the populist modalities of municipalism - 'governing for all' turned out to often be about governing for specific sectors, given the institutional architectures and economic dynamics. It was a time when some actors reaffirmed the critical importance of confronting neoliberalism and economic power, engaging more antagonistic politics in different aspects (the Fundación de los Comunes prime amongst them) in order to develop counter-power from within the institutions.

> For sure, it is necessary to shift participation towards forms of self-government and community action, but at the same time to eject private capital from the institutional architecture. If the opposite occurs, and this is an analysis shared by various departments of the city administration, participation ends up being a way of managing and containing urban conflict (MAC3 Barcelona).

The benefit of such a dual approach would be that it could not just keep the lines of conflict clearly within view, but that it could also make urban self-organization more resistant and resilient, and as such consolidate new popular identities shifting them away from neoliberal imaginaries. This battle seemed increasingly weakened as the 2019 elections approached.

6.10.7. Municipal electoral campaigns 2019

In 2019, electoral logics again took over many other dynamics in the political platforms. For Barcelona en Comú, the pre-campaign phase started in autumn 2018 and came with an incentive to more centrally control -to micromanage- messages and create new popular support where the previous neighborhood and thematic groups had faltered or, indeed, had been disabled. This meant launching new groups and platforms that could mobilize votes, as well as building door-to-door activists and campaigns. It was also the time for the drawing up of lists, and this opened onto a second cycle of reflections on governance through the statements of continuity or

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symptomatic of the difficulty BComú found in properly integrating people of non-European and non-Hispanic origins. This is due to a deep and persistent divide between the autochthonous and migrants in Barcelona, particularly non-white and non-European migrants.

withdrawal of councilors, as well as through a series of articles debating the success of Bcomú's first term and the desirability of continuing to govern.

Gala Pin for example, the governor of Ciutat Vella district during Bcomú's first mandate, decided not to repeat her candidature in 2019. Asked about the challenge of not losing one's anchorage in the reality of the neighborhood, and whether Barcelona en Comú lost this anchorage, she says:

> Some more and some less. Sometimes we fell into this logic of the party. It's complicated to get out of there when you are constantly surrounded, but I think in general we didn't [get lost]. And that's been possible because a big part of our base hadn't ever been active in a party before, that makes you have a base that pulls in another direction (Pin & López 2019; my translation from Spanish).

The role of neighborhood movements is seen as key by Barcelona en Comú, not just because of their historical power in the city but also because of their capacity to make very specific demands and evaluate proposals with expert local knowledge. Laia Forné Aguirre, of the governorship of participation and districts, describes the situation during Bcomú's first mandate as follows:

> In Barcelona – as opposed to other cities – there have been many communicating vessels between the streets and the public institutions. There's been the neighborhood movements that, through their situated knowledge and social struggles, have prefigured many of the municipal public policies. This relation, however, hasn't been organic, nor has it translated into governance based in public-communitarian collaboration. Sometimes it served to coopt movement and condition their demands, and later, to neutralize social control over local politics, whilst pacts were made with the private sector for the externalization of public services management (Forné Aguirre 2019; my translation from Catalan).

Forné-Aguirre, who is also a member of the research cooperative 'La Hidra' that took on many policy drafting processes for the City of Barcelona with Bcomú's government, insists on the vision of public-communitarian collaboration and models, a key horizon for Barcelona en Comú since the outset (more on this below, see also childcare case study). By 2019, there is a sobering up of initial claims and visions, a recognition that many things are not easy to achieve and take time, and a renewed critical claim to achieving them within the institutions. Broadly speaking, in the face of 2019 local elections, municipalist actors in Barcelona emphasize that it is worthwhile to keep building on the work done, and that transformations are possible and worthwhile. 'We need another mandate to accomplish things properly,' many councilors and activists said, insisting on the specific potentials of institutional work: '...social movements have many potentials, but also limitations; institutional politics has many limitations, but also a transformative potentiality that I think should not be underrated' (Pin & López 2019; my translation from Spanish).

This phase of re-evaluation, preceding the 2019 elections, offered refreshing reflection and (self-)critique, addressing itself to and involving the initial constituencies and activists that brought Bcomú to power, many of which had become disconnected –and some disenchanted– with Bcomú. Half analysis, half electoral prod, texts from spring 2019 evaluate institutional politics by dwelling on realism, pragmatism and continuity. During that time, the renowned geographer David Harvey, too, was asked to comment on the advancements of municipalism in Barcelona and whether he was disappointed:

> No, I'm not. I think we have enough experience at the local level to know what's possible and what isn't. It doesn't surprise me, I don't expect a new administration to enter and magically go things. I might desire that things had gone better. But I hope they keep governing. It's very easy to critique from the outside. But quickly you realize that there's been a very strong opposition to Colau. That the media have not been on her side. That capital isn't on her side either. That they have no economic resources. That the regional government is not on your side and tried to boycott you (Harvey 2019; my translation from Catalan).

Spring 2019 is thus a time when a certain soberness and pragmatism, but also determination, dominates municipalist political discourse in Barcelona. In other cities, the situation is quite different. Madrid is caught in stories of betrayal, splits and accusations, in a large part of the social movement's profound frustration with Manuela Carmena, and the formation of a new candidature of councilors expelled and exited from Ahora Madrid, by the name of Bancada Municipalista, that ran in the 2019 elections as part of En Pie Municipalista, an alliance between Izquierda Unida Madrid, Bancada Municipalista y Anticapitalistas Madrid.

In Málaga, disillusionment over splits remained present and chances of winning looked slim, giving way to a more open and unexpectant kind of analysis from within both the municipalist platforms and its associated movements, digesting the failings of institutional politics and of a successful articulation of movements and institutions:

> That's why it's so hard to understand the people who evaluate political combats solely based on the rules of winning or losing within the institutional ring when the real conflict is in life; in how we treat it, how we care for each other, in what desires we are capable of releasing, in how we relate. To change the city (and the world) is to change life (Navarra 2019; my translation from Spanish).

Foreseeing electoral failure and the burning out of the institutional horizon, activists in Málaga proceeded to shift the focus back to everyday struggles and relations.

6.10.8. The 2019 municipal elections

The elections finally yielded very disparate results across the Spanish state. In most bigger sized metropolitan areas, municipalist candidatures' seats were reduced to half (see appendix 1), having been shaken by splits that usually involved Podemos

breaking away from the 2015 'confluences.' In the two major cities of Barcelona and Madrid, results held (both obtained only one seat less than in 2015), but only in Barcelona –and only just about, with the help of a political manoeuvre[47] – did this lead into municipalist platforms governing. Pragmatism was further emphasized, for example in the act of blocking the independentist winners of the election from forming government and getting Ada Colau into office instead: 'Ada: Pragmatrix versus Matrix;' 'We're facing a debate that we continually have to confront, which is about seeing how you move between ethical purism and pragmatism' (Pin 2019c). Pragmatism is of course a rhetorical shell that can be filled with any political priority. Convinced of their work being worthwhile still, staying in government was the key priority for councilors as well as the base of Bcomú,[48] to see its policies to maturing in a second mandate.

In Madrid, the right and far-right formed a coalition to marginalize Manuela Carmena and Más Mádrid. There were also some remarkable exceptions, like Cádiz, where Podemos sustained the mayorship, even growing from 8 to 13 seats by absorbing the smaller Cadiz en Común, or indeed smaller towns like Cárcaboso or Áviles that obtained the same amount of seats with the same candidature as in 2015 (see table 1, appendix). Overall, the municipalist grassroots candidacies however declined by half or more (see table 1, appendix). Málaga Ahora, the alliance of social movements with traditional leftist parties, was caught in total defeat, losing all 6 of its seats, 3 of them to Málaga Adelante, the split-off coalition of the parties Podemos and Izquierda Unida. Their tonalities after the election night were humble and restrained, and indeed also relieved, as a member of the municipal Málaga Ahora team wrote:

> Despite all this [losing the elections] I have to confess that after the bad experience, the moment of tragedy that we already foresaw in the course of the electoral night, the moments of necessary warmth and mutual care that we gave each other after the results came through, the first thing I felt as I walked home was relief. Making the jump into the institution after years of autonomy meant a long process of changing skin for us. It was only possible thanks to the political climate [of the 15M] and the collective determination. We prepared and meditated on it, but all the previous immunizations turned out to be insufficient for what we faced: personal ambitions, betrayals, a climate of conspiracies, experiences of 'entryism,' defection. Add to that that the real enemy, the regime of 78, received us with its tentacles wide open (Diaz 2019; my translation from Spanish).

In some places, like Málaga, 2019 marked thus the end of the municipalist dream and effort, leading actors back into movements one way or another, with a lot of new knowledge and experience. In Madrid, the experience is very similar, though marked

[47] Barcelona en Comú came second to the republican independentist ERC by some 7000 votes, but with the support of anti-independentist forces (the PSC, the Catalan social democrats) got to form a government, much to the anger of the independentist movement.

[48] 71.4% of Bcomús registered members voted for making Ada Colau mayor by governing with the Catalan socialists (Sust 2019).

by various continuities of (rather troubled) electoralism at the different political levels. In Barcelona, municipalism sustains itself as model of governance in relation to social movements, institutionally and in large part also socially, though Bcomú's coalition with the socialists leaves them in a weaker position and solicits more explicit criticism from movements in this second mandate. Here, the conflict between Catalunya and Spain's centrists led to an overdetermination of politics by the independence issue, marking a harsh macropolitical conjuncture and period of profound instability in which municipal politics, too, was increasingly captured. There was, as ex-councilor Gala Pin says in 2019,

> the feeling that suddenly the calculus of institutional politics counts more… people expressing discomfort with the elaboration of the [electoral] program [of 2019 municipal elections], which in reality is not a matter of process but a discomfort about how the electoral calculus has come to the forefront. I think that at the level of the organization that also causes disaffection, not ruptures but disenchantment (Pin 2019a; my translation from Spanish).

While the electoral program of 2015 had been elaborated across squares, social centers and offices of cooperatives, the 2019 program was elaborated behind closed doors and with selected collective interlocutors, a fact that saddened many. Discomfort and disenchantment are not the end of it all though, nor are they necessarily a disempowering thing, as Pin insists in a text of December 2019, where she insists on the need to go beyond scandalizing power.

> If there's one thing I learned in these recent years…it's that politics needs to be done in a situated way, and from there, we must assure that politics knows how to inhabit discomfort. Our own, not that of others. It's not about making others politically uncomfortable, but getting uncomfortable. We have to flee the spaces of comfort, because they stop us from advancing, progressing, transforming, challenging ourselves' (Pin 2019b; my translation from Catalan).

Looking ahead at a period of increased political instability, a steep rise of rightwing populists and adjacent fascist groups, ecological disaster and increasing violence against those who defend solidarity and the poor, this is a pragmatism which -almost Lacanian style- insists on going outside, getting unsettled and developing politics from there.

This above list of dynamics and variants –and, of course, cities– is far from complete, but in it we can see some possible continued trajectories of the relation between movements and institutions. Let us now, after this timeline of some events and dynamics, look closer at the relation between movements and institutions.

In this section, you will find in-depth discussion of the relation between movements and institutions, as a relation concerning movements and the state as well as movements and the city. Following Latin American examples and referents that were

important for Spanish municipalisms, we trace some ways in which progressive governments and social movements relate(d), and the kinds of agonism or antagonism they engaged. Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar and Maria Galindo will accompany us here and in the next chapter, as figures that have been vocal and helped think about the relation between movements and institutions from feminist autonomist and anarchist viewpoints in Latin America. We will also trace the reflections of Barcelona municipalists Gala Pin and Laia Forné, and the role of the Fundación de los Comunes in creating fora for debate and reflection on this matter in Spain. The role of spaces of dialogue, debate and encounter is what we explore in some depth at the end of this section, mapping such spaces at a local, movement, party and institutional level. Such intermediary spaces and agencies are the make or break for relations between institutions and movements, as are chains of relation and care running across these spheres in a continuous way (which we will explore further down).

6.11. Movements and institutions

6.11.1. Grappling with power and the state: Latin American referents

Focusing on Barcelona, let us outline some of the early debates on the relation between movements and institutions –inevitably also debates on capitalism, the state and communitarianism– that took place in anticipation and preparation of the municipalist turn. The Fundación de los Comunes is a key agent for propelling these debates –often together with the editorial work of Traficantes de Sueños– and the Latin American experiences of popular movements, leftist government and constituent processes were key referents. Thus, in April 2015, two weeks before the municipal elections, upon the invitation of the Fundación de los Comunes, Bolivian vice-president and ex-political prisoner Álvaro García Linera conversed with philosopher and ex-political prisoner Antonio Negri on the relations of the state with the left.[49] The notions of constituent process (Negri), the autonomy of the political (Gramsci),[50] community and communitarianism, and indigenous struggles (García Linera 1995, Gutiérrez Aguilar 2008; 2017b) were key for unfolding debates on how to approach the state as movements. In 2017, a moment of inflection in the reflection on the relation between movements and institutions or the state, the Fundación de los Comunes hosts a series of talks of Raquel Gutiérrez Aguilar in Spain, to present her book *Horizontes Comunitario-populares* (Traficantes de Sueños 2017), where she analyzes the tense relation between movements and new socialist governments in Latin America. Latin America plays a key role in the ways in which movements and

[49] In the context of the event on 'Forma Valor y forma comunidad' de Alberto García Línera y 'El poder constituyento' de Antonio Negri' in Barcelona on 17 April 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZhSUlHIBPQ0.

[50] The way in which this notion came to be used by many activists, depreciatingly, perhaps stems from a comment of Antonio Negri in the aforementioned conversation with García Linera. The autonomy of the political was often referred to as the runaway tendency of the political class into corruption, as was the case with myriad corruption cases shaking Spain's political parties (particularly the then governing Partido Popular, ousted from government by a motion of non-confidence in 2018). This autonomy was understood to be undesirable, and that movements were to challenge it, since being in power would inevitably make municipalists part of the political class.

municipalists understand and conceptualize their challenges in the early years of municipalism (2014-17 particularly), inheriting reflections, relations and debates that were constitutive of the formation of Podemos and later fed into municipalism. Many municipalist activists had not just spent time with the Zapatistas in the early 2000s, but also worked with governments in Ecuador and Bolivia in some function -the FLOK society was key amongst them (Commons Transition 2015). Thus, Javier Toret, who coined the notion of technopolitics and played a key role both in relation to Podemos and municipalist digital strategies, argued that Podemos emerged from the combined knowledges and energies of the 15M movement and of the Latin American state-focused processes:

> The know-how of the 15M and the refined knowledge of electoral campaigns and progressive governments in Latin America (in Bolivia, Argentina, Venezuela and Ecuador) produced an explosive combination. This strange combination of the know-how of the 15M and of the Latin American experience are central for the successful launching as well as the viability of the initiative [Podemos] (Toret 2015; my translation from Spanish).

The formation of Podemos was to some extent a testing and learning ground for municipalism, in that it prefigured a turn from movements towards institutions but also showed some key flaws to avoid, concerning mainly processes of verticalization that destroyed Podemos' vibrant 'círculos' (akin to the 'ejes' in Barcelona en Comú), the dangers of hyper-leadership (Pablo Iglesias in Podemos, Ada Cola in Barcelona en Comú) and the subsumption of the political process by dynamics surrounding the central state (concerning both the influences of big capital on the central state, and the framing of Spain vs. Catalunya). Municipalism ended up replicating some of the fallacies of Podemos, except for the latter, where a clear strategy was devised to escape the binary capture of the Spain-Catalunya conflict and nascent nationalisms, a strategy involving a vibrant internationalism as seen in the Fearless Cities summits, for instance. Raquel Gutiérrez, the Latin American militant and academic, reflected on this dimension of the state and municipalism during her 2017 visit to Spain:

> In Barcelona I heard a bit more interesting things [than in Madrid], that aren't only to do with governing for everybody. I find it ['governing for everybody'] to be a bit thin: to govern a bit better and to govern without corruption. I think that we indeed need some kind of possibility of dialoguing and to get back to working with the spirit of inside and outside [pinza de adentro y afuera], in the street and in the institution, like something a lot less vertical, to abandon this position of great giving [patronizing; gran dador] that is the power of the state, that concentrates the entirety of wealth and then divides it, and that at the end constitutes a fundamental base of the masculine symbolic order, very well entwined with the capitalist world and successive centuries of accumulation. This challenging of the dominant masculine order, in a state that isn't neutral, in institutions that are eminently masculine in symbolic terms, because they are

> founded in a negation of the creative energy that life has, is a step we need to make (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2017a; my translation from Spanish).

Gutiérrez radicalizes the idea of 'feminizing politics' into an idea of a politics in the feminine more broadly, unimpressed by the glass ceiling approach:

> feminizing politics seems a weak proposal to me. And, moreover, I'm worried that it's going to be a reedition of the old trap: add women and mix in. We've already been there. We don't want to be those to manage hell. We want to disarm it, and we want to go build something different that can emerge from the interstices that are left in hell (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2017a; my translation from Spanish).

Feminist critiques played a key role in initial municipalist positions and reflections on government and governance in Spain, and 2017 was thus also a moment for revisiting some of the claims of 'feminizing' politics. Latin American feminisms played an important role in giving another perspective on feminist struggles, as they too had passed through the ups and downs of progressive governments. They also found themselves in a phase of re-energizing struggles in 2017, with Ni Una Menos and the Women's strikes working to get beyond the state-centric narrative of the great failure of progressive governments in Latin America ('fin de ciclo de los gobiernos progressistas en América del Sur; Gutiérrez Aguilar 2017) with a sober discourse on institutional promises and with a praxis that shifts the focus back to movements, since claims to progress and hope had been monopolized by the state.[51] Gutiérrez narrates the Latin American political-institutional experience as one of failure, yet she also affirms the need to articulate movements and institutions, when asked about choosing between the two:

> This is a question that was often asked in Latin America in terms of an excluding binarism, which moreover is a binarism that sterilizes the real possibility of making actions of sustained and profound force. It was movement or institution, and never could one think movement 'and' institution, and set the terms movement and institution in tendentially less hierarchizing conditions, where tasks are given to those who enter the institutions, because what they have to work on are these hierarchies. The problem is that the state is an entity where a great part of the capacity of public speech is monopolized. So, if those entering the institution preserve this monopoly, or what's more, if they reaffirm it… how is it then going to be possible to enable a dialogue? (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2017a).

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[51] This is reflected by councilor Gala Pin when she recounts how the huge, historically unprecedented 8th March strikes of 2018 inspired her and other feminists in government to look beyond institutional impasse: 'For me [on the timeline of municipalism] 8th March 2018 is a turning point, many of us who were affectively demotivated with institutional politics and who were inside the institution, suddenly had the impression that the process lies outside of all that realm and that there's a climate where anything could happen, and that was super powerful' (Pin 2019a).

The experience of activists-politicians affirming this division of visibility and legitimacy, of buying into the idea of their monopoly over meaning-making, from which, ultimately, the monopoly of violence is derived, is a bitter one. While this had been witnessed in Podemos, it was also reflected in different places and parts of municipalist movements, particularly when the traditional parties and their electoral priorities were involved (see Malaga workshop notes 2018 for an example). The gap between a state institution and an institution of the commons (or movement-institution) came to its fullest in these cases and moments, accentuating contradictions to a point where social movements strongly distanced themselves from the political doings of their ex-comrades. Madrid saw a lot of stark examples of such alienation, as did any other city to different degrees. The internal splits that occurred in municipalist movements had often to do with this position of imposing unitary narratives and of prioritizing hegemonic discourse -a reflection of 'the tension between confluence and unity,' as municipalist activists in Málaga put it (Málaga workshop notes 2018)- and as such with the statist influence of Podemos on municipalist candidatures.

6.11.2. Learning processes and phases, translocal network-building

The shift from a movement-dominated politics to a more institutionally determined one seemed unavoidable, and while in a way no one had expected otherwise, neither in the movements nor in the streets, there was no knowledge of what to do with this expectation: no precedent or indeed culture of precedents (Vercauteren, Mueller & Crabbé 2007) that could guide the municipalists on both ends of the civic architecture, the city hall and the streets, to take the two extremes of this spectrum, which should however be understood as a continuum involving a myriad of layers and configurations. As mentioned, Latin American genealogies were precious in providing some referents, but of course municipal politics is not the same as central states, and national and local contexts are not always comparable. What does travel and is translatable, however, are affective states and modes of emotional and empathic understanding and support, and as such the links to Latin America were key not just –or maybe not even primarily– in a sense of providing cases, lessons or facts, but rather in the tacit and often affective grasping of phases and collective states, of moments and modalities of collective becoming.

Those processes of collective becoming -becoming social movement, becoming campaign, becoming electoral platform, becoming party, becoming institution, etc.- are always singular, and what can be drawn and learned from them often passes as much through the modes of inhabitation and articulation of agents. It is in this sense that the presence of people –elders perhaps– like Raquel Gutiérrez, Alberto García Linera, Silvia Federici, Antonio Negri and many more acts on the collective subjectivity. We will return to this dimension of learning and affect, and solidarity and trust, later, since the collective becoming of movements is never just about political moves and organization, but also about embodiments, imaginaries and interconnections.

Thus, in sum, while in one way or another, the imaginary of being able to sustain a movement-based institutional politics was kept alive until at least 2017, it began to show its cracks and the need for a different narrative and understanding of the relation movements-institutions became manifest. Hence, in 2017 we see a series of analyses emerge, leading to a more pragmatic and sober, sometimes also more directly (self-) critical tone in municipalist discourse. This was very much linked to the internal learning processes in the institutions, a key aspect of which concerned the recognition of different fields of political competences, until then ignored by large parts of social movements, but soon showing itself to be highly determinant in municipalist work and claims.

While from the outside, in the 15M movement and beyond, institutional politics had been criticized in a wholesale fashion as corrupt, and some of the workings of power therein were analyzed, there was little notion or experience of the actual mechanisms of government and institutional decision making. The sovereignty and power of politicians was largely overestimated, the complexity and slowness of policy-making largely unknown, and the division of powers across levels of government little understood. Thus, it became clear –at a broader social level– that in the absence of competences on social rights, employment, citizenship and migration, and with very limited legislative power, amongst many other things, municipalism would largely need to operate via a series of 'minor' (in the sense of Deleuze) political manoeuvres and *detournements* rather than being able to simply realize sweeping policies. This did not mean limiting its radical claims or failing to use the municipality as a discursive platform to challenge processes at other levels, as Barcelona en Comú did with respect to the arrival of people seeking asylum in Europe, the rise of right-wing currents and politicians in Spain and beyond, or the fight against supranational lobbies and platforms like Airbnb.

In another turn towards referents, looking to find translocal ways of challenging neoliberalism and building municipalist networks, Barcelona en Comú invested in building international networks of movement-parties, linking up with the sanctuary cities movement and the Working Families Party in the US, as well as with nascent municipalist projects in Europe, Africa and Latin America particularly. This search for, and cultivation of, international referents was a key labor not just for strengthening Barcelona en Comú's profile abroad but also for nourishing it with ideas, inspiration and solidarity from abroad. The Fearless Cities summit in 2017 was a key expression of this drive within the party (Barcelona en Comú et al. 2017).

One referent in this process was Debbie Bookchin, daughter or anarchist communitarian municipalist Murray Bookchin. Around 2018, the latter became an important referent for ways of understanding the specific relations of cities to the state for Barcelona municipalism.[52] This problematic had become increasingly manifest

[52] See, for instance, the Fearless Cities book (Barcelona en Comú et al. 2017) which has a foreword by Debbie Bookchin, this panel at a Barcelona conference (DSA 2018) or texts such as those of P2P Foundation 2018.

with the surge in Catalan independentist movements, with the tensions between the political outlook of municipalism versus the more state-centered party politics of Podemos, as well as with the difficulty of negotiating limited municipal competences, the inability to legislate and access major budgets on healthcare, housing etc.

In the relation of cities to the state, limited competences could be seen as both a curse and a blessing. As the municipal government's hands were strongly tied on a lot of fronts, they turned to the invention of local schemes and dispositifs that operated as social as well as political machines –from housing or migrants' cooperatives to neighborhood-run cultural centers, in a myriad of experiments of situated participatory local politics. A specific know-how with its tactics and strategies for municipal governance thus emerged, with a more realistic and specific view to relations between movements and institutions, and a strong desire to win a second mandate in order to bring some of these dispositifs and broader strategies of municipalist transformation to a point of maturing. The role of neighborhoods and local actors appeared as key for engaging sustainable and resilient transformations at a local scale. Not just because those actors had long been key protagonists in politics in cities like Barcelona, but also because any durable political transformation would have to be rooted at the local scale, integrated into people's lives and everyday relations. Those are the agents who can best defend programs and policies as their own, and resist enclosures to come. Community-based urban institutions are not just particularly engaging and creative, they are also the most resilient.

6.11.3. Inside/outside

Before we move on to look at specific places and times of municipalist collective thinking and action, let us pause on the use of the terms inside-outside for a moment, a topographical imaginary shared by almost all municipalist discourse as well as by academic and activist political analysis that charts the institution as 'inside' and the streets/movements/everyday life as 'outside.' Raquel Gutiérrez proposes a powerful inversion thereof, based on the idea that going into institutions is in fact 'entering the outside:'[53] 'There are some that entered the outside. Well, let them enter the outside and respect what we are doing and let them open up terms of dialogue' (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2017a; my translation from Spanish). And she goes on to describe how this way of approaching institutions from an assumed centrality of movements can avoid the compartmentalization or diluting of social desires into participatory processes or policy areas for example, as would be relevant examples in municipalism:

[53] Trying to trace this notion of 'entering outside' in practice, some researcher-activists coming from the 15M and following the municipalist processes with a slight difference and distance (in Madrid and Barcelona particularly) have been conducting a research project called 'Entering outside,' where they look at some configurations of the relation between public and commons in community health practices in southern Europe. See the website https://entrarafuera.net/, accessed 24/7/2020.

> This I think could be a fertile path for the longing for social transformation not to be transmuted into different levels of political change. Doing that would amount to packaging social desire into micro doses, it would amount to diluting them. When the energy of the 15M was here… That energy was made of the same stuff I think, it was the same energy that we could unfold in the water wars or that was unfolded in the aymara blockades, it was the same longing but with another content. This spread-out human capacity, how can we convert it into a torrent that unsettles and disturbs the institutional? That's my question and let's not assume the opposite, let's not think about how we can channel this process of struggle that is based in a profound collective desire into a change that's possible by establishing terms for diminishing the radicality of the word. This is what the comrades in Latin America did and it's going wrong, this is why they have been falling, this is why it's not going well for them (Gutiérrez Aguilar 2017a; my translation from Spanish).

Gutiérrez addresses a key problem and perhaps dilemma here, which is not just about a choice of terms but indeed, as she points out, about the *energies* carried by calls, cries, imaginaries and demands in social movements, and the way in which these link to social desire. Institutions are known to destroy, to fragment and weaken social longing, by 'blending it in' to rigid or inert institutional architectures (as Gutiérrez says of women being added and mixed into masculine political cultures), submitting it to rhythms and limitations that are not its own, by breaking its radicality down into many micro-doses that in themselves no longer bear the strong energy of the collective process, demand and movement.

On the other hand, on the part of movements, there is often a treacherous imaginary of governments and institutions as homogeneous or bloc-like, an idea that not only betrays the complex realities of agonism and antagonism as well as of roles and responsibilities within institutions, but can lead to premature responses of blockade and condemnation as well as misdirected critiques or requests on the part of movements. Asked what knowledge of institutions might be useful to take into account by movements, ex-councilor Gala Pin responds:

> everything is attributed to this unit of action, but in reality the party or government has different layers, and it's important to acknowledge these layers, not to excuse them but in order to elaborate a strategy so that tactics can be much more refined in the movements (Pin 2019a).

Early on in their mandate, Barcelona en Comú undertook sessions explaining the structure and functioning of city hall to its activists initially, to avoid misconceptions and inform activists and movements of possible ways to go about campaigning and demanding.

In Barcelona we witness thus a certain capacity of learning together across movements and institutions, of sharing information and aims despite actors being positioned broadly either on one or the other side of the movement-institution divide.

This capacity, and the collective maturing it allowed for across mobilized society as a whole, is no doubt part of why Barcelona was spared the kinds of ruptures and alienation that happened in other cities. As Laia Forné Aguirre of Bcomú's team in city hall, says: 'In Barcelona –as opposed to other cities– there have been many communicating vessels between the street and public institutions' (Forné Aguirre 2019). We shall now turn to the role of these communicating vessels, intermediary and mediating agents and platforms.

6.11.4. Spaces of dialogue and critique between movements and institutions

The importance –generally expressed as a lack of– spaces of dialogue across movements and institutions, as well as across different layers and places of municipalism, is a recurrent motif in conversations about the micropolitics of municipalism. In this section, I will address different kinds of interstices and communicating vessels, in order to map out some of the corresponding efforts and shortcomings of the Spanish municipalisms in 2015-20.

Encounters and debates

The Fundación de los Comunes soon recognized this need for dispositifs to generate encounters across movements and institutions, and set out to organize a series of large-scale, periodical meetings: the MAC encounters, standing for Municipalismo, Autogobierno, Contrapoder (municipalism, self-government, counterpower). Their premise is the loose, non-ideological autonomist base of many of the social movements that initiated municipalist ventures, and the notion that institutions must respond to movements, and not vice versa (see Espinoza Pino 2017). Municipalism was therein conceived as an autonomous movement, using different vessels and means but self-defining and self-governing beyond a single party or place: 'The municipalist movement claims autonomy in relation to any party or centralized instance, [as well as in relation to] its method of democratic construction and its roots in the cities and localities where the municipalist initiatives grew' (MAC1 2016; my translation from Spanish). There was a vision of being able to support or even spur movements from within the institution, not just of moving institutions in new directions:

> Municipalism also consists in imagining strategies to give resources and propel a new ecosystem of movements and institutional experiments from [within] the institutions -a new institutionality- while at the same time keeping the autonomous agenda of movements themselves intact (MAC1 2016; my translation from Spanish).

The Fundación de los Comunes to a considerable degree inherited the discourse and imaginaries on experimental and commons-based institutions that the Universidad Nómada had inaugurated, where institutionality was not a matter linked to formal or legal status but to social legitimacy and transversality. Transversality (Guattari 2003), in this radical vision of bottom-up institutions, is the equivalent to what inclusivity and participation are in liberal institutions: the difference between the two lies in

where they locate the political subject. In the former, more autonomous sense, the agents of politics are the people who organize and assemble their own institutions, whilst in the latter it is politicians who make politics by deciding to include or exclude. In other words, borrowing from group psychology, in autonomous politics, the people are an in-group of institutionality, whilst in liberal versions, they are an out-group.

The first MAC summit was at Casa Invisible in Málaga in July 2016, the second one in Pamplona/Iruñea in July 2017, the third one in A Coruña in October 2017, and the fourth one in Madrid in June 2018. At MAC2, a more sober analysis of the autonomy of the political within the institutions appeared:

> The question of organization has certainly been the great blind spot of the institutional cycle, also in the municipalist initiatives. The consistent lack of organizational experiences has on too many occasions produced a growing isolation and autonomy of the municipal teams. And that's not just in the worst sense of bureaucratization and institutionalization of those very same [teams], but also in [terms of] their incapacity to overcome just the political limits inscribed in the institution (MAC2 2017; my translation from Spanish).

The various attempts at bridging movement and institutional dynamics had showed themselves to be very limited, and a sense of decoupling between the two spheres increased. Institutional actors seemed to be getting carried away by electoralist and careerist calculus, no longer responsive, let alone obedient to social movements. The initial municipalist slogan of 'governing by obeying' (gobernar obedeciendo)[54] was no longer appropriate. And by the time of the 4th and last MAC meeting in Madrid, the question was no longer one of evaluating municipalism but rather of looking towards resurgent social movements and their capacity to point a way out of a sterile institutional climate that also affected activism (Contraparte 2018).

Laia Forné Aguirre, both a member of the Fundación de los Comunes via the Hídra cooperative and a municipal officer working on participation, once more reaffirmed the importance of autonomy in a 2019 text:

> If you want to build a public policy of the commons, it will have to learn a new way of *doing* that necessarily implies knowing how to conjugate spaces of autonomy with the public function. An autonomy that gives communities the capacity to make emancipatory policy, added to the capacity of city hall's public function (Forné Aguirre 2019; my translation from Catalan).

There are thus two notions of autonomy at play in the Fundación de los Comunes' discourse more broadly: that of the autonomy of movements and that of the autonomy of politics, taken from Gramsci, but read in the negative sense of the tendency of institutional politics to separate itself and act on its own behalf only.

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[54] This phrase was very widely used in early municipalist days, for instance as the title of Barcelona en Comús Code of Ethics (Guanyem Barcelona / Barcelona en Comú 2015).

The conversation about municipalism and its relation to social movements was also of interest to social and political movements internationally, addressed in a myriad of encounters, conferences and research projects organized by groups, platforms, foundations or parties across and beyond Europe. The Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, of Germany's Die Linke, was key to many of these endeavors (see, for instance, Rubio Pueyo 2017), but so were a host of social movements wanting to know about the work of municipalism in specific areas such as housing or migration for instance. Barcelona en Comú pursued a lively politics of international outreach and networking, themselves organizing large encounters between political and social movements, such as the Fearless Cities in 2017 in Barcelona, and many parties in other cities, too, tried to enliven municipalism internationally (even so, Barcelona remained the by far most active and successful in this regard).

As the local relations between municipalist parties and social movements changed and weakened, however, this international work also lost some of its more radical potential, in the worst case acting as a replacement relation of sorts, whereby city governments reached out to movements abroad when they could no longer engage in fruitful dialogue with their own local social movement in a specific area. This was the sense I sometimes had at times with Barcelona en Comú's international commission, particularly after 2017. An example of this is the international attention and praise received by the Ciutat Refugi refugee welcoming program and campaign of Barcelona en Comú, which at home however was met with stark criticism from migrant rights groups and their allies, as undocumented street vendors (Manteros) were being criminalized. The contrast and contradictions between Barcelona en Comú's 2015 migrations group manifesto (Barcelona en Comú Migrations 2015) against the criminalization of the manteros, and the reality of their governance in coming years (see, for instance, Iborra 2016, Macedo 2019), including police deployment and campaigns against illegal vending, was an uncomfortable fact.[55]

Beyond the struggles for autonomy

While this was the predominant sense around the time of 2017 -one of *weakening* relations between movements and institutions- things however look somewhat differently in 2020. Retrospectively, it seems that relations between movements and institutions went through some phases of change, from co-emergence and synchrony to gradual differentiation and dissociation, to later finding new ways of relating and producing complicity. In Barcelona, after the 2019 elections, at a time when electoral repetitions as well as independentist-statist polarizations calmed down somewhat, a new climate for radical alliances with the municipalist institution emerged. This time, alliances were not marked by notions of autonomy -movements had found their way

[55] This is an extremely interesting case for the detailed study of the complexity of power relations within the institution and municipalist parties, from the tensions between Ada Colau and police chief David Battlé, expressions of discord from the migrations axis of Barcelona en Comú as well as different officials of Bcomú, to the difficulty the elected officials have with positioning themselves in this respect, as well as the massive pressure from local shop owners' associations, etc.

back from or into municipalism more solidly, and Bcomú and its councilors had also consolidated their roles and positions more- but by notions of cooperation.

In other cities where municipalism lost power, and where conditions had been grimmer, the prophecies of dissociation and decline of course turned out to be accurate, and the need for movements to distance themselves durably from this experience and move on was palpable. Thinking with childrearing and subjectivity formation, as we do here, we may see an 'autonomy phase' of sorts in the relation between movements and institutions in Barcelona: an initially exciting, but then also painful process of people breaking away from movements to shape municipalist projects in institutions, involving a lot of struggles around association and differentiation, feelings of anger and abandonment. Autonomy phases, as phases of differentiation, bring upheaval and confusion, and a reorganization of relations and modes of dependency. Following the struggles -both subjective and collective- of becoming-separate, of individuation in Simondon's terms, there arise new subject positions, and with them new possibilities for relation and association. It seems to me that movements as well as municipalist actors in Barcelona had gone through this cycle by 2020, in a way that -compared to most other cities in Spain- allowed for integrity and new kinds of political work.

Autonomy phases, if we can thus think them in relation to political movements and relations, are not once-and-for-all points of identity formation, but points along ongoing processes of life, as becoming and individuation. Just as with human beings, cycles of change, differentiation and consolidation leap into one another, leading us not into a fixed identity but into a blossoming of subjectivities and alliances, never final but only ever metastable. The theories on subjectivity and identity of Guattari (Guattari & Rolnik 2006) and on individuation of Simondon (Simondon 2005) point in this direction, where we can see not just human becoming but an integration of processes and phases of becoming across a myriad of bodies, living and livelihoods. The individual and the collective are in constant interplay in processes of individuation (see also Zechner 2013a).

Permanent spaces of encounter

A 2017 text coming out of the Instituto de Democracia y Municipalismo reflected on the need for spaces of encounter in the following terms:

> Sustaining the tension between institutions and the movement dimension requires an organic approach that needs to be capable of encompassing very different social agents within a territory, generating spaces of encounter that allow for dialoguing and the defining of collective strategies. But where to meet? It would be necessary to build enclaves in the territory that favor such discussions, such as ateneos (neighborhood-run social-cultural centers), casas del pueblo (village social-cultural centers) and autonomous social centers– there's a fair few historical examples to draw on. Without open local dispositifs that allow us to centralize encounters, conversations and popular articulation–

> and whose model could well be different from case to case– it will be almost impossible to pose political challenges that sustain themselves over time, beyond episodical events (Espinoza Pino 2017; my translation from Spanish).

The emphasis on the territory and local dimension of such spaces is important, as it takes continuous, embedded and embodied dialogue and thinking in order to render the tension between movements and institutions productive. Only local and organized agents can build and sustain pressure from below, in touch with local realities and with a broad vision of problems and demands. The Casa Invisible in Málaga is a failed version of such a site of articulation. Whilst several councilors of Málaga Ahora emerged from the Casa Invisible, and the municipalist campaign received support by the social center, the relation between activists and councilors gradually deteriorated. The institutional 'ocupas' that come from the social center, as many of the councilors understood their role, were disappointed by the lack of incentive on the part of the social center, having hoped for them to run campaigns and put pressure on institutional action, so that they could turn the respective keys in the institutions. Councilors point to the calls for discussion that were launched from the city administration, which activists were apparently unaware of. The social center was left weakened and fragile as its ex-activists entered the institution (albeit in an oppositional role), not least by personal disappointments that came with political splits, and no clear strategy for action emerged on the activist side.[56] Both councilors and activists agree that the lack of micropolitical awareness has been a key problem, leading to conflicts, mistrust, insecurity, personal strategies and ambitions, silence and misunderstandings to take over. This was due to, and exacerbated by, a lack of common spaces of discussion and strategizing.

Speaking of Barcelona, Laia Forné Aguirre names 'republican cooperativism, social struggles, the feminist movement and the associational and neighborhood fabric' (Forné Aguirre 2019) as key territorial actors that operate via collective spaces of debate and encounter that build counter-power, and can act as communicating vessels to the city administrations. It is territorial rootedness that allows social movements to make claims that are radical in the sense that they take complex local realities into

[56] Common grievances and challenges abound: 'No use is being made of the knowledge of the city we have from the vantage point of town hall;' 'a lack of spaces of communication between Málaga Ahora and the Casa Invisible, where we can sit down and discuss, think, share;' 'there's a corporativism and personalism that makes conversations personal' rather than allowing for shared public debate; 'a lack of debate about the genealogy of municipalism within the Casa Invisible,' again these considerations are only expressed at an individual level; 'micro-debates impede broader debates, because they're already decided;' there's a predominance of 'personal and personalist strategies, some people have a lot of weight in decision-making and end up deciding the pathway;' 'the Casa Invisible hasn't had protagonism or set the debate regarding urban issues;' 'movements lacked collective analyses of the conjuncture;' 'a difficulty understanding the micropolitical affects/effects that exist within city hall, people don't feel supported;' 'a need for a space like the MAC but at the local level' because 'at the MAC people come with a discourse that then doesn't apply in Málaga;' 'it's a problem that people speak of Malaga Ahora and the Casa Invisible in binary terms, that there hasn't been a space to share this;' 'a space to build shared strategy;' and to acknowledge 'shared vulnerability;' from the outside, 'the conflict within Málaga Ahora was a bit scary.' These quotes are taken from different participants at the internal workshop I organized on the micropolitics of municipalism at Málaga's Casa Invisible in 2018.

account, and ideally, side with those most vulnerable. In a similar account, Gala Pin tells of how, as a councilor, she came to value the agency of radical autonomous movements, and their role in pressuring or mediating:

> One thing I've been thinking these 4 years is that the libertarian, anarchist, autonomous sector –or whatever you want to call it– is super important. I've fought a lot with them in the movements, but suddenly they emerge as a sector that's capable of distinguishing between different layers of society…and can work with the sex workers, the lumpen, the middle class that isn't middle class but wants to be middle class –with its disagreements and tensions, but it knows how to understand complexity and so on (Pin 2019a; my translation from Spanish).

She appreciates the fact that anarchists have a global vision of the city (as opposed to economic sectors) and that because they don't need to prove themselves to the institution, they do not fear conflict, 'because what conflict does is give voice or influence to people who usually don't have that' and because 'it's not all about recognition and that things are super fun' (Pin 2019a). The role of conflict, antagonism and autonomy can thus also be appreciated from within the institution, albeit retrospectively in this case (Pin had left office 5 months prior to this interview). Let's now briefly look at the institutional and organizational attempts at establishing pathways of exchange with movements.

6.11.5. Organizational and institutional vessels to communicate with movements

To some extent, and differing degrees across places, the municipalist party platforms themselves are the main communicating vessels between movements and institutions. The ambition expressed in calling them 'platforms' rather than 'parties' points to a desire for them to be more than keepers of the party books and electoral campaign organs. Barcelona en Comú, for instance, is a complex organization with multiple layers in its 'D' phase (2016-onward), featuring a plenary, different commissions, territorial and thematic groups, a coordinating and executive group, and different intersections with the institutional space (Barcelona en Comú, undated). Its architecture is designed to bring together officials from city hall (councilors and their teams), party members and representatives (those elected to different bodies), and social movement actors. In order to trace the connections and (initially) entanglements with movements, it is useful to step back and look at its beginnings.

At the very beginning of the electoral campaign, Guanyem Barcelona was a platform of activists without any elected officials yet, unmarked by the categorizations and hierarchies of political institutions. The elaboration of the electoral program is a good example of how a core group of initiators kicked off an immense process of participation, or indeed collaboration, since vast amounts of new people took matters in their own hands (Zechner 2015; 2017). Events and assemblies were organized along local and thematic lines, in order to come up with proposals of measures for the program. This was an incredibly mobilizing and empowering process, unseen in this

form anywhere in the world, whereby thousands of people were inspired to imagine and dream up the city they desired ('If we have the capacity to imagine another Barcelona, we have the power to transform it' was a key slogan of Guanyem Barcelona), coming up with visionary collective proposals. This meant a process of building, first, great organizational power, from collective inhabitation and composition, and through this, considerable representational power, first informal, and later with the elections also formal. As I have argued with Bue Hansen in an article that addresses the ways in which different forms of politics build power, there is great value in building transversal connections across the spheres of networking, inhabitation, organization and representation (Zechner & Hansen 2015). Municipalism springs from a novel and intelligent articulation of these dimensions towards a broader political project (see Zechner & Hansen 2015 for an early analysis of Barcelona en Comú along these lines).

The groups that drafted the program locally and thematically were formalized as 'axes' within the initial organigram of Barcelona en Comú ('phase C'), acting as organs of communication and mediation across the emergent divisions of labor and formal roles. There were thematic lines (healthcare, education, local government, work, urbanism, migrations, culture, gender, information society, city economy, tourism, security, right to information –in abbreviated terms, see figure 3 of the appendix for full names) as well as territorial lines (neighborhood axes), which carried information from the bottom up by sourcing and articulating ideas, scanning and receiving grievances, suggestions and complaints in movements, as well as downward from the institution by communicating decisions and engaging political pedagogy.[57]

This organizational model, highly functional and efficient in the campaign phase, resembles the assembly-based libertarian municipalism of Bookchin, where groups can make their own decisions without depending on superior instances much. It however stopped being quite so functional as Bcomú entered the institutions. Confronted with institutional hierarchies and protocols (including their timeframes, vocabularies, formalizations of knowledge, etc.), the function of the ejes became unclear, as their assembly-based decisions and proposals were now no longer binding or even recognized, making them highly dependent on the officials in their fields. Some ejes managed to continue and reinvent themselves in this new landscape, particularly where assemblies were led by people with good knowledge of representational and institutional politics and where corresponding officials were

[57] There are myriad examples of this kind of mediation. In the case of the undocumented street vendors in Barcelona, for instance, the migrations axis of BComú was actively debating the problem of criminalization and precarity, picking up on critiques from different migrant organizing and anti-racist groups and platforms, holding meetings with them, creating statements and communiqués to pass on to councilors and other working groups. This sometimes involves writing articles, organizing debates and meetings across movements and institutional actors, and filtering down rationales of decisions and suggestions for tactics to activist groups. All this can take many forms and pathways. Indeed, the migrations group is not exactly an example of success since they lost much of their power after the electoral campaign, surviving as more of a lose network after the first years of government.

more susceptible to working collectively and with social movements (for instance, the feminisms eje and the international commission). In many fields, however, this was not the case (on the one hand because not all areas of government went to Bcomú with its 11 councilors, on the other hand in Bcomú, too, there were people with different political cultures, particularly those coming from established parties like ICV_EUiA, Procés Constituent). Many ejes thus lost their power and with it their energies, and stopped functioning. In the diagram of the D phase, they are no longer mentioned.

An example of an eje that survived across and even beyond Bcomú's first term is that of Feminisms, a vibrant space with high participation and good exchange with elected officials. This was a space that has continuously served not just for feedback and ideas on policy, but also as a space for reflecting on the cultures of care ('or of non-care,' as Gala Pin remarked in our interview) that existed and emerged across the institution and the party. Feminism has been a key pillar for Bcomú from the start, and found its representation both in the institution, party and activist base. Within the party, a study on gender in the organization was commissioned (Diversitas 2018), and within city hall a telegram group of Bcomú women became a useful platform for mutual support (Pin 2019a).

Another important level of exchange is that between municipalist platforms (comprising their activist as well as organizational and to some extent also institutional base), facilitated via the Municilab encounters at the Spanish level (held in Barcelona 2017 and 2018, organized by Bcomú)[58] and the international Fearless cities summits (2017 in Barcelona, 2018 in New York, Warsaw, Brussels, Valparaíso).[59] These platforms allow for broader networking and exchange across municipalist strata as well as places, with local platforms largely setting the agenda.

From movements to institutions, municipalism implied a change of rhythm, tonality and modality of relation. It generally oriented actors across the spectrum towards the town hall and institutions. For activists in the street and neighborhoods, and above all for municipalists in institutions and parties, this meant grappling with the temporalities of policy, elections, media, often with a sense of becoming absorbed by those, losing the autonomous timeframes as well as conceptual and organizational production characteristic of the social movements from which municipalism emerged. In this section we will dedicate some time to look at the times, spaces and embodiments that came with municipalism's 'assault on the institutions' [asalto institucional]. We begin with analyzing everyday life in the institutions and then look at changes in social movements, coming to grasp how individualization works in institutional politics, leading us into a final section on broader matters of participation and policy.

[58] See the website of the Municilabs https://municilab.cat/, accessed 24/7/2020.
[59] See the website of the Fearless Cities Summits http://fearlesscities.com/en/summits, accessed 24/7/2020.

6.12. Collective intelligence, affect, embodiment and subjectivation

> The rhythm of the electoral cycle is not the rhythm of life and its unforeseeable musicality, nor that of the city and its infinite noises. But since some years we have exceedingly adapted our rhythms to the monotonous electoral noise and its resonances in the media (España Naveira 2019; my translation from Spanish)

6.12.1. Socializing experience to make it meaningful

Another crucial aspect, always mentioned, is the way in which institutional architectures and temporalities separate its workers from the everyday rhythms of neighborhoods and movements. The sheer complexity, enormity and intensity of administration is something councilors across cities mention as a factor of alienation. Communication within the institution is a complicated matter, too. Gala Pin mentions the women's Telegram group in city hall as a rare (albeit modest) example of a continuous space of care and notes the overall lack of spaces of collective thinking once in office. Accelerated rhythms and a lack of spaces of socialization make it impossible for councilors to develop shared imaginaries. Pin comments how, despite seeing other members of the municipal team frequently, and working with great numbers of fantastic people, the modalities of institutional work do not allow for the development of common notions, neither at the subjective nor objective level. 'We're living very different realities, we don't have spaces for socializing what is happening to us, what we are finding, what we are seeing, from the subjective to the objective, and so our common senses, which had been very close, are distancing themselves instead of broadening together' (Pin 2019a). This leads to emotional and affective disagreements.

Alejandra Baciero, working for the municipal Medialab in Madrid, has a similar experience

> Indeed I feel a big difference regarding your team at work, for instance in Medialab I don't feel I have a team, I have people around me on whom I can rely at different moments, but I don't feel there is a common vision, no common vision that would make us consult or participate in all decisions has configured itself from the beginning (Baciero 2018).

In these accounts we hear resonances of the fragmentation and 'blending' that Gutiérrez speaks of in Latin America, of how collective thought comes to be limited and social desire consequently packaged into micro-doses.

The 15M movement and the municipalist electoral campaigns were moments of peak collective intelligence, and they had created networks and modes of thinking and action that were hard to bring into the institution. Amador Fernandéz-Sabater from Madrid speaks of a loss of empathy that came with the municipalist turn:

> The 15M created a *sensitive common* in which it was possible to feel others and with others, as fellow beings. This skin has peeled off or gone numb, weakened

> to a considerable degree by a 'verticalization' of attention and desire, deposited and delegated towards the electoral promise of the new politics during the 'institutional takeover.' Captivated by the stimuli that came from above (tv, leaders, parties), at the same time neglecting what happened around us, the skin cracked (Fernandéz-Sabater 2018; my translation from Spanish).

The skins that were most brutally affected by this dynamic were no doubt those of the new councilors and government teams, whose often invisible and repressed experiences we want to look at here, to properly understand municipalist micropolitics as a relational matter, wherein all actors are sentient, affected and responsible. This points us to a crucial problem, one that sits at the heart of this report: how do people and groups *learn* within and across different places and positions of municipalism, its 'insides,' 'in-betweens' and 'outsides'? How do they produce useful knowledge about their conditions, in ways that build *cultures of precedents*, that provide concepts, lessons and stories that future generations can orient themselves by? We follow the leads of feminism, feminization and care here in order to understand experiences and limitations of institutional political work.

6.12.2. Embodying vulnerability…

New councilors and their co-workers found themselves thrown into a new institutional and mediatic reality marked by caution and distrust, yet they could not quite share this experience –neither amongst themselves due to lack of spaces/times, nor with their previous collective contexts in social movements, for fear of being judged. Councilor Claudia Delso of A Coruña says

> We do speak much amongst ourselves, the only thing is that we don't socialize it. We don't socialize it because of a fear of the interpretation that will be made of this, in the context we're in…I think there's a whole surrounding that's thinking about this, that is helping us find ways out which are absolutely fundamental and vital, and the problem is that we're not socializing it... (Delso 2018).

Madrid councilor Celia Mayer says there was no dialogue between the institution and movements, 'we're trapped between private chats and the media,' the latter determining interpretations and debates (Traficantes de Sueños 2017). Apart from missing mechanisms and spaces, the media and opposition's political slander clearly also play a role in the lack of evaluation and self-criticism, making it impossible for politicians to express vulnerability and doubt.

This tendency has been challenged many times by Ada Colau, who let herself cry and admit to struggling in different occasions (Pau Faus' film 'Alcaldessa' dwells on this). This is also what the feminization of politics can mean: to remain attuned to vulnerability despite (or through) mediatic exposure and rigid institutional hierarchies that make it difficult to show sensitivity and emotional interdependence. In a context where politicians are supposed to project the strong and sovereign individual -the context of politics in most places and ages, as profoundly patriarchal culture- a mayor

who cries with calm and dignity, as a normal way of letting emotion happen, rather than in the exceptional modality of breakdown only, is a powerful example of another kind of embodiment of politics. To allow oneself to feel, be affected and resonate with things that happen is a powerful act, in city hall as much as in party spaces and indeed activist cultures: the projection of sovereign, cool individuality is a problem that movements and organizations of all kinds face, too.

6.12.3…as a way of changing political culture

In a very micropolitical endeavor of research and debate, Barcelona en Comú's feminist diagnosis of gender dynamics in the organization looks at this also, featuring a schema of 'masculinity and new forms of political interaction,' which charts out traditional political habitus against open and pluralist political practice as seen in the movements of 2011 and onwards (Institut Diversitas 2017; see appendix section 4, chart on 'Masculinitat I noves formes'). The chart contrasts a) ' ''winning the political debate" based on the imposition of positions' with 'recognition of diverse postures,' b) 'using absolute opinions (locking down positions)' with 'valorizing elements of contrary postures that can be shared,' c) 'always showing assurance and authority' with 'relativizing one's own assumptions,' d) 'difficulty in sharing political discrepancies' with 'facilitating shared spaces of work,' e) 'speed in the taking of decisions' with 'allowing for time of deliberation,' and finally, f) 'exclusive, restricted and informal spaces of decision making' with 'inclusive and transparent spaces of decision making' (Barcelona en Comú/Institut Diversitas, 2018). This schema provides a very good overview of some of the shifts in activist culture that the movements of 2011 (the movements of 'the squares') brought about and that the new municipalist organizations are adamant to translate into the sphere of institutional politics. This is easier to realize within the party, which is autonomous in the sense of giving itself its own forms and laws, than within the city administration. The memory of movements and the 15M are still alive in those who went to take on official roles, but it is being worn down by institutional protocol.

6.12.4. Fear and the individualization of responsibility

Many councilors admit to an acute sense of missing the collective sense of political experimentation and the trust that characterize social movements:

> There are elements of listening and communication and of processes of construction let's say, of trial and error that happen in movements but that we find very hard to make happen with the institutional. …For me there's something we bring from the movements but that we're not able to place at the center and to dare, and that's where fear comes in…(Delso 2018; my translation from Spanish).

Whilst in social movements, experimentation rarely triggers fear (repression does), in the institution, this seems to be the inverse. Fear is an affect that was mentioned oftentimes in my interviews, occurring in relation to experiences and processes at all levels, from personal to macropolitical, from a fear that right-wing electoral wins to

fear of personal failure. The presence of this affect has to do with the strong sense of individual responsibility that comes with being a public representative or indeed servant. 'Responsibility' is another word that came up in several councilors' accounts of unpleasant dynamics in my interviews.

The micropolitical problems facing people and groups at different levels of municipalism are far from being matters of personal choice or virtue mainly, nor of *limited* responsibility –municipalism was engaged as a broad movement and vision by many, and while everyone needs to deal with where they ended up five years after (in grey town hall offices, in pirate radios decrying political manoeuvres, at home with kids…) it is clear that there is still a shared responsibility for what happened and will happen. Some splits and disenchantments have fractured the big 'we' that stood at the beginning of municipalism, yet a sense of interest, empathy and dialogue is still palpable across movements and institutions in 2020, at least in Barcelona. The vibrating skin of the 15M might have cracked and become rough, but in the vulnerability and suffering of its cracks there are a myriad of reflections and attempts at moving on, together, even if this takes on very different meanings. The problem is rather about the configuration of institutional work and decision-making, where responsibility is individualized, rather than merely limited. Whilst the fact of not being able to take sweeping, broad decisions hardly bothers or surprises anyone in the institution (but the most despotic characters perhaps), the fact of having to take and stand for decisions more or less alone does.

And again, it appears that those most acutely fragmented are the ones at the top of the institution, cut off from the *collective* intelligence, responsibility and care that had accompanied them in social movements. Some find this easier to deal with than others, and unsurprisingly this difference often articulates itself along gender lines. Alejandra Baciero, in the position of someone working for a municipal institution and active in a municipalist platform, is bothered by the loss of closeness with collective agency in movements:

> In fact I rather feel a bit distant [from movements] and that worries me a lot, because before I felt closeness and now it's like I'm in an intermediate space which is a bit of a no-mans-land, and it's hard to know how to deal with it, because in fact the idea was to translate the lessons from all this more movement -and militancy-based phase into… well, to take those lessons and bring them into municipalist dispositifs that can then translate into real politics, into public policy (Baciero 2018; my translation from Spanish).

This account of being in a no-man's-land makes me think of the term equidistance, a terrifying notion for municipalists who seek to keep taking sides, avoiding the liberal notion that there can be a neutral place. Being equidistant, as being at a distance from both movements and institutional habitus, is to be lost, to be nowhere. This was never the idea. How to collectively position oneself, to find a collective compass in a context that strongly individualizes? This is the role of fractions and municipalist sub-platforms, as spaces of collective deliberation and positioning. Baciero is part of

Madrid 192, a municipalist space of affinity that allows for collective reflection and care, she says. The various organs, assemblies and social spaces of municipalist parties also serve similar functions of collectivity, allowing for different levels of agonism and antagonism within and beyond municipalist projects. While they act upon the institution as collective forces, they fail to undo the individualization of public function in itself. This individualization is inscribed in politics as a focus on the person and its agency, on individual political subjects.

The institutional -as public- political subject is not just individual or personal however, it is also -unsurprisingly since it is a subject on paper first and foremost- disembodied. Being disembodied here means more than being disconnected from bodily feelings, needs and desires: it means being disconnected from material, bodily interdependency, the very basis of our life, in favor of a myth of autonomy. This is a critique of politics we heard feminists make in a myriad ways (see for instance Perez Orozco 2014, Galindo 2019, Federici 2014). We shall dwell on some (dis)embodying and individualizing aspects of institutional politics, in order to understand what we are up against when we speak about 'changing political culture' and 'taking over institutions' and, indeed, to get an idea of what kinds of embodiments and political subjects institutions of the commons would need to be based on.

6.12.5.Institutions without bodies?

In city hall, a heavy workload and workdays of 12-15 hours together with representational function make for schizophrenic experiences. As Gala Pin says, whilst outside the institution you might go through 3-4 moods in a day, in the institution it is more like 10-15.[60] In official roles, responsibility is individualized, and thus fear, mistrust, guilt and defensiveness come to mark a myriad of relationships and processes. Decision-making is often individualized in institutions, and moreover individual bodies are supposed to decide in conditions of extreme pressure and stress – 'In order to take the right decisions… decisions are also taken with the body, and the institution makes you negate the body' (Pin 2019a).[61] This individualization of

[60] 'In a day when I'm not in the institution, I go through 3-4 moods (at the micro level many more, of course), however in a day in the institution you get up happy because they give you news that some building works you've been waiting for 3 months get the go-ahead, then you read an email that says you're lacking money for something and you get pissed off, then you meet up with people who explain a program of work placement to you that's super important to them, they've been preparing for this meeting for months, you have to empathize and figure out if this projects fits into the categories of the institution, whether you find it interesting and it's in the public interest, and how you can fit it in; then you run to a historical remembrance event, you walk there and prepare for it and when you arrive you get emotional, because these things always move you, from there you run to the managing board of the Licaeu theatre, there's the man from the state, the man from the Generalitat, the man from the Diputació, the gentlemen from the Liceu, and you have to read between lines there and understand what they're saying about the budget because there's really some political moves there that you don't quite grasp, but you have to also remember that you have to be very nice with that man there and give him a wink so that he helps you out with the Raval Nord health center, whilst at the same time a lover writes you and says they can't meet tonight so you feel down, then later you go for lunch with someone you have to talk some work things over with but they tell you that their father was sent to hospital, you have to be empathic, etc...' (Pin 2019a; my translation from Spanish).

[61] Pin still considers change in the institution is possible, but under certain conditions only:

responsibility and decision is precisely what the movements for a new politics were up against. Not having means to effectively counter it is a grave fact.

Moreover, the negation of the body in the institution is a problem not for individuals, but also for politics as large, rendering a deep-reaching 'feminization of politics' impossible. As Maria Galindo points out, speaking of the inquiry she did on gender in the Bolivian parliament (during the mandate of Evo Morales):

> We're in democracy without bodies. The body is expelled from political matters. The parliamentarians themselves told me that they had never addressed the issue of the body, it isn't considered important. Thus, when they debate abortion, there are no established bases for political discussion, and those of us who did indeed build them [the bases] are expelled from the right to debate (Galindo 2019; my translation from Spanish).

The problem of changing political culture is not a matter of replacing male with female bodies simply –'The feminist imaginary stands for political proposals for the transformation of society. It's not an ideology of rights for women within a neoliberal patriarchal system' (Galindo 2019). To properly and profoundly transform this culture, in the sense of a becoming-feminist of politics, means to grapple with the body not just as an object (upon which policies impact) but, firstly, as the basis for politics as practice itself, in order to enable other kinds of deliberation, decision-making and, thus, policy. In Barcelona en Comú, this is addressed mostly in terms of debates around reconciling work and life and to some extent also diversity (see, for instance, BComú Ejecutiva 2019).

But, as Celtia Traviesas Mendez, ex-secretary of Political Strategy and Communication of Podemos Galicia, points out (her words resonating with those of Gala Pin), there is invisible knowledge and analysis about ways of embodying power, which grows and circulates in conversations between women within and across institutions. The account of ex-councilor Claudia Delso, responding to Traviesas Mendez, reflects this:

> During my four years on the front lines, I have felt physically blocked in my diaphragm –the wide muscle located between the chest and abdomen, which rhythmically contracts and relaxes to help us breathe air into and out of our lungs. I had bronchitis four times and pneumonia once and even had to begin using a night guard to sleep. But the strain placed on my body didn't just come from the daily management of a councilorship that we built up from nothing, tackling the million and one exciting challenges it presented –challenges which

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I think it can be done, but I don't know if with a government of 11 [councilors], with this kind of macropolitical intensity… it sounds banal but if we'd been 20, without each of us having to be in charge of 3 things at the same time, without a 155 [enforcing of central Spanish rule onto the Catalan political bodies], without a declaration of independence [in Catalunya], etc. … We did indeed generate some spaces of reflection, but got together twice in four years as the entire government in order to think about policies, and that was only because some of us forced it a lot… I understood that, because I also couldn't, there wasn't space in my calendar either (Pin 2019a; my translation from Spanish).

> were often rife with problems caused by the datedness of the institution itself. What strained my body the most was observing, enduring and participating in the traditional exertion of power and, in turn, one of its more unpleasant outcomes: power struggles. I resigned myself to thinking that politics could only be approached with a mindset that polarises, excludes and rejects otherness (Delso & Traviesas Mendez 2019).

Delso says she needed to find her way back to 'fragility, fears, vulnerability, grief and everything that does not fit into the world of politics' after her first four years as a councilor: 'I keep asking myself why we have not been able to change our approach in a way that is much more tangible than just a weaving a narrative. Or at least why we haven't made a more heartfelt attempt to do so' (Delso & Traviesas Mendez 2019). Traviesas Mendez thinks this is due to their male peers' resistance to changing political semantics: 'Most of our male colleagues are not ready to surrender those concepts. Doing so requires a deep personal reckoning' (Delso & Traviesas Mendes 2019.) Here we find another internal faultline within municipalism, running along lines of gender, that has rarely found public expression beyond the positive discourses of feminizing politics and care.

6.12.6. Finding new positionalities

What is the role of movements in looking at the conditions of alienation in the institution? Should they care about the debacle of their (ex-)comrades in the halls of power? Do movements not risk immobility and impasse if they get too absorbed in the spectacle of institutional struggle? Certainly, they do, and in many cities it took them a while to find back -or find anew- their place, voice, strength and mission. With all eyes and minds focused on municipalism, on this new field of learning and practice within, across and beyond institutions, it took a while for movements to catch their breath and focus back on their own place and roles, particularly since these roles partially changed with a dialoguing administration. It is dangerous for movements to empathize with new politicians and thus accept the latter's political failings, out of a sense of loyalty or friendship. This process can easily lead to the subsumption of movements, without anyone in the institutions necessarily ever desiring such a dynamic. The relation between movements and institutions is just that -a dynamic relation- and as such depends on both parts playing a role. It is not a relation dictated by those in the institution, nor is it fixed.

Disentangling the emotional and relational interdependencies across these two fronts took some years in the base of Barcelona. Like after any change in relational roles and positions, it is confusing for people to navigate the new separations this brings and to understand what distance feels right, and when feelings of betrayal, abandonment and anger are legitimate. The affective dilemmas municipalism brought with it –as broad dilemmas of social relationality, not just as interpersonal problems– were not known to many people beforehand. And if they were known, it was mostly as knowledge of processes *elsewhere* (Latin America) rather than as embodied knowledge. Hence, it

was hard to speak of the social and political recomposition that municipalism implied in situ, in embodied terms.

Should and could movements address their ex-comrades in institutions in the same terms as before, with the trust that they're on the same side? Should and could councilors try to explain their institutional ordeals to movements? If councilors relay their challenges, they might not expect the listeners to take over their responsibility (Pin 2019a), but in a scenario marked by trust, won't people realistically feel caught up or immobilized by these stories? Where is the line between soliciting empathy and manipulating people's political outlook? How to navigate this complexity without leading into either blind apologism or blind condemnation? Where and when to draw the line(s) as movements, and adopt an antagonistic stance towards municipalism? In a context where collective debate is possible on an ongoing level, those matters can be thought through and resolved of course: in the absence of such platforms, social movement actors as well as municipalists are left to make private interpretations and decisions.

Overall, beyond some pockets of encounter and debate, and beyond private friendship circles, no collective intelligence was engaged to address this matter, few lessons learned at a collective level. After a few years of paralysis and silence, social movement actors either adopted a pragmatic attitude to municipalism or disengaged, as individuals mostly. A small number became cynical of municipalism. At a collective level, the matter remained too complex to address without exploding assemblies. It could fragment already fragile spaces of mobilization. While at a political level this is understandable -it would make little sense for movements to endlessly debate what the correct line is, indeed, it is much more interesting that people are diverse and flexible on this subject- at a social level this led to a lot of awkwardness.

Raquel Gutiérrez and Rosa Lugano, reflecting on an impressive conversation between Bolivian activist Maria Galindo and then vice-president Alberto García Linera (Galindo & García-Linera 2014), take to narrating the process lived on the movement side with strong words, allowing for no apology of politicians' missed opportunities:

> …there is a continuity and causality between social mobilization and the occupying of the state by the so-called progressive governments, but once these settled [in the institution] that force was made minority, its protagonists converted into students and spectators. Everything is thus inscribed in a new turn of the screw –and of language– of plunder, which is the intimate key to capital's power (Gutiérrez 2014 & Lugano; my translation from Spanish).

Certainly, many people became unhappy spectators of Spain's new municipalism too, feeling concerned by the complexity and difficulties of government, but also feeling patronized by the electoralist language of 'governing for all' that municipalists often adopted. The 'we' of the 2014/15 municipalist surge had disappeared in real life, but it persisted and was generalized in discourse. Increasingly, the municipalists' attempts at

engaging political pedagogy (seen particularly in 2017, as noted above) failed, in the sense that they provoked either an empty, demobilizing empathy or pity, but no broad debate or collective movement. Individualization, we may add to the quote above, is indeed the intimate key to neoliberalism's power. In the case of municipalism, it comes with a lack of collective strategy that manifests itself in the personalization of issues and tactics (as noted in relation to Málaga above), and with erratic and short-term moves by people or fractions. Emmanuel Rodriguez blames this 'tacticism' for breaking the potential of real change in the given conjuncture:

> Tactics are engaged in concrete practices, avoid obstacles, save movements, seek immediate efficacy. Tactics don't require complex questioning, don't need to think about ends. That's why, and particularly in institutional politics, tacticism tends to boil down to the question of 'how much power'…a concrete action produces. And that's why political tacticism is congruent with the 'elitist' logics of the concentration of power in small groups, in charismatic leadership. In other words, the 'governism' [gobernismo] and the 'autonomy of the political' that reduce politics to these games of institutional and minority action. …In the worst case, -our case– tacticism tends to confuse a minorities' position of power with the opportunities for change that a conjuncture offers (Rodriguez 2016: 190; my translation from Spanish).

The hypervisibility of individual leadership –as is common from Pablo Iglesias to Ada Colau, Manuela Carmena, Kichi, Iñigo Errejón, etc.– is also a consequence of failed collective becoming and representation. In the context of repeated elections, parties repeatedly resorted to their key figureheads for propaganda and protagonism, leading to the wearing down of collective subjectivation not just across institutions and movements, but also within municipalist circles. Electoral lists are the epitome of this reduction of politics to small numbers of persons.

We are thus compelled to conclude that the articulation between movements and institutions has largely failed, in different ways and degrees, to sustain a radical municipalist collective subject, one that is lively, situated and diverse. With this dynamic, the tendentially empty signifiers of municipalist populism (cf. Kioupkolis & Katsambekis 2019: 5) also became empty of enunciators, leading from a radical visionary politics to more pragmatic approaches focusing on making policy and political alliances. Repeat electoral campaigns strongly limited municipalism's capacities to be open and vulnerable, to be creative, lively and magnetic (as a social movement) rather than pluralist, friendly and inclusive (as a political organization). In the words of councilor Clauda Delso we find a self-critique relating to the unifying narrative of municipalism:

> Without a doubt, one thing that we did very well was creating and communicating a story: we dismantled the political status quo so that we, as leaders, could return the institutions to the 99%. We have collectively created a narrative that is epic, compelling, and richly woven but which is in my view also incredibly self-indulgent, considering that we have focused our political

> communication efforts on feeding this narrative rather than addressing the underlying institutional dysfunction and focusing on other realities and discourses (Delso & Traviesas Mendez 2019).

The main effect Delso and Traviesas Mendez point out is that of failing to change political culture, offering a counter-populist movement in commons-based institutional politics:

> Engaging in commons-oriented politics does not mean talking about the commons; more than anything, it means being part of a community and fulfilling the collective requirements and needs of the community. If this happens, the rest will fall into place. But if the foundation is unstable, every policy that is introduced will fail (Delso & Traviesas Mendez 2019).

This is more than a hunch, since another one of the effects of being focused on a grand narrative relates to transversality and participation. Without a lively collective subject that empowers and carries municipalism (and indeed also its sibling electoral ventures, like Podemos), organizational power as well as voter support are bound to decrease (see Zechner & Hansen 2015, as well as Zechner 2016b). Yet participation, at the organizational as well as voter level, have often been hailed as the crux of the commons-based municipalisms. In the section that follows, we will try to stake out some ways of thinking about and beyond this notion.

In this section, we will briefly look at the question of participation, from the perspective of social movements and mobilization. Following troubles and aporias of participation as formulated by municipalists, we question the relation of the participation paradigm to the autonomist as well as feminist ethos. We shall be distinguishing between a more liberal paradigm of participation -and its neoliberal expression in policy proposals such as those of the Big Society in the UK- and between new politics and frameworks of public-commons cooperation that go beyond those paradigms. In the latter, the terms of governance are set in such a way to encourage and enable self-organization and self-governance, in a way that brings the public closer to the commons and vice versa. In this context, we will come to see interdependence as the key underlying principle of doing politics, in a way that doesn't negate the autonomy of movements but that builds chains of co-responsibility and cooperation across the public and commons.

6.13. Beyond participation: public-commons partnerships and collective ownership

I participate
you participate

we participate…
they profit
(Atelier Populaire de l'Ex-École de des Beaux-Arts, 1968)

6.13.1. The problem of participation

What do we call participation? What function and use does it have in municipalist politics? And what is the relation between micropolitics and participation? The anti-capitalist politics of the commons that are at the base of this case study (cf. De Angelis, Federici, Linebaugh etc.) set out from the notion that change has to come first in society, then in politics. They are interested in the transformation of subjectivity as a means to change society and politics, in the sense of the micropolitical viewpoint laid out initially in this text. Micropolitics is, in this view of transformation, not coincidental but the basis upon which any change is built.

Participation sets out from a similar premise, with the difference that micropolitics is a bottom-up concept elaborated and made theirs by social movements (in Latin-speaking countries initially, but also in a myriad of other social movement geographies), whilst participation has moved from movements to being a centerpiece notion of neoliberal governance (Leal 2007).

> Reduced to a series of methodological packages and techniques, participation would slowly lose its philosophical and ideological meaning. In order to make the approach and methodology serve counter-hegemonic processes of grassroots resistance and transformation, these meanings desperately need to be recovered (Leal 2007: 539).

Barcelona en Comú, and municipalism overall, certainly represent such an attempt to recover or reconfigure participation as radical, grassroots decision making, inevitably with a strong collective dimension. Such participation -concerning necessarily both the party and city level- would need to go beyond the right of individualized citizens to vote on matters, to fill out forms in one-directional public consultations, to vote in rare party congresses, or to dialogue with political leaders and policymakers from time to time. Bcomú engaged all these things as crucial part of its participation strategy: Ada Colau and her councilors descending regularly to squares in order to listen to and dialogue with people in neighborhoods or institutions; online voting and ongoing consultation on party decisions on the 'Participa' platform, as well as citizen and government proposals on the 'Decidim platform; longer-term participatory processes and consultations at the local level, facilitated by movement-linked research cooperatives such as the Hidra or Raons Publiques, to name two that have been very relevant to the neighborhoods of Sants and its Can Battló, and Poble Sec and its grupos de crianza, amongst many other things.

In the account of Santi Fernandez Patón, ex-councilor of Málaga Ahora, participation takes on an ambivalent, if not problematic, role. In a book he published four months after exiting office, he reflects on how the notion of participation can lead into a twisted logic that fools both politicians and citizens into thinking there is collective

agency. He cites the disappointment with 'low participation' that was expressed by Málaga's municipalists at different points, and particularly towards the rather demobilized end of the legislature:

> Under these conditions [of demobilization], participation resembled a mere division of labor and a systematic holding of open forums, where –with some exceptions…- the participants were pretty much the same as in any other meeting (Fernandez Patón 2019: 41-42).

Under conditions of low mobilization, participation resembles thus, indeed, a series of methodological packages and techniques without much bearing on reality, empty formulas that can serve to legitimize a lack of de facto engagement. Paton disenchantedly refers to participation as a meme of sorts -a replicable form, image or message, that works across a myriad of contexts with possible slight adjustments. Participation as such is not necessarily reflected in numbers, either -you can have the same relatively high number of people come to assemblies, without anyone new participating. Does participation require increasing outreach?

Patón asks (himself) what, if not participation, can be a good way of gauging the liveliness of a citizen candidature. 'Our reach in (social) networks? Neither' (Paton 2019: 41). He notes that in the absence of any echo in mainstream media, social networks were key sites for raising and politicizing issues, but online participation does not translate into (electoral or policy) success. 'Moreover, [online] networks can in a way turn into the exact opposite of participation. They can confuse the role of the spectator, sometimes interactive, with that of the participant.' Do high numbers of retweets mean high participation?

> Maybe what we sometimes mean by 'participation' is 'horizontality:' but is it rigorous to speak of horizontality when there is scarcely any participation? Does an overflow of participation turn out to be operative or does it necessarily provoke more verticality?…Can we speak of participation when there is no intervention [in political decisions]? (Paton 2019: 41).

Those questions require further elaboration and discussion to be broken down to a set of problems. Without going into more detail, we content ourselves with noting that they point to doubts about whether it is methodology, quantity, growth or effect that (should) matter for a municipalist candidature, and to the need for combining all those into evaluating participation and the danger of focusing just on one dimension.

6.13.2. Self-managed neighborhood spaces as public-commons partnerships

While across municipalist cities the registers of participation and consultation were used creatively and meaningfully, there has also been the elaboration of a different model of participation, more based in commoning. It consists of more radical, ongoing and collective modalities of participation -as modalities of cooperation and partnership, and indeed these terms are more appropriate for our descriptions- between movements and institutions. This particularly concerns, in Barcelona where it

has been most successful, the local collective governance of spaces like Can Battló,[62] Ateneu9Barris,[63] or Calabria 66,[64] spaces of building community and commoning politics, where decision-making is but one collective moment in many.

The key to this approach is enabling a self-governance and use of spaces that operates by its own logic and laws, those of autonomous or neighborhood movements, but cooperates with the city administration on accountability (in the framework of Patrimoni Ciutada, as pointed out above), health and safety, accessibility and similar matters. Thus, these are 'public socio-cultural centers that operate on the basis of the model of community management' (Ateneu 9 Barris), publicly funded but 'an infrastructure [equipamiento] of citizen management that is not run by an intermediary administration or company, but administered via neighborhood debate and decisions' (Calàbria 66), a 'neighborhood self-managed space' (Can Battló). In these spaces, though insistent upon self-management and independence from parties and governments, the principle of heteronomy is engaged in relation to the public: projects of neighborhood and movement commoning as interdependent with the public. This reaching out towards one another is mutual across movements and institutions, or commons and the public, and possible only thanks to great sensitivities and openness of the Barcelona en Comú-led administration. Some refer to its products as public-commons partnerships (Milburn & Russel 2019).

Public-commons partnerships, contrary to the public-private partnerships of the neoliberal era, which can essentially be understood as enclosures of the public by the private, should open onto new circuits of collective ownership that extend and ground the commons by articulating them with the public system. Grassroots activists as well as municipalists at different levels recognize that the public as well as the commons need to be defended, strengthened and articulated (see the previous chapter on childcare commons for more examples); that they must not be pitted against one another in competition; that great political strength and power comes from articulating these two dimensions. It is clear that this strand of policy and the imaginary of public-commons partnerships point the way in terms of radical participation, opening a new horizon for relations between movements and institutions. We shall now look at a few cases and their history in some more detail, before proceeding to move towards conclusions.

6.13.3. Can Battló: urban commons and citizen patrimony

The most famed and acclaimed case of commons policy of Barcelona en Comú is probably Can Battló, an old factory reclaimed and turned into a social space by people in the Sants neighborhood. It was occupied in 2011 to reclaim it for the locals and city, and at a crucial point in 2014, when Bcomú entered government, ready for the kind of dialogue and invention the new government sought. With the research support of the Hidra cooperative -through some years of workshops, mediation, meetings and

[62] Website Can Battló https://www.canbatllo.org/, accessed 24/7/2020.
[63] Website Ateneu 9Barris https://www.ateneu9b.net/, accessed 24/7/2020.
[64] Website Calabria 66: https://calabria66.net/, accessed 24/7/2020.

research- BComú engaged the category of 'citizen heritage' as a legal and policy category based on Can Battló. An official city hall power point presentation entitled 'Common goods. Towards the community use and management of public [resources],' which features a factory resembling Can Battló on its cover, states that

> Starting from the idea that 'the public' can become 'the common,' the city administration of Barcelona wants to promote new forms of interaction between public municipal institutions and community-based citizen initiatives, based in the recognition of the right to the community management and use of public heritage by citizens (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2019b; my translation from Spanish).

This presentation is authored by the Participation department of Barcelona city, and its Pdf metadata shows it was signed by Laia Forné Aguirre, both member of the participation department and the Hidra cooperative. People like her play a key role in enabling the dialogue that is necessary to make such a process possible. Indeed, we can visualize the chain of feedback between the institution and movements quite concretely as follows: from Laia's office in town hall to the offices of the Hidra cooperative in Sants, and from the Hidra a few blocks down to Can Battló. Proximity matters in several ways, for such processes, because local knowledge, trust and investment matter.

By 2009, the large empty premises of Can Battló, previously a textile-related factory, had already seen 30 years of neighborhood campaigning for it to be rendered useful. That year, activists made an ultimatum to the (then conservative) city administration: if by June 2011 works haven't started in the complex, people would go in and take it over. In 2010, they launched the tic-toc campaign to pressure further. 2011 happened to be a moment of extremely high mobilization across the Spanish state and, thanks to popular pressure, the city voluntarily handed one of the factory halls (Bloc 11) to activists. From there, it was an uphill race towards reclaiming more spaces, with a foot in the door and a strong movement in the back[65] (see also Eroles 2011). Little by little, the massive halls were coming to be inhabited and transformed into different kinds of spaces.

After Barcelona en Comú came to power in 2015, there were rife conversations on granting this space a special status, indeed using it to develop another legal municipal formula of public infrastructure, also in relation to the pioneer housing cooperative La Borda that's part of Can Battló. By 2019, the over 13.000 square meter complex was declared citizen heritage and handed to the Can Battló Platform for a period of 30 years, extendable by another two decades (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2019b; 2019c). Every year, Can Battló's assembly has to go through self-evaluation, based on criteria elaborated jointly with city officials, to assure the project is functioning and open to the public. This accountability procedure is based on an evaluation protocol of the network of social and solidarity economy initiatives.

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[65] On their website, Can Battló activists chronicle their collective process. See Can Battló undated.

The city administration's key argument for such management is its efficiency and low cost, calculating that in order to run Can Battló as a municipal infrastructure, it would cost 1.430.810€ a year, whilst the total public money that went into it between 2011 and 2018 (both years included) is 1.103.000€ (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2019a). A strong economic argument in the face of neoliberal consensus. If it were not to come alongside increased social spending and a defense of public services, as it did in Bcomú's first term, it would risk resembling the UK Conservative's 2010 'Big Society' proposals for shrinking public services in face of cultures of free labor and precarious volunteering, one not of self-governance but rather of being determined by the market (see Dowling & Harvie 2014). These crucial differences between a politics of the commons and one of neoliberal communitarianism have variously been pointed out as crucial (see also Hoedemækers, Loacker & Pedersen 2012, Caffentzis 2009).

These formulas for participation, as cooperation that encourages self-government, work since they empower self-organized communities to do their legitimate work, granting them legality and some material support for their cause. Can Battló is not just thriving with activity by activist groups and civic associations, it is also a lively place of cultural production and display (concert halls, etc.), of handiwork and infrastructure-building (workshops), of sociality (the bar), cooperativism (the Coopolis support center), movement memory (the library-archive), and so forth.

La Borda

La Borda is a housing cooperative that emerges from Can Battló, which managed to negotiate a 75-year lease (as 'cesión de uso,' granting use, also known as peppercorn rent) of land adjacent to the factory complex to an association of future tenants.

> The model of grant of use is widespread in countries such as Denmark and Uruguay…Both experiences develop the model of cooperative housing ruled by grant of use, where the property will always be collective, while use is personal. Residents have the status of cooperative partners and can live there for life. The General Assembly is the main sovereign institution where the decisions are made. This model eliminates property speculation and profiteering on a fundamental right like housing. Members cannot sell or rent the flat. It is an alternative model of housing access to the traditional ownership and rent, with a strong commitment with the use value above exchange value (La Borda, date unknown).

A perfect example for commoning housing, La Borda was the first in a series of similar projects granted land for use by the city (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2018b, Cabré and Andrés 2017), which refers to this model as one of 'collective ownership' (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2017a). In 'the Housing Plan 2016-2025' the idea is to reach the figure of 500 homes in collective ownership in Barcelona' (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2017). By 2018 there were 6 more co-housing projects of the same kind underway (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2018b), and by the time of writing, a new round of seven projects is about to be selected.

6.13.4. Municipalities facilitating commoning

There are many other notable aspects of participation worth mentioning in relation to Barcelona en Comú, beyond the online platforms, local meetings with the mayor and councilors, and participatory policy processes: the neighborhood assemblies, for instance, are key platforms for participation, as are the regular events and get-togethers of Barcelona en Comú at the party level, including the free childcare space La Canalla en Comú. All those are worthy of chapters in themselves, a task probably being done by researchers somewhere right now.

The above examples attest to the vital importance of social movements in enabling, accompanying and inhabiting commons-based formulas of public policies. Can Battló and La Borda would never have been possible without strong movements at the city and neighborhood level. And, indeed, La Borda would never have been possible without Can Battló. The chains of connection and interdependence that mark the conditions of possibility of these commons-making processes run along historical-genealogical lines, from Can Battló to La Borda, as well as social-organizational lines, from Can Battló to La Hidra cooperative to the city's participation department. Indeed, I propose to see these lines of interdependence as crucial in making not just policy but also any project of the commons.

In the case of commons policy, where those chains involve institutional and party actors, this entails a crucial shift in perspective. Institutions and dependence on them not as something that corrupts, and intermediaries between movements and institutions not simply as traitors, as much autonomist thought would have it, but a recognition of interdependence as fundamental to commoning across the collective and public dimensions. Such commoning needs translators, intermediaries and mediators sometimes, as it is a social labor that runs beyond a single group or field. Recognizing this interdependence and taking it as the basis for respectful -and nonetheless principled and firm- negotiations is what enabled the success of the Barcelona commons policy models described above. Thanks to the feminist legacy of Barcelona en Comú, this interdependence can be affirmed and accepted, as something that links the different interests (the commons and the public). The interests of the commons and those of the public do not overlap in all ways, indeed, often they seem to scarcely overlap, as we have seen in the childcare report.

6.14. Conclusions

We started out on this journey with questions about the micropolitics of municipalism, asking *how the people involved with municipalism at different levels negotiate their positionality, the tensions between ideology and subjectivity, between social movement ways and institutional ways. We set out to identify differences along the movements-institutions spectrum in terms of habits, expression, relations, embodiment, horizons, orientations, and to understand how these different modalities of politics make us think, feel and respond (per se and in relation to one another)*. Our guiding lines came from the Spinozist question of *the capacities to act that these*

modalities and spaces of politics confer upon us, and following Guattari and Deleuze, *how subjectivity is produced and articulated within these spheres of politics, as well as across them.*

Beyond the confirmation of the simple intuition that the relation between movements and institutions is not a simple matter of good and bad, one side or another, nor reducible to a set of principles or hypotheses, we have traced how people involved with a political movement such as municipalism -be it at its core or margins- learn, lean into complexity and struggle. We have seen how people confront uncertainty, discomfort and alienation through feminist, embodied, reflexive, vulnerable, critical, dissociative, autonomist and other strategies. Learning and listening have emerged as important forces in the formation of political subjectivities through municipalism, and we have seen different forces -both external and internal ones- limit and hinder this development to different degrees: personal insecurities; a climate of electoralism; a male culture of politics unable to face vulnerability; a lack of time and spaces to collectively narrate, think and imagine; and so forth.

We set out to *look at the ways in which municipalism has altered the relation between movements and institutions, as well as affected relationality and subjectivities within institutions, parties and movements. When and how did municipalists change standard ways of doing politics, beyond a pure antagonism between movements and institutions?* We confirmed that the answer to this question can be neither simple nor unequivocal. On the one hand, we traced experiences and fields of powerful and profound transformation of political cultures in relation to a politics of care and a feminization of politics, as some would call it, as well as in relation to ways of negotiating autonomy-heteronomy across different social and institutional spheres, in organizational culture as well as policy. Those processes are not all-encompassing or complete, but they reached significant levels of spreading and maturity, as seeds that stand on firm ground to grow in institutions, social movements and society.

On the other hand, we have found faltering processes and failing ambitions, relating to the radical changes in modes of inhabiting traditional political institutions that were needed to change institutions from within in a deep and sustainable way, and in relation to the capacity for learning and relating of the institutional sphere. We heard how the individualization of responsibility as well as professionalization affect municipalists in institutions and parties, and how participation can be as meaningless as a formula and as rich as an experiment in public-commons governance. In this as in any case, recognizing limits in one aspect does not mean failing to see openings in another, as we hear in this quote of Claudia Delso:

> These projects [of co-designing policy and spaces] helped us to listen. They contributed to the learning process of the institution, a machine designed to prevent change. After all, the institution can also learn, and we have learned to allow the institutions (and ourselves) to experiment, to change how things are done and also to make mistakes. Nobody can expect to know or control everything (Delso & Traviesas Mendez 2019).

In this sense -eminently micropolitical- municipalism can be traced, as I have attempted to do, as a process of confronting the ghosts of individualism, paternalism, competition, supremacy, racism, sexism, and other -isms that we all have internalized. To realize that no one can expect to know and control everything, said from an embodied and situated place, implies a radical recognition of limits (Kallis 2019, Perez Orozco 2014) and vulnerability (del Olmo 2013, Gil 2011). Two facts that we as humans and societies have to urgently live up to, in the face of rampant capitalism and neoliberalist exploitation, and its twin climate and ecological breakdown.

There is no doubt that there is a lot to learn from municipalism. As a vast collective project of experimentation and learning, it has engaged the lives and labors of hundreds of people from social movements. They, together with hundreds more, who are critically complicit in their surroundings, work towards an uncertain, open-ended, needed and promising transformation. The assessment of the urgency of seizing the moment to propose an electoral political struggle over resources, shared by those who started the grassroots candidatures in 2014, largely appears as confirmed. With all its difficulties, the moment was ripe and right for attempting to combine the force of struggles with 'the force of manoeuvres' (Gutiérrez & Lugano 2014) in the political domain. In the places where this failed, it constitutes a rich although troubling pool of knowledge and experience to learn from. In the places where it sustains political force (Barcelona foremost), it enables progressive policies that make a positive impact on people's lives and solidarity.

We have seen that the relation between movements and institutions is not a peripheral or anecdotal matter to political projects like those of municipalism. Rather, it lies at the very core of their possibility of existence. This relation matters not because of a moral imperative or tactical electoral calculus primarily (though every 4 years it does come down to that, too), but because it is in this relation that the capacity of an antagonistic, anticapitalist politics resides, and thus of a radical democratization along lines of class, race, gender, and so on. It matters not just that institutions listen to movements but also that they do not coopt or paralyze them. It also matters that movements know how to confront institutions and make demands not just so that they achieve wins, but also so that they can affirm their autonomy. At the same time, it matters that institutions and movements -as agents of the public and the commons- can see and inhabit their interdependence with one another, and invent new political horizons from there, direly needed after the destruction of the welfare state and the subsequent rise of neoliberal individualism and nationalist racism. Any new 'social contract' today must build on both commons and the public, and on both autonomy and heteronomy as principles.

The tension between heteronomy and autonomy is not one I have sought to resolve in the chapters above. Rather, I have sought to show the interplay of forces that lead to more or less promising articulations of those two principles. Indeed, these should be key terms when thinking about the commons. Too much time has been spent trying to show their tragedy and immunity respectively, with little attention given to the ways

in which commons always necessarily involve both tendencies of interdependence and independence.