



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

Seeds of the Future.
Democratic Action, Citizenship Practices and Institutional Imagination
in Barcelona

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2018 / Vienna, 2018

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 656

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Cultural Differences and
Transnational Processes (CREOLE)

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Peter Schweitzer

Acknowledgements

First of all, I wish to thank my parents, Elena and Alfred Zelinka for their support - throughout my whole life. Without them I would not be who I am nor where I am.

This pages would have not been possible without the people I encountered during my stay in Barcelona. I wish to express my gratitude and respect for the people and their work, which has not only informed my intellectual and academic work, but moreover influenced me on a personal level and had a great impact on my life.

And finally, I wish to thank everyone who accompanied me along the way of writing these pages. The scholars in Barcelona and Vienna as well as my fellow students who I was lucky to meet and discuss my research with. Especially, I wish to thank all of my friends, wherever they may be, for supporting and comforting me throughout this difficult years.

Love to all of you,
Andreea

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List of Akronyms

APRA:	Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana (People's American Revolutionary Alliance), Peru.
CiU:	Convergència i Unió, an alliance of parties which has separated, in Catalonia.
CONAIE:	Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador.
CUP:	Candidatura d'Unitat Popular, an anticapitalist, anarchist and direct democratic party in Catalonia.
C's:	Ciudadanos, new conservative liberal party in Catalonia.
ERC:	Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (Republican Left of Catalonia).
Equo:	a fusion of many Spanish green parties forming this party in 2011.
PAM PAD:	Pla d'Acció Municipal & Pla d'Acció de Districte (Municipal Action Plan & District Action Plan).
PAH:	Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Platform of those Affected through the Mortgage).
Partido X:	first party which emerged from 15M and other movements in 2012/13.
Podemos:	a political party which emerged as part of the aftermath of 15M in 2014.
PP:	Partido Popular (People's Party) of Spain.
PSOE:	Partido Socialista Obrero Español (Spanish Socialist Worker's Party).
PSUC:	Partit Socialista Unificat de Catalunya (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia).
15M:	the protest is denominated according to the official day of its start on 15 th May 2011.

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which humanity is always landing. And when humanity lands there, it looks out, and seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realization of Utopias.
Oscar Wilde

Introduction

Democracies throughout the world are currently under scrutiny. Protest movements on the right and the left of the political spectrum have equally called democracy as a political system into question. Ever since the so-called “post-2010 wave of occupations and street politics” visibly articulated discontent and dissatisfaction at the beginning of the 21st century (Rovisco/Ong 2016: 2) limits and shortcomings for democratic political system have been increasingly visible and addressed in public. Protest movements, such as the so-called Arab Spring, Occupy! or 15M, gathered ordinary citizens on public spaces to defend modern democratic values and express their disapproval of their governments. Their indignation with social injustice and their lives being increasingly under the dictation of financial markets challenged the hegemonic system of liberal representative democracy (Rovisco/Ong 2016). In territorial Spain, it was 15M in 2011/12 which articulated their mistrust by stating “Lo llaman democracia pero nunca ha sido” (They call it democracy but it never has been).

These global political developments sparked my interest in 2014. Around that time Podemos emerged as part of the aftermath of 15M. The nationally competing political party created a lot of hope and enthusiasm around it, and shook up the political landscape of Spain. The significance of their emergence was immediately internationally confirmed, which is why I also read about it in Austrian and German news. In the same year, I started a Master's program which offered the opportunity to spend one year at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. I set out to go there in order to study the newly emerged political party. However, soon after my arrival I realized that Podemos did not have the same importance in Catalonia, as it has for instance in Madrid.

The Spanish peninsula has been quite successful in creating an image of national and territorial unification towards the international community. Many visitors of Spain do not know of the contested historical past of this nation-state, and are neither aware of its prevailing currency in the present. Arriving in Barcelona, I understood that the aftermath of 15M had a large impact on regional and municipality politics. New political actors throughout the territory of Spain entered governments, among them in Andalusia, Galicia and in cities as Madrid or Barcelona. Generally, these new political actors brought social and political claims of 15M into public municipal institutions. Thereby, they were reclaiming them as theirs, the citizens' (as opposed to the people's – a notion of the people was not used). This resulted in a discussion of a difference between political actors inside the institution, being elected or not, and those outside of it.

Connected to the will to re-appropriate public institutions is the protesters' argument that the vote as a democratic tool and the lack or degeneration of other participative elements within a representative democracy is insufficient and threatening the population. Not only did many of

Spanish citizens live in poverty or were acutely endangered of it since 2008. The financial crisis brought Spanish people in jeopardy, because of the insufficient capabilities and non-existing willingness of Spanish politicians to deal with the consequences in a way that was beneficial for them (Elola 2011). Political corruption and the lack of accountability of Spanish politicians proved to be increasingly problematic.

I was fascinated by the optimism I encounter in Barcelona in spite of the severe existential threats many were faced with. At the same time, the municipalist movement in Spain is part of the emergence of a new left-wing populism in Europe. In Catalonia I was in a political environment where left-wing politics is still widely normalised. Additionally, anarchist movements are deeply rooted in Barcelona. This was unlike the experiences I made living in Vienna, Austria, where left politics is not positively connoted, and often no longer an identifier among the broader youth. In Barcelona I met many highly politicized individuals, and not only through the activists I came to know, but also among ordinary citizens. Political identities on the spectrum from the right to the left are strongly represented within the territory of Spain.

The global rise of new right-wing populism delineated already in 2014. I learned that the rise of left-wing populism within the territory of Spain is inevitably and inextricably linked to a past and a present shot-through with fascist logics. As I will discuss in the first part of the historical trajectory, the current democratization movements also demand a break with authoritarian government and the development of institutions according to principles of participative democracy, such as the Catalan independence movement. Although Catalonia makes part of Spain, a lot of Catalan people don't *feel* part of it (*nación-sin-estado*) (Clua 2015: 64; Clua 2014b: 80). It can be shown that attempts by the Spanish state to create a shared sentiment of a nation within its territory have failed.

Furthermore, I will draw on historical accounts regarding La Transición. The transformation of Spain from dictatorship to democracy started before the death of Francisco Franco. Even though the Spanish Transition is widely celebrated as a wonder of political engineering, it is rendered visible how even contrary political logics still persist and compete within a democracy as a political form of a nation-state. Against the backdrop of a fascist and authoritarian past, the notion of 'political caste' grew stronger in recent years and sparked an imaginative will for transformation. It is an attempted break with a (so-called old) regime of political classes to reorganise the relation between citizens and government and install a new one which ought to be (more) democratic.

Research Focus

My fieldwork took place around the time Barcelona en Comú celebrated their first year in the city hall. The political organization emerged as a result of the popular mass mobilizations and occupations called 15M. In Barcelona, it was founded through the initiative of local activists coming from social movements and neighbourhood associations in 2014. The self-understood citizens' platform the city hall elections in May 2015. These new political actors propose a counter-narrative of radical democracy towards the hegemony of liberal democracy. I was living in El Raval, so during spring and summer 2016, I attended the assembly of my district. I conducted participant observation within the assembly of Ciutat Vella. This is the territorial assembly of Barcelona en Comú in this district. I also went to other participatory spaces. Participatory spaces are institutionalized or semi-institutionalized settings of encounter, dialogue and/or decision-making. Further, in my ethnography, I will refer to 15 of the semi-structured qualitative interviews I conducted with activists of Barcelona en Comú.

Thus, central research questions are: How is the relation between citizens and government perceived and in which way attempted to be altered? Which kind of concepts of alternative political solutions emerge? Further questions are: What does democratic practice on an everyday basis look like? Which kind of relation between citizens and public institutions are actors of Barcelona en Comú imagining and which consequences does this have for the role of citizens and holders of office? As a consequence, I will scrutinize individual and collective political practice and identity. I will do so by focusing on the interaction of people between different organizational levels within the assembly of Ciutat Vella, and between actors of Barcelona en Comú, being citizens as well as representatives of the city, and citizens. As limits of everyday practice reveal themselves, I will outline conflicts and coping mechanisms of how tensions between ideal and reality and the potentials of frustration are dealt with. Thereby, I attempt to examine how actors of Barcelona en Comú understand power, make it knowledgeable and attempt to alter power relations within their own political organization, as well as between city hall and citizens of Barcelona. Following, I will depict the methodological framework I chose to attempt to answer these questions.

Methodology

In spring and summer 2016, I conducted fieldwork for five months in Barcelona. Methodologically, I applied participant observation and conducted qualitative, semi-structured interviews. Moreover, I acquired a pile of photographic, graphic, video and text material by taking pictures and videos on-site, using social media feeds, newsletters and respective websites, and collecting flyers and other

printed materials. Following, I will elaborate on my field work experiences and the data along these methods. For the purpose of a reflexive research process, I will lay bare my course of action (Matt 2007: 585). Thereby, I allege a 'confessional description' (ibid.: 584), as I am, as a researcher and acting subject, inseparably entangled with my field of research and its people.

Participant Observation

Participant observation can be defined as a flexible strategy driven by a plurality of methods and contexts (Lüders 2007: 389). Its result is ethnography, a description of 'small life worlds' (Honer 1993: 14f). In the spotlight of these descriptions are the respective cultures and forms of knowledge that are inherent to them (ibid.: 390). Cultural forms are thus seen as reflections and reproduction of 'making sense of the world', of how reality is practised and produced. Thus, it is the everyday practises that seem ordinary which are most interesting to the social scientist, as these are the actions that create social facts (ibid.: 390). In order to scrutinize the production of reality, the ethnographer tries to grasp the perspectives of participants of communities and groups 'in the field', their interactions, practises and discourses. For this purpose, the ethnographer has to submit, to subjugate and to adapt to the vivid, situational orders and practises of everyday life in the respective field (Honer 1993: 391).

With this in my mind, I arrived in Catalonia in autumn 2015. The first half year, I was discovering the political scene of Barcelona, of Catalonia and of Spain. I attended campaign rallies, accompanied my flat mate casting his ballots and followed the results at election eve's of 27S and 20D. Thereby, I identified local and national political actors. On Spanish national day, I travelled to Madrid and regarded curiously its celebrations on the square and among the people. Continually, I learned about the different standpoints and claims of political parties and actors as well as citizens and habitants that constitute the local political landscape.

During this exploratory phase, the specific context of Catalonia as a socio-political entity and the importance of Barcelona en Comú for the city of Barcelona became clear to me. Through the website of Barcelona en Comú and the facebook page of the assembly of Ciutat Vella, I came to know that Barcelona en Comú has local assemblies organized by the ten districts of Barcelona (that in turn include 73 neighbourhoods). These assemblies are open for the public, so I assessed that I would be able to observe and participate in everyday actions there. As I lived in El Raval, which makes part of Ciutat Vella (the Old Town), I decided to contact the assembly of Ciutat Vella. I wrote an e-mail explaining my undertaking and my wish for participation in the assembly. The response was welcoming and stated that the e-mail had been forwarded to all members of the assembly and I

was invited to attend the next meeting. As Lüders argues, the way a researcher finds access to the field already reveals central characteristics of the field (2007: 392). In this case, the correspondence confirmed that the assembly is open and receptive to the public.

I was a participant observer or an observant participant at multiple occasions, settings and formats. My ethnography is based on different participatory events providing space for deliberation, discussion, reflection and information. These are meant for the public, such as PAM PAD (Pla d'Acció Municipal & Pla d'Acció de Districte), the Neighbourhood Council of El Raval or the Plenary Council of Ciutat Vella. Then there were extraordinary events that provided information to the public as well as activists of Barcelona en Comú, such as the Day of Interculturality and the one year anniversary of Barcelona en Comú holding office. Others were internal events such as an Extraordinary Plenum for the visitation of Y. Varoufakis forming an alliance with Barcelona en Comú or the Ordinary Plenum of Barcelona en Comú. And I participated regularly in the assembly of Barcelona en Comú of Ciutat Vella. I will discuss a selection of these accounts in greater detail in my ethnography.

My main fieldwork took place in the latter at La Negreta del Gòtic which is a community centre that provides a shared space for various neighbourhood initiatives and associations, political groups (i.a. CUP, Barcelona en Comú, 15M), and others. The assembly usually takes place every 15 days. The number of participants of the assembly ranged between 12 and 20 throughout the meetings. The first time I went to the assembly of Ciutat Vella, I was not welcomed officially but attracted attention of some participants (older women) who would approach and talk to me. I was also recognized by the woman I had been in touch with via e-mail. Nevertheless, it was only after several months when I learned that the assembly actually had two 'professional stranger-handlers' (DeWalt/DeWalt 2011: 42) whose task it was to take care of the newcomers and provide them with information. There was not one local gatekeeper in terms of being a leader and representative of the group (ibid.) and therefore had a special position within in the group. Neither did I have a sponsor (ibid.: 45f) or key informant.

The reactions to my presence differed. Some of the participants of the assembly were very open and welcoming and tried to integrate me into the group on events and gatherings. In turn, I saw a lot of eye rolling as soon as they found out what my background was. This was due to the fact, that people were overwhelmed by how many students were doing research on them. After some time I became increasingly self-conscious about my role in the group. As I was not able to participate in the discussions due to a lack of knowledge on the challenges and problems of living in Barcelona, I was solely able to listen and learn, but not to address issues myself. Around this time, I had an important

encounter with one assembly member at the Jornada d'Interculturalitat (Conference of Interculturality). In a coffee break we were starting to converse and he asked me about my extensive note taking during the last assembly. I explained what I was doing. He reacted very upset and explained angrily, that there were a lot of students coming to write about Barcelona en Comú, they would suck their lives and then disappear without leaving a trace and providing any feedback to the movement. He asked me bluntly, how I thought to give feedback to the movement. By referring to my paper at first, he just rolled his eyes. Then I told him that I had signed up for helping at the organisation of the Fiesta de St. Joan in July. This calmed him down. By any account, I was glad about this encounter, as it explained previous reactions and addressed the issue I had thought about directly. Thus, during my fieldwork I did experience the uncertainty, uncomfortableness and inherent risk of failing of becoming a member of the group (Lüders 2007: 394). However, I was eager to support the decoration team of the Fiesta of St. Joan and met up collecting carton on the streets of Barcelona, painting them, decorating the little square in front of La Negreta. Even though there is often times the methodological claim of distancing oneself, I agree with Girtler on the approach that loosing distance and really get to know the people and their problems results into a more efficient research (2001: 121). I did not establish proximity with all of the assembly members in only five months (as parts of the members were somehow fluctuating and due to an age difference which led to other difficulties). However, I do think that I was able to establish rapport at least with some of them in terms of a reciprocal commitment "to help the other achieve his or her goal, and have interaction in respectful and thoughtful way" (DeWalt/DeWalt 2011: 47). Reciprocity was and is a very important part of my research. During my fieldwork I tried to "provide services as they were appropriate in the setting" (ibid.: 49), establish as good communication relationships as possible, be a good listener, always explain the goals of the study, and entertain a respectful interaction (ibid.: 51f). Further, as DeWalt and DeWalt describe, there is "some obligation to give as well as take in the research setting" (ibid.: 27). I tried to do exactly that as much as my skills were allowing me throughout my research. Nevertheless, as one of the assembly participants explained, I was a special case, because even though I was there all the time, they knew that one day I would be gone. Therefore, I was a "Mitglied im Schweben" (Weinberg/Williams 1973: 98).

Against this backdrop, it is clear that my participation during the fieldwork had different degrees. As I did not have the expertise or knowledge of issues as locals, I was hardly able to participate in the course of discussion. As a result, most of participant observation took place by passive participation, as I was there and attentive, but more in the role of a "spectator" (DeWalt/DeWalt 2011: 22). However, I do not agree with DeWalt and DeWalt describing this as no interaction at all, as there is always some kind of interaction going on even if it is not verbally.

Additionally, in spite of being restricted in participating in the course of debate, I would interact and talk to people before and after the assembly. Therefore it is also accurate to describe my being there as moderate participation, as I was present, identifiable as a researcher, occasionally interact with others, even though participation was limited (ibid.). During the organisation of Fiesta of St. Joan I participated actively, as I was doing almost everything other people were doing (ibid.). Therefore, in any kind of setting and through any kind of degree of participation I was trying "to learn the cultural rules for behavior" (DeWalt/DeWalt 2011: 22).

Finally, some words about field notes. Even though I do understand Catalan and Spanish, it was difficult for me to remember the exact course of discussions afterwards. Therefore, I decided to make notes during the events. Most of my notes on the discussions consist of descriptions of the space, behaviour and interaction as well as quotes. I often drew drawings of the spatial settings. Especially, when the discussion would get very heated up, I noted what was said analogously. Before and after debates, I had informal conversations and dialogues which I noted afterwards in my notebook or on jottings.

Field notes are a representation of observations and therefore result of a "transformation process" and a "reconstructed conservation" (Lüders 2007: 396). This reproduction is a post-priori construction of observations and memories and not completely unproblematic (ibid.), as it constitutes a highly artificial and complex process of sensemaking (ibid.: 397). In the representation of reality as text, authorship assumes an inevitable central role within this process (ibid.). The fixation of observations and experiences in text remove them from their contexts of action and become therefore interpretable beyond the particular intentions of the participants (Matt 2007: 580). The construction of the text is inherently selective and should not be understood as a mere reproduction of the matter, but rather as a mean to find out how meaning is constructed in what way on the basis of which resources and how it constitutes reality through situations, symbols and objectivations (ibid.: 581). In the process of research that lays ground to later principles of representation and research results, researchers cannot "become completely objective measuring devices" (DeWalt/DeWalt 2011: 37). Drawing on Bohr, DeWalt and DeWalt explain that objectivity does not mean to be disconnected of the observed as a researcher, but that the observation of a phenomenon is only possible when a researcher intersects, interacts with it and is connected to it (ibid.: 92). Karen Barad, drawing on quantum physics, agrees with this when she argues

that knowing is a direct material engagement, [...] There is not this knowing from a distance. Instead of there being a separation of subject and object, there is an entanglement of subject and object, which is called the "phenomenon". Objectivity, instead of being about offering an undistorted mirror image of the world, is about

The discussion of the nature of observation is nurtured by Bohr's claim "that things are indeterminate; there are no things before the measurement, and that the very act of measurement produces determinate boundaries and properties of things." (Barad 2013: 62). This is an important insight not only in regard of reflecting on reality production and conditions of perceptions themselves. Further it is crucial in the critique of ethnography (DeWalt/DeWalt 2011: 93). Against this backdrop, as I mentioned at the beginning, reflexivity is crucial in the conduct of research as well as the depiction and reflection of the "relationship among observer, observed and report of observation" (ibid.).

Semi-structured Interviews

Besides my fieldwork, I conducted 16 semi-structured interviews with activists (representatives as well as militants) of Barcelona en Comú. All of these interviews have been scheduled (and re-scheduled) beforehand, had an open-ended character, and covered a list of topics that I pursued with a pre-written list of questions (Bernard 2011: 156). All of them took place face-to-face at cafés, bars, restaurants, and in offices of the city hall. Although I did impose some kind of lead (ibid.: 164), I always tried to stay open towards my informants' train of thought and tried to let them talk about the aspects that seemed most important to them in regard of a certain topic (ibid.: 160). Therefore, I tried to endorse my conversation partners before an interview that I was eager to learn about their point of view and perceptions regarding them as 'cultural experts' and thus I tried to convey confidentiality (ibid.).

During the course of the interviews I tried to probe effectively by silent probing, echo probing and uh-huh probing (Bernard 2011: 161ff). Thus, I was trying "to stimulate the respondent to produce more information without a reflection of [myself] on the data" (ibid.: 161f). Therefore, I tried to remain quiet as often as it seemed appropriate (ibid.: 162), and often times breaks were followed by more thoughts on the current subject. However, what proved most effective was the communication of affirmative comments, the uh-huh probe (Bernard 2011: 163). Mirroring positive impulses towards my informants made them feel comfortable and seemed to signal 'they are on the right track' which encouraged them to talk more. As a lot of my research questions repeatedly seemed to overwhelm my informants, this was especially crucial in the conduction of my interviews.

I conducted one interview in March, the rest took place from May to July. I chose my interviewees

through different factors: 1) persons I personally met at events, 2) persons that were working in an interesting and/or important position; 3) persons who were regular participants of the assembly of Ciutat Vella; 4) persons who were willing to talk to me in general; and maybe most importantly 5) persons who made time for me. These categories intersect.

The interviewees are between 32 and 75 years old. Especially the age range between 30 and 60 years seemed common among participants of Barcelona en Comú. I interviewed nine women and seven men. The majority of them were regular participants of the assembly of Ciutat Vella and were active in some kind of position and/or additional working groups, committees etc. Most of them could tell about a personal political background, be it early politicization through family life or activism in other movements. Almost nobody told me about engagement in other political parties. Generally, their jobs ranged from, e.g. being an architect, a teacher, a university lecturer, a hairdresser, a clerk to a street artist. Not all of them were born in Barcelona but most of them were living in Barcelona, and especially in one of the neighbourhoods of Ciutat Vella, for long-term period of time (more than 10 years). The majority speak both Spanish and Catalan (only one person coming to Barcelona in older age does not speak Catalan).

Analysis and Account

Regarding the analysis of the data, I have used atlas.ti in the course of it. I decided to use it as it helped me to “organize the analysis”, “managing the data and the analytic thoughts”, thus, as an “organizational support” (Gibbs 2014: 277). Especially in order to analyse the qualitative interviews I conducted, the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis was useful for the first phase of open coding (ibid.: 284). This is when I developed a list of codes “inductively by interpreting the data” (ibid.; Schmidt 2007: 451). Gibbs describes the coding process as characterised by “attaching a name or tag to a passage of text” (2014: 283). As I had an extensive set of material, the utilization of the software was helpful. However, the “software does not understand any interpretation given to it” (Gibbs 2014: 283), which is why using software does not account for a method or a distinct analytical approach itself (ibid.: 277).

In qualitative data analysis, for the purpose of “systematically describing the meaning of qualitative data”, researchers are “assigning successive parts of the material to the categories of a coding frame” (Schreier 2014: 170). Coding denominates the process of naming, categorizing and summarizing a given data set (Thornberg/Charmaz 2014: 156) which is inherently a fragmentation process. Thus, it “reduces data, is systematic and flexible” (Schreier 2014: 170; also see Schmidt 2007: 451). “By coding, researcher scrutinize and interact with the data as well as ask analytical

questions of the data. They create their codes by defining what the data are about.”

(Thornberg/Charmaz 2014: 156) Thus, coding is not a linear process, as it is described as a way of going back and forth with the data at hand (ibid.). This means that especially initial or open coding constructs “short, simple, precise and active” codes which “are provisional and open to modification and refinement to improve their fit with the data” (ibid.: 156, 158). In case several codes fit the text passage, I used the most dominant one applying (Schmidt 2007: 451). As a result it is an iterative process of “modifying the coding frame in the process” (Schreier 2014: 171). In the course of my analysis, I applied especially data-driven, but also a few concept-driven categories within my coding frame (cf. ibid.: 171).

Thus, it is a “constant comparative method”, as it is characterised by a “flexible way of seeing” in order to continuously “define what is happening in the text” (Thornberg/Charmaz 2014.: 156). It is also inherently comparative, as the researcher compares the different data and codes in order to find similarities and differences (ibid.: 158). The “focus on selected aspects of meaning” always happens against the backdrop of the research questions and “the meaning of the passage will be taken to a higher level of abstraction” (Schreier 2014: 170). In the course of the analysis, some codes may be erased or changed to other more fitting ones (cf. Thornberg/Charmaz 2014: 158.) As a result, researchers “explore and decide which codes best capture what they see happening in the data, and raise these codes up to tentative conceptual categories. This process means giving these categories conceptual definitions and assessing relationships between them” (ibid.: 159). After the first open coding, there is a second coding in which the results of the analysis should be similar to them of the first coding phase when the categories are clearly and unambiguously defined (Schreier 2014: 171). Moreover, inductive coding, as I mainly described, “allows for assigning any number of codes to a piece of text” and “code development and application go hand in hand” (ibid.: 173). Thereby, in the course of my analysis I also used “in-vivo-coding” extracting actual notions from the respondents (Bernard 2011: 430). I was also attentive towards repetitions and uses of words and phrases in unusual ways (ibid.; Schmidt 2007: 449).

Inductive coding is very important to the Grounded Theory (Bernard 2011: 429), as it “starts from a tabula rasa, put aside any pre-existing theory or understanding of the data and use coding to allow new ideas, themes and theories to emerge” (Gibbs 2014: 284). There is a lot of methodological debate on coding in qualitative data analysis. Even though some argue that “coding is just a matter of data management”, I agree with scholars arguing that “coding is not merely the random division of text into smaller units, but requires skilled perception and artful transformation or even a ‘theorising process’” (ibid.: 283). As “no matter how you actually do inductive coding, by the time you identify the themes and refine them to the point where they can be applied to an entire

corpus of texts, a lot of interpretative analysis has already been done.” (Bernard 2011: 431).

The process of interpretation makes the data meaningful (Willig 2014: 136), as I have already discussed above, “the act of observing is done from a certain analytic position toward the object.” (Marvasti 2014: 355) This is due to the fact that “qualitative research is based on fundamental assumptions of phenomenology” as it “examines the life world as experienced by humans” (Roulston 2014: 302). In science, “it took centuries for what we now consider 'scientific observation' to be separated from wisdom, experience, intuition, feeling, and divine knowledge” (Marvasti 2014: 354). This is why it is important for the researcher to question one's modes of understanding, namely hermeneutics which denominates the “understanding of understanding itself, of one's own understanding” (Roulston 2014: 301f). Thus, the “construction of theories cannot be based on data alone, but has to draw on already existing knowledge, since the world is always perceived through a lense” (Kelle 2014: 555). Similarly, Schmidt explains that one's own theoretical pre-understanding and the research questions direct the attention while reading the research material, such as transcripts (2007: 449). Accordingly, Willig explains that “the type of interpretation we generate depends upon the ontological and epistemological positions we adopt before we start the process of interpretation” (2014: 137). However, “interpretations are more than idiosyncratic flights of fancy on the part of the interpreter” (ibid.: 140). In the undertaking of creating knowledge which is meaningful and valid, the researcher is confronted with the challenge of having to adopt a perspective (ibid.). As I argued above with Barad, the phenomenon is constituted by the inextricable entanglement of observer and observed. Thus, the researcher adopts a position “from which to view” a phenomenon, and engages in a relationship which it in order to be able to ask questions (Willig 2014: 140). This inevitably shapes the way something is seen and “what can be known” (Willig 2014: 140). As the process of identifying themes and “decide what they represent” also “have implications for the approach to interpretation” (ibid.: 147). Similarly, how oneself generates interpretation, also “how we evaluate other people's interpretation depends to a large extent on our views about the nature and purpose of the act of interpretation.” (ibid.: 141)

This research moreover constitutes a narrative research, as I agree that “people organize and bring meaning to their experiences through constructing narratives” and “through which particular versions of human experience, and indeed of social reality more generally, are constructed” (Willig 2014: 146f). In this regard in my analytical approach, which is also reflected in the form of account I decided to create in the ethnographic part, I adopted a rather empathetic interpretation. This means I “elaborate and amplify the meaning which is contained within the material” (ibid.: 138). Thereby, I stay close to my ethnographic material in order to focus on “what presents itself” and “what is

manifest” (ibid.). This is contrasted by a form of suspicious interpretation which is “theory driven in the sense that to extract deeper meaning from an account, it is necessary to have access to theoretical concepts with which to interrogate the text.” (ibid.) Although, I rather seek to “amplify the meaning ... than to explain what something 'is really about’”, this research “sheds further light on that which is foregrounded by illuminating the background against which this is set” (Willig 2014: 139). Therefore, I combined the empathetic and suspicious interpretative approaches in my analysis, not to be able to make predictions, but “to give a detailed descriptions of a social environment, its rules and practices as well as the orientations and interpretations of its members.” (Kelle 2014: 560)

Preview of Chapters

After having discussed my methodological preconditions, I will now turn to the chapters of this text. In this soon ending decade we have entered a discursive field of hotly contested political concepts, in regard of ideologies as well as procedures. As political theories and political societies are closely interwoven and nurture each other, I decided to focus in my theoretical section on political theory, rather than on a historical approach. I do this in order to render visible and comprehensive the different political logics and the ways they relate to and compete with each other. I use political theory in order to identify, describe and explain differing democratic models, which construct normative concepts that constitute hegemonic and counter-hegemonic narratives in the present. However, when looking at democratic practices, I do not consider them as empirically sustainable positions. Thus, my position in this research is that of an ethnographer. I stay close to the ethnographic material and contextualise it within current political thinking on that matter. By giving an overview on theoretical approaches and ethnographic results, I will show how I attempt to answer my research questions posed above at the end. The theoretical section is divided into two parts. In the first I attempt to construct an anthropology of democracy through an interdisciplinary approach merging and contrasting political and democratic theory with anthropological studies on democracy. The second part is concerned with discussing insights on the formation of citizen identity and citizenship practices drawing on the anthropology of citizenship.

I start the first part of the theoretical chapter by discussing democracy as a modern phenomenon which is ideologically constructed on a premise of universality (cf. Paley 2002). This universal promise is connected to the hegemony of liberal (representative) democracy, which is denominated as “normative democracy” (Nugent 2008) and constitutes a specific understanding of its political institutions and citizens, which I will explain in detail. However, in the course of my

outline, I emphasise the diversity of democratic organisation throughout the world. Drawing on the research of Nugent in Northern Peru, I depict how a specific understanding of participatory democracy emerged there based on an imperative of 'civic morality' which resulted in disciplined and 'cultured' individuals (Nugent 2008). Against the backdrop of a participatory democratic project which is strongly founded on a critique of political classes and elites, I will then discuss two opposing democratic conceptions within political theory.

I will describe the elitist and participative model in order to outline normative conceptions of democratic theory. However, I emphasise democracy as a contradictory and constant process of re-definition (della Porta 2013). Hereby, and with the subsequent discussion of the role of a people and the masses within a political democracy, I seek to show how the concept of government by the people is understood differently by scholars in terms of its possibility. This is where I will touch upon questions of political representation and public space as an inherently conflictual space (Lorey 2012; della Porta 2013). I will stress the point that democracy can be understood as a “set of processes unevenly enacted over time” and its character of an “open-ended construction” (Paley 2002: 470). This is due to an opposition of central power versus popular will which can be found in a democracy ideally resulting in “negotiated consent” evoked by popular mobilization (Tilly 2007: 58). However, this negotiation process is a highly contested process of “regimes of truth” which create mechanisms of conferring legitimacy on political leaders, authorities, and institutions (Rose 1999: 197). Drawing on Rose, I will depict how government inherently reflects modes of existence and is increasingly understood as utilizing the capacities of subjects to act (Rose 1999: 4).

By making a short reference of democratic power as calculated power (Rose 1999: 200), I turn to the research of Banerjee on electoral participation in West Bengal, India. Against the backdrop of a high number of electoral participation, as voters understood their participation in terms of duty and self-expression, she shows how democracy is a myth reiterated through collective participation in order to sustain a status quo and maintain social cohesion (Banerjee 2008: 66f). As I argue with della Porta, the function of elections have been increasingly put in jeopardy at least since 2008, and redirected the attention back on other democratic qualities (2013: 5). Political theorists have increasingly theorized the activation of “civic democratic engagement” and the capacities of citizens such as information, deliberation and association for building political capital in order to create critical citizens (Band/Dyrberg 2000: 146; Sawad 2000: 4; della Porta 2014: 4).

Important in this research is what Budge has called the “workable agreement” (2000: 195), as it is a result of a negotiated consensus as well as of a participative decision-making process. A critique of liberal democracy, as it is done by Paley putting forth a normative conception of accountable democracy, is that consensus is often not negotiated among representatives, civil

society and social movements, but among an encircled group of a political elite (2004: 499ff). Against this backdrop, I depict the contemporary critique of political parties within modern democracy, in order to explain why it is a site of political innovation itself. Subsequently, I will draw on Paley's research on social movements in Ecuador to argue why social movements have a significant role in a democratic regime even though the government might be deploying a participative system. It will be seen how this serves for a “deep democracy”, and that “democratic practice is not automatically reproductive” (Appadurai 2013: 176, 155).

At the end of the first part of the theoretical chapter, drawing on Appadurai, I will argue for humans as future-makers and the future as a cultural fact constituted by a form of difference and based on imagination, anticipation and aspiration (2013: 286, 187). Against this backdrop, I refer to Bretherton's diagnosis of a “deficit of institutional imagination” in contemporary times (2015: 286). I introduce the “capacity to aspire” in order to argue with Appadurai, how humans “frame the good life as a landscape of discernible ends and practical paths” within a cultural framework of futurity (2013: 290, 292). Against this backdrop I use the term “ethics of possibility” to describe how collective horizons based on hope and imagination can be created in order to “widen informed, creative and critical citizenship” (ibid.: 195). A crucial argument in this research is that the realization of a collective idea of the future is “best understood as making and interpreting life in the present” (Greenberg 2014: 19, 10). Drawing on Greenberg and her research on the Serbian youth movement in post-revolutionary times, it will be seen how “the democratic era has ushered in a new pragmatic politics of the present in which the contradictions of democratic representation become terrain for political action.” (ibid.: 26). Greenberg stresses the point that democracy as a political system entails tensions between the ideal of the political vision and the reality of political practice. Therefore, it is always profoundly contradictory and flawed when measured against idealized moments and normative expectations (Greenberg 2014). Living in this contradiction is what she called a politics of disappointment, which does not mark the absence of hope and possibility, but denominates the limited possibility of coherence notwithstanding political action takes place (ibid.: 8f).

In the second part of the theoretical section, I will show how democracy, bound to the nation-state, is a political system based on individual political rights and obligations. Thus, citizenship “that establish[es] the terms of participation in a political community that exercises the powers we associate with states.” (Nugent 2008: 22). According to this, democracy describes a certain power relation between citizens and the state distinct from other political systems (as dictatorships, etc.) and democratization denominates the attempt to change this relation in specific ways (Tilly 2007:

12; Nugent 2008: 24). I will describe, how citizenship is not only a formal status, but also creates a regime of governance which is constantly culturally, socially and institutionally produced (Bretherton 2015: 4). Thus, I will discuss how performances of visions of politics congregate and thereby reflect how a certain polity imagines to go about living together at a specific moment in time (cf. *ibid.*: 5).

This basic understanding also encompasses those without a legal status, as they, too, have a role within a certain political community. Thus citizenship marks political belonging (Tully 2002: 155) and a form of allegiance (Rose 2000: 98). A central point in this discussion is 'being recognized' within a political community (beyond formal citizenship) (cf. Kastoryano 2002: 123). However, I defy a romanticized notion of community and will emphasise that community is inherently conflictual and “resists the 'urge to unite'” (Lazar 2013: 9). Subsequently, I will introduce the notion of insurgent citizenship which defines the struggle over what it means to be a member of a community (Holston 1999: 94ff). In the course of the sections it will be shown that citizenship is not a static, but a dynamic relation and identity (*ibid.*). Further, insurgence will be presented as a crucial issue of democracy being a process of counter-acting (Holston 2008: 34). Hereby, it can be understood how citizenship is realized through engagement and thereby incorporated in terms of “self-making and being-made” (Ong 1996: 80). I will discuss the ways citizen identity formation is taking place, and how the cultural capacity of 'having a voice' is a significant part of this process (Appadurai 2013: 186). It is also emphasised that it does not only contribute to the creation of an individual political identity, but moreover to generating a consensus/status quo within a political collective (*ibid.*: 184). Additionally, I will shortly discuss how citizens as modern subjects are “obliged to be free” in order to understand how citizens are increasingly asked to understand “their lives in terms of choice” (Rose 1999: 87).

Lastly, I will show how responsibility is strengthened in theoretical debates on citizenship. I will explain how “living together in a community of fate” reinforced the 'care for the other' (Perczynski 2000: 162) opposing the hegemonic liberal conception of citizenship (Lazar 2013: 1). Based on responsibility as the prominent feature of the relation between individual and community, Rose introduces the notion of relational citizenship which is based on the capacity to act in relation to others and one's environment (Rose 2000: 99). As will be seen, his conception agrees with current theorizing of contemporary political developments by situating the capacity of citizens, their commitment and a “politics of the minor” in the center (*ibid.*). Based on, what he calls, the “democratic obligation” as a “form of consumption” and “ethical behavior of citizens”, I will be able to contextualize my ethnographic results within a “new radical politics of urban citizenship” (*ibid.*: 108).

After the detailed theoretical discussion, I will proceed with my ethnography on Barcelona en Comú. I will start by situating the emergence of the political organization and its political project in a historical context. I will begin with glancing at Catalonia in order to understand the contemporary political landscape there which is a result of a revolutionary struggle, the fascist past of the Spanish peninsula and the current wish for independence and self-determination of Catalonia as a nation. Then, I will trace back the political project of Barcelona en Comú to the practices of 15M, a nation-wide occupation of public spaces throughout the cities 2011/12. Back then, occupiers built up an infrastructure and implemented a way of achieving consensus-based decision-making which stood for a proposal of an alternative way of doing politics. This was done based on already existing knowledge and experiences of activists. Similarly, actors of Barcelona en Comú are “in the making of democracy” (see Blee 2012), thus, in the process of developing democratic practices within an institutional setting. Thus, the real-life occupation in offline public space, extending into the online, was a momentary social, political and cultural draft of reality expanding new “collective horizons” (Appadurai 1013). I will describe how Barcelona en Comú, as part of the aftermath, ventured 'the jump into the institution' and took office in the city government.

Therefore, I will first discuss the origins of the political organization, their focus on the territory of the municipality and the city as a site for political innovation. I will shortly describe the right to the city and the creation of urban commons referring mainly to David Harvey. Afterwards, I will explain how Barcelona en Comú attempts to organize itself as a political organization and introduce the assembly as organizational entity, its procedures and participants, where my field work mainly took place. As I scrutinize democratic practices, namely the relation between different entities and groups of people, I will then depict the political vision and ideal of members of Barcelona en Comú. This vision is mainly based on three aspects. The first is the attempt to understand the role of the politician differently, namely as a citizen characterised by proximity to the citizensry, as accountable (provided through e.g. the ethical code), and transparent which is realized by utilizing technological developments as the internet.

Further, I will render their political project comprehensive by explaining the discourse of old and new and the properties given to each. This is also crucial in order to understand their critique of contemporary politics and their proposal of a 'new' kind of politics. Then, I will turn to the assembly which is constructed as an important site of political innovation by most of its participants. The assembly is the main site of my ethnography through which I will depict conflicts within the organization in the subsequent chapter. Throughout several thematic sections, I will delineate the relation between 'being an institution', namely the city hall, and 'being a movement' and their entanglements and reciprocal relations as well as the properties given to each by actors of Barcelona

en Comú. By depicting the ceaseless negotiation process and coming-into-being of organizational principles, I will show how identities as politician, militant, and citizen are created and how these categories influence power relations between government respectively public institution and citizens. Throughout these descriptions it will also be seen, how participants attempt to find solutions for conflicts and problems in order to make organizational innovation possible.

The third chapter of the ethnography is concerned with the relation between the city hall and citizens. As I stay closely to my material, I will render visible the challenges of 'being inside the institution' and the capacities that are needed from the political actors who took office. Then, I will explain how their project of democratization is denominated as a new institutionality in order for them to alter the relation between institution and citizens. At the end, I will describe how actors of Barcelona en Comú view the role of the citizens in this relation. Telling the story of three different assemblies, where citizens came together with city hall representatives in order to create the plan of the mandate for the upcoming years, it will be shown which kind of capacities are needed from citizens and what kind of role the institution has in order to enable citizens to participate. With a special focus on participatory spaces, it will be seen how Barcelona en Comú succeeds, struggles and fails to alter the relation between citizens and government which is perceived as a static condition that needs to get dynamized. Accordingly, characterizing democracy as maintained status quo is seen as inherently false. Rather, it is nurtured by dispute, interest and a sense of collectivity, which is why activists of Barcelona en Comú attempt to initiate more communication between public institution and citizens.

Simultaneously, they propose public politics as something which is concerned with everyone, constructing an inclusive notion of all members of a political community. I will show which kind of mechanisms and organizational entities Barcelona en Comú creates in order to allow political and organizational innovation. I argue that the re-entry of the political in the everyday as well as the activation and cultivation of an institutional imagination is a discursive move which reinforces other democratic qualities and practices, which are generally marginalized. This is coupled with a reactivation and/or building of political identity and consciousness. Thereby, new forms of political practice can emerge, as well as already existing ones can be recovered.

Against the Backdrop of Current Events

Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall the political landscape of the Western world has changed. Socialism was widely defeated, and capitalism on the rise with the promise of democracy for

everyone. However, contemporary everyday political and bureaucratic organisation seems to be based widely on principles of inequality. Anthropological research is usually concerned with people outside Western civilizations, the most prominent example being hunter and gatherers. At least the few groups that still exist. However, proposing an approach of applied anthropology on this matter, more and more people are robbed their existential needs and positive outlook on their futures in the West. At the same time, fear and hate spreads through every inch of society. Seemingly, we stand at the brink of a future filled with disaster, violence and death. Against this backdrop, scrutinizing Western political ideas and practices seems worthwhile. Thus, this is not so much an account of democracy as a political model, but of democratization as a political process within a specific normative ideological framework. Thereby, I hope that this research enables to glimpse at the emergence of alternative political projects in contemporary times. Moreover, I generally consider it indispensable to scrutinize both left- and right-wing populism. In this case, however, I hope to contribute to the ethnography of democratic left-wing populism.

Even though my research took place in an assembly, the smallest organizational unit of the political organization Barcelona en Comú, this discussion cannot neglect current global political developments. For the international emergence of a critique of political representation is also connected to the strengthening of national isolationism and cruel authoritarianism of Western nation-states. The global migration flows of 2015, made it possible for politicians such as Trump, Salvini and Kurz to be elected and hatred and fear re-emerged violently to the public surface. Therefore, I do not only hope to be able to contribute to innovating the field of the anthropology of democracy. In the conclusion, I will attempt to connect simultaneously occurring, seemingly opposing phenomena in the hope that I will be able to help understand current events and developments, which often seem unintelligible and unimaginable. For looking at the unabated domination of capitalist logics of profit, extraction and exploitation, the precarity and destruction it imposes to all species and the environment, as well as the rise of new right-wing populism and the consolidation of established right-wing politics, it is all the more urgent to scrutinize Western political ideals and institutions.

Theory

The anthropology of democracy is currently an emerging field (Paley 2008: 4). As the matter is still under construction, I will provide a more detailed version towards an anthropology of democracy. Within an anthropological framework I will discuss different analytical angles on democracy. In doing so I intent to avoid to reproduce a monolithic notion and break with the hegemonic understanding of it. This is also why I will give space to anthropological theory building in form of ethnographic examples. I propose looking at a selected set of ethnographic accounts in detail, in order to understand social and cultural implications, namely democratic ideals and practices. The research of David Nugent, Mukulika Banerjee, Julia Paley, and Jessica Greenberg give insights on different aspects of democratic organisation which are significant to more or less extent in my ethnography. However, democracy is first and foremost a political concept based on political theory. This is why an interdisciplinary approach is inevitable in this subject matter. The following pages reflect a range of phenomena, discourses, and practices within the field of so-called democracy.

Doing so it will soon be rendered visible that the notions of citizen and citizenship play a central role in this matter. Therefore in a second theoretical section I will propose my take on the anthropology of citizenship. There is already a wide range of research in this field, and I will discuss citizen formation and practices, the notion of community, and forms of citizenship. Through that I hope to construct a theoretical framework which is drawn from a vivid realm of anthropological inquiry. It is constantly connected to the wider topic of democratic ideals and practices. Through an anthropology of citizenship it becomes possible to understand how discourses and practices at times oppose, at others resemble, but always transform each other. Within democracies the citizen is ideologically supposed to govern oneself and others. Through engagement, participation and voice one becomes a citizen, and acquires a citizen identity.

Towards an Anthropology of Democracy

Earlier studies from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s have focused on democratization as a modernizing project evoking images of prosperity and wealth, as “democracy was a universal political form signaling progress toward modernity” and “anthropologists sought to make their work relevant to political change.” (Paley 2002: 471) These were anthropologists from the U.S. traveling to places in Asia, Africa, and especially Latin America (ibid.). Even though the origin of democracy is commonly traced back to the Ancient Greeks in Europe (Nugent 2008: 26), it is a rather “modern phenomenon” (Tilly 2007: 29; Sawad 2000: 5). This is due to the “distinction between the

(utopistic) conception of a democracy of the ancients, in which all citizens participate directly in the decisions about the public goods, and a (realistic) democracy of the moderns, where an elected few govern.” (della Porta 2013: 6) Of course, “some elements of democracy existed at small scale across the world well before the 18th century” (Tilly 2007: 29). However, contemporary political institutions and political representation started to develop in the 18th and 19th century in Western Europe, but only the suffrage movements in the 20th century brought political democracy into being as we know it today (ibid.: 28).

The real political implications: Democracy being a concept of life and its organisation is used as an ideology. During the Cold War, it was an “antithesis to Soviet communism and was deployed in U.S. foreign policy to justify counterinsurgency efforts – as well as political transitions” (Paley 2002: 473). After the Cold War had ended, democracy transformed into a universal “truth held to be self-evident, easily defined by its most prominent features: free and fair elections, multi-party system, freedoms of expression and the press” (Paley 2004: 500; Paley 2008: 3). It was thereby widely used to legitimate Western regimes (Segert 2016: 88; Greenberg 2014: 14; Lorey 2012: 7). Further, as of its universality it became “immunized in scientific discourses (Paley 2002: 473; Sawad 2000: 3; Segert 2016: 112ff). Hereby, critical voices became silent or went unheard until the euphoria of political transformations all around the world stopped abruptly with the financial crisis in 2008 (Segert 2016: 115). Moreover, with the disappearance of socialism, there was no alternative to liberal democracy, and the imagination of any other was erased (ibid.).

Thus, there is a particular form of liberal (representative) democracy which is hegemonic and dominates discourses as well as practices, and which David Nugent has termed 'normative democracy' (2008: 5). He describes its main features as the following:

The liberal component refers to the rights and protections enshrined in the constitutions of many countries of the North Atlantic – the “freedoms of” (speech) and the “freedoms from” (arbitrary search and seizure). These freedoms seek to establish a state-free topography by limiting the exercise of government power. They are not concerned, however, with the ability of the citizenry to exercise a voice in political affairs; therefore, these freedoms have little to do with the original meaning of democracy (rule by the people). The representative component refers to individuals ceding direct decision-making power to others, who make all decisions in the political arena. As has been widely noted, representation disempowers those who relinquish their voice and was designed with this purpose in mind. The delineation of spheres component refers to a formal realm of politics that is open to some popular decision making while other realms are not. Particularly important in this regard is the structure of class, property, and exchange, which many argue would be quickly transformed if these could be changed by popular will. (Nugent 2008: 56)

Central to liberal democracy is the constitution as the basis of the organisation of a nation-state, which implies “freedom as the premise for government” and “the epistemological, institutional and technical conditions for the production of truths.” (Rose 1999: 3 30). Nicholas Rose calls this “the installment of “regimes of truth” (ibid.: 18f). Important for my research is the argument that the freedoms of and the freedoms from do not imply the freedom of voice, or political implication in

decision-making processes which translate into (real) power. Thus, within this described political context, it is argued that representation signifies as disempowerment to a broad extent, which is designed to make citizens renounce their voices. Subsequently, this has effect on economic issues and questions of resources. However, even though Nugent indicates that this conception of liberal representative democracy is far away from an original concept of which the sovereign of the state is its own people, it contemporarily constitutes the norm in the West.

Liberal (representative) democracy is claimed to have specific features which are supposedly replicable infinitely (Paley 2008: 5). However, ethnographic research shows “the existence of a broad range of democracies and the social conditions out of which distinct democracies have emerged” (Nugent 2008: 22). Thus, even though liberal democracy has become a norm, it should be understood as one among many existing forms, as the emergence of democracy is highly historic, contested and dependent on its specific context. In this regard, anthropologists and political scientists agree on the fact that the term democracy constitutes a highly dynamic concept (Paley 2008: 5; Segert 2016: 87; della Porta 2013: 3; Lazar 2013: 5; Sawad 2000: 3). Thus, an “anthropology of democracy explores the meanings, practices and languages of political action, as well as the interplay between formal and informal spaces in specific contexts” within the realm of “popular understandings of democracy – liberal or not – and ordinary people's engagement with democratic institutions” (Lazar 2013: 4). As meanings and practices of democracy are various and highly contested (Paley 2008: 5), there is an urgent need “to bring historical perspective to examinations of contemporary political practice” and “political practice as what people actually do, as opposed to reading political practice through normative ideologies.” (Lazar 2013: 5) Writing about diverging forms of democratic meanings and practices, the assumption of core and periphery must be shattered and the multiplicity of democratic organisation throughout the world and especially within Western Europe emphasised (Nugent 2008: 23).

Ethnographic Example: APRA, Peru – Political Participation and Civic Morality

As will be seen, my ethnography is an example for participatory in Western Europe. Forms of participatory democracy have been emergent on other sites of the world before. David Nugent worked on a movement called APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) which emerged in Northern Peru in the 20th century. The Apristas were promoting principles of a specific conception of participatory democracy, such as a 'continent-wide citizenship', cooperativism and the

active engagement of the public in decision-making processes in the region of Chachapoyas (Nugent 2008: 21). Their political action was based on the critique of an 'aristocratic order' embodied in the entitlements of a political elite whose membership in this social group gave them political leadership and the right to vote (ibid.: 35ff). This social as well as political elite grounded its legitimization of political power on a discourse of 'tradition and the past' which enabled Apristas to create discourses of participatory democracy evolving around notions such as 'modernity' and 'future' (ibid.: 34). Their claim for political participation went beyond the right to vote or other rights within a liberal democracy (Nugent 2008: 36). It included "the ability to control the most important aspects of their everyday lives, especially their conditions of work" (ibid.). According to APRA, this ability was to be actively practised by everyone. Thus, Apristas understood political participation within a democracy as a "broad set of complex duties that ensured that everyone would be actively involved in making decisions about, and in sharing responsibilities for, the well-being of everyone else." (ibid.) It was a capacity, duty and obligation which everyone should exercise in order to succeed in "the realization of these collectively established goals." (ibid.) Thereby, Apristas created an imperative or expectation which requested everyone part of the community to participate in the collective decision-making processes and, thus, a moral project (Nugent 2008: 40, 53). In this way, it was believed that relations between people and "in each person a sense of duty and commitment to the well-being of the community as a whole" would be created and strengthened (ibid.: 39). This 'civic morality' resulted in the management of behaviour which expanded into mental, emotional and physical spheres of everyday life and introduced "new forms of discipline" (ibid.: 53). Thereby, participants were to become 'cultured' individuals (ibid.). Apristas did not think that people who would not follow this dogma had to be executed, but did consider them "much as the Inca, as poisonous snakes, parasites" (ibid.: 43).

This example shows the possibility to construct "moral traditions to sustain the kinds of practices and beliefs by which a commitment to the dignity of friends and enemies and a vision of a common life as something more than the aggregation of individual choices can be sustained and renewed through time." (Bretherton 2015: 297) It also constitutes a specific version of participatory democracy, a democratic concept which will be scrutinized in more detail in the following section.

Forms of Democracy: Elitist vs. Participatory Concepts

As a result, "ruling becomes a 'reflexive' activity: those who would rule must ask themselves who should govern, what is the justification for government, what or who should be governed and how." (Rose 1999: 7) In democratic theory there are two major theoretical approaches that are more or less

in opposition to each other: the elitist and the participatory concept (Segert 2016: 96). Their similarity lies in “the legitimizing role of citizens” as their conceptual foundation (della Porta 2013: 3f). In an elitist organisation of democracy, the selection of leaders is in the center of democratic processes, therefore elites are central actors (Segert 2016: 96). The participatory concept of democracy understands the citizens themselves as central actors of politics, as well as their capacity for deliberation (ibid.: 97). There are more capacities to add here, which will be shown in my ethnography. At this point this model is strongly connected to the idea of deliberative democracy by Jürgen Habermas which makes democracy “more than just counting heads, it must involve discussion on an equal and inclusive basis, which deepens participants' knowledge of issues, awareness of the interests of others, and the confidence to play an active part in public affairs” (Sawad 2000: 5).

Elites are often understood as political and financial elites, however, they never occur completely homogeneous and unified and as well through social movements and civic organizations (Band/Dyrberg 2000: 151). As mentioned above, the post-2010 social movements posed a strong critique of elitist democratic regimes (Segert 2016: 116), and the diagnosis of the contemporary phenomenon that public institutions keep on functioning, however, the levers of power cannot be located within them or the political participation of citizens anymore, but rather in the hands of the financial and economic sector opting for neoliberal policies (Crouch 2008: 13, 29f). This was termed post-democracy by Colin Crouch (2008). The general experience of political powerlessness of ordinary citizens and subaltern groups put the question back focus: what does the adjective democratic denominate? Thus, the importance of social and cultural contexts of democratic regimes was emphasised (Segert 2016: 118). Anthropologists have understood well before that democracy is not confined within the political sphere, but also trespasses to other spheres such as cultural and social ones; which focuses on how an individual is perceived, as citizen or multi-faceted individual (Holston 2008: 309). It is the promises of democracy to “protect a citizen's body” and “produce a just city” (Holston 2008: 309), which “requires social and cultural changes that escape a classically narrow understanding of the political.” (ibid.: 310). Thus, “the problem with narrow political conceptions of democracy is that they fail to analyze the very contradictions that characterize contemporary democratic developments worldwide” (ibid.). Holston emphasizes that it is necessary to “abandon the idea of democracy as a totalizing project” and states “that what is productive about democracy is its condition of incompleteness and contradiction, its wager to be always unfinished.” (Holston 2008: 309: 311) Thus, “democracy is in a permanent process of definition and redefinition” (della Porta 2013: 5). However, contradictory and unfinished attributes of democracy, especially generated through participation of the people, has been generally assessed as a danger.

The People and the Masses

Scrutinizing Western political ideals and institutions is even more acute and crucial as of the emergent counter-hegemonic definitions of democracy. Social movements often deploy alternative visions of democracy and peoplehood strategically (Paley 2002: 485). This applies for both left and right social movements. Discourses of 'a people' and democracy tend to be universalistic, however, “do not refer to a people that actually pre-exists; rather, the act of constituting a people happens within political action and public rhetoric on an ongoing basis.” (Paley 2008: 10) Further, contemporary progressive social movements often construct a more inclusive notion of peoplehood which is distinguished by dialogue between different cultures, ethnicities and origins (ibid.: 11). Additionally, they often propose conceptions of participatory democracy which argues that different interest groups of a plural society will come together in order to discuss their different perspectives on issues searching for compromises (Segert 2016: 98).

In contrast to this, political theorists dismissed participation as leading to chaos early on. This critique is based on the size of the nation-state which is said to hinder debate and the organization of the plurality of people (Segert 2016: 89ff, 99). Further, the masses were considered as 'emotional', 'unpredictable' (as in 'incalculable'), not reasonable (Lorey 2012: 18), and therefore not able to turn claims into knowledge for policy-makers (Segert 2016: 99). Based on these theoretical doubts, it seems unrealistic to change the logics of compromise and consensus, and the fact that active minorities play a dominant role, thus, as utopian (ibid.: 104). Against this backdrop, the hegemonic understanding of the political argues that in order to be able to govern power has to be unified and made representable (Lorey 2012: 29).

However, this is a rather ahistoric conception of the human being as it does not admit that humans are able to evolve new competences and interests (Segert 2016: 103). It seems that critics just assume that there is no politicization of citizens developing any interests and capacities to act on in politics, even if they are actively encouraged to. This is criticized in turn as blindness of possibilities (ibid.). Participatory democracy as a model assumes that democracy has to extend into realms beyond the political, and must be innovated through cultural and technological developments (ibid.: 104). It is further based on the presumption that it is always possible to include new groups of people into the democratic processes, and that people are able to think beyond the immediate, individual interests, as well as on democracy which is more than the juridical equality of citizens before the state and the law (ibid.).

This is why, besides juridical constitution and formal procedures, political scientists increasingly locate political innovation in “the spontaneous, the civil and the informal” (Sawad 2000: 218). Thus, “by creating public forums, open to the participation of all citizens, in which a

plurality of opinions is represented”, the public sphere is considered a “conflictual space” which ultimately redirects the focus on the actual “conditions for the formation of collective identities during the democratic process.” (della Porta 2013: 10f) Participatory theories thereby highlight the process of “constructing good citizens through interaction and empowerment” (ibid.: 7). Della Porta argues that “by relating with each other – recognizing the others and being recognized by them – citizens would have the chance to understand the reasons of the others, assessing them against emergent standards of fairness” (ibid.). Centrally, through communication “the perception of one's own preferences” is changed, which results in a balancing of individual and collective matters by strengthening the latter (ibid.) However, “broad, equal participation does not qualify as democratic itself. After all, high-capacity authoritarian regimes such as the European fascist regimes of the 1930s and state socialist regimes before the 1980s commonly institutionalized broad, equal, even compulsory political participation.” (Tilly/Tarrow 2015: 71)

Contesting Regimes of Truth

Theoretically, the sovereign in a democracy is embodied by the people which has the power to make rules and laws for itself (Lorey 2012:15). However, the procedure of how these are achieved are not self-evident and assemblies and the inter-exchange between persons is not 'naturally' part of the formal procedures (ibid.). In order to understand how power is enacted within a specific political framework, it is therefore crucial to scrutinize its political institutions (Paley 2002: 477). As “'democracy' may at times seem to be a floating signifier that can be filled with any number of meanings, it is hardly 'hyperreal' in the sense of being disconnected from institutional referents” (Paley 2002: 477). However, different political logics are “not neatly differentiable but rather complexly intertwined, and the discourses labeling certain regimes as democracies are strategically deployed by groups with strong interests in particular definitions and contested by others differently situated in relations of power.” (ibid.: 471) This means that also after political transformation, the logics that occur in the previous regimes (such as military regimes) continue to persist in 'democracies' (ibid.: 476f). Jessica Greenberg agrees with this in her research in post-revolutionary Serbia by arguing that “the arrival of formal democracy did not erase existing power dynamics, forms of inequality, state-citizen relations, practices of collective action, or understandings of the political.” (2014: 16)

The resulting constitutive struggles give birth to new democratic meanings and practices “envisioning political possibilities beyond actually-existing democracy, and – by taking the present as an instance of uncertainty – holding open the possibility for a range of alternatives.” (Paley 2002:

479) Therefore, a crucial point in this paper is that, “democracy is not a single condition that countries do or do not have, but rather a set of processes unevenly enacted over time” (ibid.), constituted by an “open-ended construction” (Paley 2008: 4). In this regard, Lorey argues that the creation of new institutions and new commons, which is a main objective of the municipalist movement, is incorporated by a constitutive power which is constantly re-constituting itself (2012: 48). However, in opposition to the constituted power bound to representation, the constitutive power is often dismissed as apolitical and a mere process (ibid.: 30). Nevertheless, the creativeness and messiness that is attributed to the constitutive power is understood as the motor of every political order to emerge (ibid.: 29). This is similar to the characteristics of democratization processes “as an ongoing failed or semi-successful imaginary project” (pers. comm. with Elizabeth Povinelli in Paley 2002: 470). Thus, democratization is not a linear process with a tendency of gradual success, but rather a contested messy and creative struggle where opinions, visions and practices of different actors come together. Protests such as 15M can then function as “shocks’ which “undermine self-reproducing systems of control over states and thereby weaken the elites that have the most to lose from democratization. They open up room in which ordinary people can negotiate consent to newly emerging systems of rule.” (Tilly 2007: 40) This involves a tension of “central power versus popular will”, as the objective is that “collective demands” of citizens “translate into transformations of social life”, which means that the relation between citizens and state is characterised by the states’ behaviour “in conformity to the expressed demands of its citizens” (ibid.: 12f, 58). Thus, “democracy involves negotiated consent in the exercise of concentrated state power. For that reason, it always involves popular mobilization.” (Tilly 2007: 12f, 58) Regarding de-democratization, Tilly argues that it “occurs in the course of rulers’ and elites’ responses to what they experience as regime crises, most obviously represented by threats to their own power.” (ibid.: 58)

Within this realm, democratization movement initiate a process of contesting ‘regimes of truths’ by questioning and attempting to create mechanisms “of conferring legitimacy on political leaders, authorities and institutions.” (Rose 1999: 197) Rose argues that “every style of government also implies a way of living, a form of life, a mode of existence. An ethic of how one is governed is also an ethic of how one governs others, of how one governs oneself.” (ibid. 283; also see Foucault 1997) This entails government as the conduct of others and ultimately oneself, as “one might be urged and educated to bridle one’s own passions, to control one’s own instincts, to govern oneself.” (Rose 1999: 3) By making one’s personal freedom the ground for this, “to govern humans is not to crush their capacity to act, but to acknowledge it and to utilize it” (ibid.: 4), “in order to increase their good order, their security, their tranquility, their prosperity, health and happiness.” (ibid.: 6)

Central to governance are “political rationalities” which “are characterized by regularities” and act as principles such as “freedom, justice, equality, responsibility, citizenship, autonomy” (Rose 1999: 26). Further, numbers have a high significance in contemporary democracies, as they are able to “determine who holds power, and whose claim to power is justified.” (ibid.: 197) Accordingly, elections are considered the most important democratic procedure. This is due to the fact that “democratic power is calculated power” insofar as “numbers are intrinsic to the forms of justification that give legitimacy to political power in democracies.” (Rose 1999: 200) According to this, is the role of a citizen that of a mere voter?

Ethnographic Example: Electoral Participation in West Bengal, India

In her ethnography on electoral politics in villages in West Bengal, India (where some of the highest voter turnouts appear in spite of a high levels of illiteracy and poverty), Banerjee compares elections with religious festivals and rites the passage arguing “not to vote would be akin to not celebrating your child's wedding – conceptually possible, but so curmudgeonly, eccentric, and antisocial that only a tiny minority would want or dare to do it.” (Banerjee 2008: 66, 72) Banerjee draws on the notion of elections as its festive and collective character in order to describe “that so many people seem to share a genuine and thoughtful reverence for the democratic process as in some sense 'sacred' or 'sacrosanct’” (ibid.: 74, 76). She takes into account that the perspective of elections as ritual tends to disregard the technocratic aspect of them (Banerjee 2008: 74f) However, arguing with Michael Herzfeld, she rather emphasises the similarities between the “modern form of bureaucratic rationality” and “ritual systems of religions” which are both based on “exclusive communities whose members' individual sins cannot undermine the ultimate perfection of the ideal they all share.” (ibid.: 75; also see Herzfeld 1993) In terms of citizenship, the villagers perceived the vote both as a duty and as an expression (Banerjee 2008: 77). Further, egalitarian principles inherent in the vote as every voter in the polling booth was treated the same regardless of one's social, economic or political status (ibid.). Therefore, the vote gave dignity to people who were normally used to a constant form of subjugation and discrimination (ibid.). Generally, election day was also seen as a day for the people: “unlike religious rituals, which require the presence of an officiating imam or priest but not necessarily a congregation, an election could not be held without them – a 'festival for the people, not for Allah!’” (Banerjee 2008: 77f) Finally, Banerjee's research shows how powerful elections can be for constructing an identity as citizen as well as the belief in a political system:

democracy is really an untrue but vitally important myth in support of social cohesion, with elections being the central and regular ritual enactment that helps maintain and restore equilibrium disaffection and opinion but

ultimately restores the status quo. In such a reading, elections require the complicity of all participants in a deliberate misrecognition of the emptiness of these procedures, the lack of any significant changes that this ritual brings about, and the necessity of this charade to mollify a restless electorate. (ibid.: 66f)

In the case of Spain, elections had been increasingly put into question ever since 15M and have been regarded as insufficient as a democratic tool. Therefore, what Banerjee calls 'complicity of all participants' have been voided and the status quo of the political landscape in Spain has been toppled – at the latest when new political organisations emerged and entered electoral politics. Elections were not seen as a 'festival for the people', but dominantly as an insufficient and emptied signifier of democratic procedure. Their function to sustain a corrupted status quo and maintain existing political elites testified it as a symptom for the low quality of its democratic regime (della Porta 2013: 1). Moreover, challenging the dominance of elections within the array of democratic procedures redirected the “attention back to other democratic qualities.” (ibid.: 5) Opposed to the liberal conception of democracy which “looks at the public institutions as the only democratic arena” (della Porta 2013: 9), movements such as 15M revived the need for “deep-rooted traditions in democratic thinking” and the “development of democratic institutions that go beyond electoral accountability.” (ibid.: 35)

Restoring Popular Sovereignty

Democratization movements attempt to restore the legitimacy of democratic political systems by activating “civic democratic engagement” (Band/Dyrberg 2000: 146). This is done by strengthening capacities such as “information, deliberation and association” (Sawad 2000: 4), and the need for “critical citizens” (della Porta 2013: 4). The activation and (re-)politicisation of ordinary citizens is understood in terms of “building political capital” among 'the many' and “revives the relationship between political regime and political community” (Band/Dyrberg 2000: 157). In order to avoid having an elite of very active citizens dominating the political agenda, this activation entails “a search for identity and the possibility of exercising political power in local institutional settings” (ibid.: 150). However, these tendencies show a shift inasmuch as “ideas of the common good are replaced by common concerns, which are neither thick nor thin, but simply ordinary; the private disappears as the site of a univocal self and is deconstructed as a plurality of non-public selves” (ibid.).

Deliberation and its procedural character is argued to result into collective choices as “a consensus or at least a 'workable agreement'” and are enabled through 'informed debate'” (Budge 2000: 195). The democratization of the relation between institutions and civil society is strongly

dependent on citizens' engagement but further on democratizing incentives by the institutions. Even though deliberation might be practised within groups of people outside the institutions, if collective opinions and choices are not taken into account by public institutions and political representatives, they remain political wishfulness:

Unless citizens are given the fullest possible powers over policies affecting them, politics will remain defective in democratic terms no matter how reasoned or informed discussion is. Conversely, democracy could function with minimal public discussion even though the general hope is that fuller access to decision-making will stimulate it (Budge 2000: 195).

Therefore, citizens engagement and the creation of new (differently working) public institutions play a crucial role in democratic innovation (ibid.). It poses questions concerning the relation between government and citizen, of which political accountability accounts for the quality of democratic regimes.

Ethnographic Example: Accountable Democracy – A Critique of Liberal Democracy

Based on her ethnographic fieldwork in Santiago, Chile, in the early 1990s, Julia Paley tells the story of Chile's transformation from authoritarian military regime into democracy, the so-called Concertación (concerted action) (2004: 499). At the end of the 1980s, social movements and organizations identified desires and opinions of Chile's population which led to campaigning a plebiscite which took place in 1988 (ibid.: 500). The campaign was constructed around the idea that democracy's main characteristic was that people's opinions were taken into account (ibid.). After the Concertación was elected, however, the discourse of the government changed. Even though government officials claimed to stay open for dialogue with civil society, they hindered their opinions to enter political decision-making processes (Paley 2004: 500, 504). Now, it was claimed that public officials legitimately represented the needs of the people, because they had been elected into office (ibid.: 500). In spite of official discourses of participation and consensus, representatives excluded social movements and organizations from decision-making processes, discouraged their engagement by claiming that their wishes could not be fulfilled in the near future and claimed disagreement within a democracy as 'unhealthy' (ibid.: 499, 503).

As a result, social movement actors did not consider the post-1990 system as a democracy, whereas political elites, social scientists and the like did celebrate it as such (Paley 2004: 506). Social movement actors criticize that instead of governing by a consensus of the people, political elites and parties governed by their own created among themselves (ibid.: 499ff). This supported the development of a weak public and strategically discouraged citizens to claim their rights (ibid.).

Thus, what constituted democratic decisions was not distinguished by “how closely they corresponded to the desires of individual citizens or organized groups, and whether the deliberation process and the result were even publicly known”, instead officials regarded policy as democratic when it was “made by people voted into office” (Paley 2004: 504). Therefore, democracy was considered to be created through electoral politics and moreover through the development of representative political institutions (ibid.). Politicians worried that the public's contestation and critique of public institutions and policy “would diminish investor confidence, threaten macroeconomic stability, and cause a political backlash of the right.” (ibid.)

Drawing on Habermas, Paley develops the concept of deliberative democracy further by putting “the impact of public opinion on public policy and law” (Paley 2004: 497) in the focus. She suggests that between the deliberative practices in the public sphere which result in opinions and decisions and the elected government, there should be a link “sufficiently direct for policy makers to enact into law and put into practice expressed desires of citizens” (Paley 2004: 497). Based on her empirical evidence of working with social movements and community organizations (498), she develops the argument that normatively

having an elected legislature and president does not in and of itself constitute democracy. Instead, what matters is what those officials do while in office: whether they protect people's rights, whether they fight to improve living conditions, whether they take into considerations the needs and expressed desires of the people, and whether they keep their promises. (ibid.: 507)

Thus, beyond formal standards of electoral politics and the rule of law, what is brought into question are the capacities and the willingness of the elected officials to act accordingly to the opinions and desires of the population. Within this realm accountability denominates “both that politicians should be held accountable for fulfilling public demands and that [...] citizens' opinions will be 'taken into account' in the decision-making process.” (Paley 2004: 509) In order to understand how this relation is constituted, it is also indispensable to not only look at social movements' activity, but further at another organizational entity, namely the political party.

The Political Party

In mass democracies political parties have the function to organize “excluded groups and pressing for the franchise, in order to safeguard their interests” (Budge 2000: 197, 199). They are intermediaries which significantly influence and create political discourses, propose alternative options for the voter through their political programs which may or may not be implemented in government (ibid.: 196ff, 199). When political parties are criticized, it is mainly because of their hierarchical organization and the coercion of internal unification. It further appears as political

parties prefer winning elections than initiating broader deliberation or getting proposals accepted than developing ones (Budge 2000: 201). They are also criticized for obtaining a general authorization through a mandate which enables them to do as they wish without being held accountable for their actions in full extent (ibid.: 201, 199). But even if democracy is imagined without political parties, there were still “proto-parties emerging as groups of like-minded individuals” or “political clubs” (Budge 2000: 197). Thus, the political party is a site for political innovation itself which has to entail internal democratization (ibid.: 199). However, history has shown that democratizing and innovating political parties is difficult, which is illustrated mostly by reference to the ecological movement in Germany starting in the 1970s and “by the 1990s the Greens had turned themselves increasingly into conventional political parties because there was no other way to compete effectively” (ibid.: 208; Zirakzadeh 2006). The hierarchization and increasing immobility of political parties is due to

the impetus of a political party operating within the constraints of an election cycle and responding to the administrative demands of governing a modern nation-state means there is an inevitable temptation to subordinate forms of popular, local association to the implementation of a policy program or an electoral strategy. Moreover, what is achievable at a municipal level does not necessarily apply at the national level where the ability to be responsive to local conditions, histories, and traditions, and to engage in building meaningful relationships is obviated by the need to develop egalitarian, one-size-fits-all policies and procedures. (Bretherton 2015: 297)

However, scholars such as della Porta have diagnosed a contemporary increasing inability of political parties to provide for this intermediary function and as a site of identification constructing “long-term collective identities” which resulted into citizens' alienation of political parties, elites and institutions in the past two decades (2013: 24f). This is why, “in a present when old forms of political mobilization – the party, the programme, the electoral mandate – are losing their attraction, and a host of new forms of politics are taking shape, it may be ultimately to address ourselves to politics of contestation itself, to seek to diagnose the historically shaped limits of both our democratic and our revolutionary political imagination.” (Rose 1999: 279) As I will turn to the topic of political imagination in a bit, there is first to examine the role of social movements in terms of contestation.

Ethnographic Example: Social Movement's Pressure in Ecuador

In Paley's study on participatory democracy in Cotacachi, Ecuador, and the popular parliaments respectively assemblies of CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador), she emphasised the importance of continuous pressure and engagement by social movements in politics. Cotacachi was one of the cities in 1996 where a 'wave of mayors' formed 'alternative local

governments' (Paley 2008: 147). This municipal movement invited social movements and organizations, such as youth, women, neighbourhood groups, to take part in decision-making processes (ibid.: 148, 156). At the annual Assembly of the County institutional representatives as well as social movements and working groups could report on their work. Additionally, committees worked continuously on issues such as “environment and natural resources, health, education and culture, tourism, production, and municipal government” and affected policy and agenda making thereof (ibid.: 156f). Based on her research, Paley asks the question whether social movements are still needed in a political environment that already favours forms of participatory democracy and inclusive decision-making processes. Her conclusion is, instead of being “replaced by a transparent and responsive local government”, the continuous work of social movements is crucial in order

to hold politicians accountable to the demands of 'base' communities, to generate proposals to guide governance, to establish transnational networks as counterparts to governing systems that transcend local boundaries, to produce new leaders, to bring proposals to participatory assemblies, and to outlast a possible dismantling of the formal citizen-participation structure. (Paley 2008: 149)

As the continuous pressure of social movements, understood as deeply connected to the reality of everyday life, and the constant exchange between civil society, social movement organizations and public institutions provides for “roots, anchors, intimacy, proximity, and locality” (Appadurai 2013: 176). In his conception of “deep democracy” based on urban activist movement in Mumbai, Appadurai emphasises the combination of local activism with horizontal and global networking (ibid.: 155). However, the importance of social movement's constant pressure and mobilization render visible that “democratic practices [are] not automatically reproductive” (ibid.). In this regard, the post-2010 movements initiated a rethinking of political action by including the transformative power of everyday actions, social relationships, forms of living together and of subjectivization which are normally ignored in political theory (Lorey 2012: 30; Waibel 2012: 100).

The Capacity to Aspire, Democratic Imagination, and Humans as Future-Makers

Democracy as a political form is a project profoundly based on hope and people's aspiration for change (Bretherton 2015: 286). In order to give this hope a possibility for its realization, democratic public institutions serve as a site for collective action (ibid.: 290). Regarding resources, it is “a deficit not of people, ideas, or money, but of institutional imagination.” (ibid.) This is a dilemma, as people lost trust in their institutions and lack imagination to think of new ones (ibid.) Therefore, it is necessary to scrutinize the imaginative qualities of democratic practices which “refuse to live as if the future is enclosed.” (ibid.: 287)

Even though anthropology “remains substantially shaped by the lens of pastness”, as it is

concerned with reproduction, durability, and resilience in human life”, this “does not mean that anthropology has ignored future as cultural horizon”, only it did not aggregate “humans as future-makers and of future as cultural facts.” (Appadurai 2013: 286) Appadurai understands “future as cultural fact as a form of difference” which is grounded in “imagination, anticipation, aspiration” and argues that “aspirations are never simply individual” and “always formed in interaction and in the thick of social life” (ibid.: 286, 187). He argues, that the pursuit of the good life, health and happiness can be found in all societies and observed as “specific wants and choices” (ibid.). This is why, the capacity to aspire is a “navigational capacity” (Appadurai 2013: 188). However, it “is not evenly distributed in any society” (ibid.). Thus, the subaltern as well as activists “have to practice the arts of aspiration” in order to create political visions and collective horizons as well as its strategies to pursue them, make their claims heard and rendered manageable, and meet urgency with patience (Appadurai 2013: 191). Accordingly, “imagination is a vital resource in all social processes and projects, and needs to be seen as a quotidian energy, not visible only in dreams, fantasies, and sequestered moments of euphoria and creativity” (ibid.: 287).

Against this backdrop, “the capacity to aspire is a cultural capacity, in the sense that it takes its force within local systems of value, meaning, communication, and dissent. Its form is recognizable universal, but its force is distinctly local and cannot be separated from language, social values, histories, and institutional norms, which tend to be highly specific.” (Appadurai 2013: 290) Therefore, he proposes to scrutinize concepts of the good life at different localities (ibid.). It is a question of

how cultural systems, as combination of norms, dispositions, practices, and histories, frame the good life as a landscape of discernible ends and of practical paths to the achievement of these ends. This requires a move away from the anthropological emphasis on cultures as logics of reproduction to a fuller picture in which cultural systems also shape specific images of the good life as a map of the journey from here to there and from now to then, as a part of the ethics of everyday life. (Appadurai 2013: 292)

The good life is a cultural fact which is inscribed in cultural systems of futurity, growth, sustainability, ethics and way of life. Discourses of specific wants and choices transform into individual and collective goals and strategies to reach them. Against this backdrop, Appadurai proposes an 'ethics of possibility' which denominates “thinking, feeling, and acting that increase the horizon of hope, that expand the field of imagination, that produce greater equity in what I have called the capacity to aspire, and that widen the field of informed, creative, and critical citizenship.” (ibid.: 295). Contrasting with this, he also construct a notion of “ethics of probability” which is mostly based on the “modern regimes of diagnosis, counting, and accounting” (ibid.).

In contemporary times “the future is a trauma inflicted on the present by the arrival of crises of every description. Consequently, hope is often threatened by nausea, fear, and anger for many

subaltern populations.” (Appadurai 2013: 299) Therefore, he emphasizes that the blank space which is the future is not automatically filled with technocratic reasoning or victory of nature, “but a space for democratic design” (ibid.). Further, “ethical commitment is grounded in the view that a genuinely democratic politics cannot be based on the avalanche of numbers – about population, poverty, profit, and predation – that threaten to kill all the street-level optimism about life and the world.” (ibid.) This is what he calls an ethics of probability (Appadurai 2013: 295). An ethics of possibility “can offer a more inclusive platform for improving the planetary quality of life and can accommodate a plurality of visions of good life.” (Appadurai 2013: 299)

Ethnographic Example: Pragmatic Politics of the Present in Serbia

In her study on Serbian Youth Movements after the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević, Jessica Greenberg looks at how student activists which were formerly the driving force behind the revolution are confronted with the creation of democratic institutions in a post-revolutionary time. Centrally, she argues that “it is about democracy not as a guaranteed outcome of a revolution but as a project always on the threshold of becoming.” (Greenberg 2014: 2) Greenberg describes a movement of both forward and backward of former revolutionaries in the undertaking of democratization (ibid.: 2). Using their capacity for aspiration, they were navigating through “a democratic present in the shadow of the past.” (ibid.) Against the backdrop of creating new political institutions and introducing democratic or simply other political practices as the new standard, “democracy is always profoundly contradictory and flawed when measured against idealized moments and normative expectations” (Greenberg 2014: 3). Which is, to make sure to be mentioned again, difficult to avoid as democracy is still much more of a political concept in the minds of people than a directive creating a variety of social possibilities. The tensions between the ideal of the political vision and the reality of political practice, these “contradictions and disappointments are intrinsic to actually lived democracies, rather than their exceptions.” (ibid.) This is why activists attempted to rationalize the affective dimension of their undertaking, namely hope and aspiration, “and the messy and painful realities of building a democratic state and society.” (Greenberg 2014: 5) In this regard, politics means to invent new political vocabularies and strategies confronting the status quo (ibid.: 7). On this basis, she proposes 'politics of disappointment' as an approach to understand how the students dealt with everyday contradictions of political practice (ibid.: 8)

Disappointment was thus a condition of living in contradiction, of persisting in the interstitial spaces of expectation and regret. In mapping the field in which democratic practice unfolded, I seek to show the conditions under which the coherence of practice is impossible, and yet action takes place nonetheless. Here I take disappointment seriously as the ethos of many new (and not so new) democracies. Disappointment is neither an absence – of hope or possibility – nor the aftereffect of “real” politics having taken place in another

time or place. It is a complex political and affective form in its own right. (Greenberg 2014: 8f)

The revolution promises an Utopia which is an idealized version of the reorganization of society (ibid.: 9, 184). However, revolution itself “inscribes messy and complicated social practices in a temporality of rupture and progress” (ibid.: 9). This is why she develops the notion 'pragmatic politics of the present', as “projections of idealized futures are best understood as processes of making and interpreting life in the present” (Greenberg 2014: 19, 10). The students' disappointment and pragmatism emerged as a reaction to the “utopian, future-oriented politics” of the Socialist world of their parents and the everyday struggle of real (institutional) politics (ibid.: 19). Thus, “the democratic era has ushered in a new pragmatic politics of the present in which the contradictions of democratic representation become terrain for political action.” (Greenberg 2014: 26) Thereby, “disappointment provides a way to think about the gap between utopia and political practice” (ibid.: 182). Greenberg argues that, “new forms of democracy, however necessarily imperfect, are made in practice, in ways that are always contingent and shifting.” (ibid.: 183) Her notion of a 'politics of disappointment' is a “political possibility that rejects the ideal of the future (or the past) for the compromises of the present” (Greenberg 2014: 49).

For real change, “it is necessary to direct one’s attention violently towards the present as it is” (Gramsci 1971: 175). As this is a “politics of becoming-other-than-one-now-is, towards forms of open-ended subject making that are embedded in a constitutive struggle” (Rasza/Kurnik 2012: 241). Drawing on their participation in and research on Occupy Slovenia, Rasza and Kurnik highlight the production of new forms of life (ibid.: 240, 252). Downsizing the prefigurative character of their practices, they emphasize the “open-ended process” of becoming “that will involve unexpected new forms” as the political futures are not yet imagined (ibid.). This explains why, “political and social movements are increasingly shifting away from Cold War models of revolution to a language of democratization or democratic revolution” (Greenberg 2014: 185)

Anthropology of Citizenship

Before the modern nation-state advanced to the most powerful form of political allegiance and community (Holston 1999: 95), it was the cities which offered a form of local citizenship (Lazar 2013: 12). In ancient and premodern times “there were a conglomeration of separate self-governing towns” (Lazar 2013: 13) and “multiple and overlapping jurisdictions predominated in Europe” (Holston 1999: 95). The nation-state “competed with the city for the primary affiliation of its citizens” and substituted “the local management of history with the national” (ibid.). The national projects individualized citizens by stripping them down of their other identities of belonging, “but failed to do so, leaving what is often called 'civil society' as intermediary.” (Lazar 2013: 13)

The emergence of a public sphere is of special interest, as it was here where the creation of modern citizenship took place. In coffee houses and through literature and newspapers, a “specific form of civility was brought into existence” in the 18th century (Rose 2000: 99). This existence creates a certain “public persona and private subjectivity” (ibid.) connected to a notion of public opinion (della Porta 2013: 45). However, the public sphere was “not (only) bourgeois, in the sense of being limited to the elites of literary cafés” (ibid.). At the same time, social movement began to organize and citizens of mass societies became members of a political community, and 'entered history' (Bendix 1964: 72). Throughout the 19th century until the 20th century subaltern groups struggled for their rights, suffrage being one of the most crucial ones (Rose 2000: 99). In the first half of the 20th century, the universalistic principle of citizenship within social welfare societies emerged based on concepts of solidarity and responsibility, “with social duties matching individual rights” (ibid.).

Beyond Formal Citizenship

Predominantly, citizenship is understood as a formal or legal status within contemporary nation-states and defined by its memberships to them (Kastoryano 2002: 120; Ong 2005: 679; Holston 1999: 95). It is shaped by “protected entitlements” (Ong 2005: 697) and “allows for a full participation of individuals and groups in a given political community” (Kastoryano 2002: 120, 123). Therefore, it is described as passive, as it is conferred through a numerical identity bound to a nationality and “the right to a passport” (Perczynski 2000: 161). Citizenship enables identification of subjects considered as individuals, which is of great effect, as it is bound to a “framework of law, institutions, demands, and sentiments” (Holston 2008: 21). “These entitlements, institutions, and social spheres formed the core of modern democratic citizenship, helped establish the institutions of political democracy, and remain central to what democracy means to most people today.” (Nugent

2008: 26)

Thereby, citizenship evokes a relation between individual or citizen and the state, or a state-like polity, real or imagined (Nugent 2008: 24), however, incorporated through the government. It is usually linked to a demarcated territory of affiliation, of which the state grants “civil, political, and social rights” (Bretherton 2015: 4; Marshall 1950: 53). As within a democracy it indicates “who is authorized to govern and the processes by which their authority is legitimized.” (Bretherton 2015: 4) However, beyond formal citizenship, it “is also a regime of governance, culturally produced through a matrix of institutional and social practices.” (ibid.) On the one hand, this entails “participation in and knowledge about institutions of government, the right to vote and be elected, etc.” (Lazar 2013: 1). On the other, it goes beyond procedures of representation and bureaucratic mechanisms,

rather, it entails a mesh of beliefs, narratives, practices, bodily properties, habits, and rituals reiterated and enacted in contexts as diverse as the workplace, social media, and the street, and which together constitute a “social imaginary” of what good and bad politics entail, and thus what the good citizen should do. (Bretherton 2015: 4f)

This “performance of a vision of politics” (ibid.) evokes virtues and moral concepts such as equality and respect (Lazar 2013: 1) that create a shared common sense which is iteratively reproduced (Bretherton 2015: 5). Therefore, it is argued that citizenship serves as a site of construction for capacities and ground for collective visions of the good life and how a group of people (a polity) wish to go about living together (ibid.). In order to aspire to this common vision, individuals need to have a shared understanding of how to relate to each other and act collectively (ibid.) It is, thus, possible that it also encompasses those without a legal status “who nevertheless assume responsibility for and contribute to the life together and commonwealth of where they live” (ibid.).

The Political Community

The performance of citizenship inherently means that individuals 'have a role' within a political community which is learned through formal as well as informal education and creates a political identity which forms the basis for certain forms of one's personal engagement (Mekeel 1944: 208). This means the citizen is a “particular kind of person capable of living in the collectivity” (Lazar 2013: 6). This concept goes back to Aristotle who stated that “citizenship was constituted through political practice, and political practice was constituted through speech and deliberation”, thus, political participation (ibid.). An 'active political citizenship' “stresses not only entitlements but also some obligations to participate in public life on different levels” (Perczynski 2000: 161). Therefore, “political subjectivity [...] cannot be assumed to exist but must be created” (Lazar 2013: 6). “Yet at

its most fundamental, citizenship names political belonging” (ibid.: 1; Tully 2002: 155) and “is understood as formed by allegiance” (Rose 2000: 98)

There is a connection between political and cultural community, “where the former functions as a source of right and legitimacy, and the latter as a source of identity.” (Kastoryano 2002: 122) Thus, subjects are individuals with identities formed through allegiance which inherent in “a particular set of community values, beliefs and commitments.” (Rose 1999: 135f) The notion of community includes affections such as love, care or solidarity, which is “construed as natural: unlike 'society' it is not a political fabrication” (Rose 2000: 98). However, it is important to defy a romantic ideal of purity based on “small-group, face-to-face relations” which “denies difference by positing fusion rather than separation as the social ideal” (Young 1986: 65f). On the contrary, community is inherently conflictual and “resists the 'urge to unite'” (Lazar 2013: 9). As homogeneity implicates an apolitical state. Internal conflicts give “space [to] individual variability and internal differentiation, and, more importantly, for the internal power relations that constrain the ability to define what 'a community' is and what 'it' thinks.” (ibid.). Therefore inequalities are inscribed into citizenship (Holston 2008: 32). As opposing political logics persist at the same time in the course of everyday (institutional) politics, “new participatory citizenship has not replaced the old in which citizenship is a means of distributing inequalities and differences” (ibid.: 33, 249).

Against this backdrop, belonging to a community entails 'being recognized' as a person and as a member. The concept of recognition makes it possible to integrate outsiders (Kastoryano 2002: 120). Therefore, being entitled to legal citizenship provides, at least theoretically, for “equal inclusion and full participation in the political community.” (ibid.: 123). For “in practice that which constitutes citizenship substantively (rights and duties) is often independent of its formal status” (Holston 1999: 95). Lazar defines citizenship regimes as “legal, bureaucratic, ideological and material frameworks that condition practices of and ideas about government and participation in politics.” (2013: 10) These are constructed dynamically “in the interface between people, policy, market and the state” and “include the citizen as consumer – of public services, goods, lifestyle” (ibid.: 10f).

Citizenship Practices

The loss of communities and the rise of the nation-state resulted in a hyper-individualization of the individual. A citizen is “an atomized individual confronted by the collectivist power of the state, not a person rooted in family and social groups with which she is used to act, which can then form the basis of other mediating institutions.” (Budge 2000: 199) The individuated citizen constitutes the

basis for the universalistic principle of liberal citizenship (Ong 1996: 80), which is hegemonic inasmuch as liberal democracies. However, anthropological research “recognizes the diversity in modalities of citizenship today and acknowledges that liberal citizenship is one modality among many.” (Lazar 2013: 15) Further, “liberal citizenship must itself be plural, as attested by the varieties of liberalism both in historical reality and political thought” (ibid.). Thus, citizenship is “a complex bundle of practices” characterised by its specific historicity (ibid.: 12).

(Non-)Citizens Making Claims

Especially in liberal political contexts, citizenship is enacted through a language articulated through claims to rights on different political communities (Lazar 2013: 2, 12). Thus, ideally citizenship creates equality which entails “access to resources and institutions” as well as the production of “a universal equality, dignity, and access” (Holston 2008: 249). The term substantive citizenship describes the “ability that citizens have in reality to claim rights that they possess through their formal status as citizen” (Lazar 2013: 13; also see Holston 2001). This creates the battleground for insurgent citizenship to engage in “struggles over what it means to be a member of the modern state” (Holston 1999: 94, 96). As “citizenship changes as new members emerge to advance their claims” and are confronted with resistance from the state, citizenship as a relation and an identity is not static (ibid.: 94). The notion of contentious politics by Tilly and Tarrow applies in this realm as well, which denominates “interactions in which actors make claims bearing on other actors' interests, leading to coordinated efforts on behalf of shared interests or programs, in which governments are involved as targets” (2015: 7). Their main mean is the “sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions, and solidarities that sustain these activities” (ibid.: 11). In democracies, contention is especially important, for institution and civil society find themselves within a continuous reciprocal and constitutive relation: “Movements hover at the gates of institutional politics, sometimes entering, sometimes rejecting, but always in an uneasy relationship with institutions.” (ibid.: 63; also see Tarrow 2013) Tilly and Tarrow explain that “in most such cycles, contention begins moderately and in interaction with institutions. Although it sometimes produces reform, and sometimes revolution, it usually ends with the main challengers being reintegrated within the system.” (Tilly/Tarrow 2015: 119)

Modern citizenship is, thus, dominated by a gap between government and citizen practices and constant expansion and erosion of rights in contemporary times (Holston 2008: 14). Therefore, “sites of insurgent citizenship are found at the intersection of these processes of expansion and

erosion” (Holston 1999: 94). Insurgent citizenship aims at “social justice and fosters a specific democratic imagination” which is based on an universal principle of equality (Holston 2008: 249). It is highly defined by the agency of citizens and “begins with the struggle for rights to have a daily life in the city worthy of a citizen's dignity” (ibid.: 252, 313). Holston argues that this “is the central and not the collateral issue of democracy” and that “all democracies [...] are normally disjunctive in their realization of citizenship” (2008: 311, 14). Further, “the processes and practices that define citizenship are inherently disjunctive – not cumulative, linear, or evenly distributed among citizens” (ibid.: 311). Thereby, it “is seen as an expression of individual liberty, but its performance and defense is in great measure dependent on participation in a group.” (Bretherton 2015: 2) Further, insurgent citizenship entails a specific temporality, as

insurgence describes a process that is an acting counter, a counterpolitics, that destabilizes the present and renders it fragile, defamiliarizing the coherence with which it usually presents itself. Insurgence is not a top-down imposition of an already scripted future. It bubbles up from the past in places where present circumstances seem propitious for an irruption. In this view, the present is like a bog: leaky, full of holes, gaps, contradictions, and misunderstandings. (Holston 2008: 34)

Embodiment - Engagement

Citizenship is understood as a legal status, as a language and, further, as engagement and participation. This conception commonly derives from the Aristotelian point of view who defined a citizen as a man who “becomes entitled to participate in office, deliberative or juridical” and therefore has “the knowledge and ability both to rule and to be ruled” (Aristotle: 32f). Against this backdrop “citizenship is participation in government, in the taking of decisions that affect our lives” which is why the position of the citizen in relation to the state (or the polity) “becomes crucial in an assessment of the quality of his or her citizenship under a given political regime.” (Lazar 2013: 5) Organizing the common life is not restricted to “the domain of law and public policy, it includes also the vast array of institutions and programs that structure our life together” (Bretherton 2015: 294). Thus, citizenship activity involves to “hold accountable the institutions of society, government, and law that produce the conditions of urban life” (Holston 2008: 248). Then it is also possible to understand one's engagement as a citizen as empowerment “when a citizen's sense of an objective source of right in citizenship entails a corresponding sense of subjective power – power to change existing arrangements” (Holston 2008: 16).

Through an active engagement of persons in public space political socialization and the creation of a 'citizenship identity', takes place (Kastoryano 2002: 121. 124) According to Ortner's “modern practice theory”, “the little routines and scenarios of everyday life are embodiments and enactments of norms, values, and conceptual schemes about time, space, and the social order, so

that everyday practices endorse and reproduce these norms” (Ong 1999: 5; also see Ortner 2006). The embodiment of a politicized identity is based on the concept of freedom within Western democracies. “A 'free people' subject themselves to the law through their own participation; that is, they are 'free citizens' just insofar as they have a voice in their form of self-government.” (Tully 2002: 154) Participation in institutions in order to self-rule is central in this understanding of becoming a 'free people', individually as well as collectively (ibid.: 154f). This resonates with Ong's understanding of cultural citizenship as a process of 'self-making and being-made', as “becoming a citizen depends on how one is constituted as a subject who exercises or submits to power relations” (1996: 80).

Rose uses the term 'self-fashioning' by Clifford Geertz in order to describe self-making mechanisms as part of a complex of control mechanisms as a crucial governmental technique (Geertz 1973: 49). This is, of course, in direct connection to Foucault and his notion of “techniques of the self” which he developed in his genealogies and histories of conduct over the 19th century (ibid.: 43; also see Foucault 2005). These techniques entail practices of self-governing (Rose 1999: 43). However, besides the mode of conduct one imposes on oneself, “free citizenship is an identity that members acquire through exchanging reasons in public dialogues over how and by whom political power is exercised. 'Having a voice' in these activities of discussion and negotiation generates bonds of solidarity and a sense of belonging to the political association.” (Tully 2002: 156) Also Appadurai emphasizes that “voice is a critical matter [...] since it engages the question in dissensus.” (2013: 183) According to him “even the most apparently 'traditional' cultures, such as the Fang of West Africa, we cannot take consensus for granted” (Appadurai 2013.: 184). He argues that it is “through the specific forms of verbal and material ritual, through 'performances' and metaphors arranged and enacted in specific ways, real groups actually produce the kinds of consensus on first principles that they may seem to take simply for granted.” (ibid.) Against this backdrop, Appadurai understands

voice as a cultural capacity, not just as a generalized and universal democratic virtue, because for voice to take effect, it must engage in social, political, and economic issues in terms of ideologies, doctrines, and norms that are widely shared and credible, even by the rich and powerful. [...] Furthermore, voice must be expressed in terms of actions and performances that have local cultural force. (Appadurai 2013: 186)

Thus, voice is a cultural capacity enabling the creation of a status quo of a group entangled with norms and behavioral directives and a significant practice, especially within forms of political organization which are grounded on the exchange of ideas, opinions, and concerns. According to Rose, “the relation between expertise and its subjects [...] is not (or not only) one of domination, but one of subjectification, of 'making up' persons whose relations to themselves are configured within a grid of norms and knowledges.” (1999: 92) As a result, “modern individuals are not merely 'free

to choose', but obliged to be free, to understand and enact their lives in terms of choice. They must interpret their past and dream their future as outcomes of choices made or choices still to make.” (ibid.: 87) Thus, as a “politics of life”, “the project of responsible citizenship has been fused with individuals' projects for themselves. What began as a social norm here ends as a personal desire.” (ibid.: 88)

Novel Spaces of Political Action

Even though the nation-state is still the main reference point for many in terms of political community, this link is increasingly called into question. Based on the recent wave of globalisation and its effects on markets, populations as well as the role of technological innovations, “the difference between having and not having citizenship is becoming blurred”, and the entitlements are “increasingly challenged by deterritorialized claims beyond the state” (Ong 2005: 697). Therefore, “rights and entitlements once associated with citizens are becoming dispersed among populations who can include non-citizens.” (ibid.) Thus, the role of the citizen is substantively changing, “as governing shifts its target from the social and collective management of the population (biopolitics) to a focus on individual self-governing (ethico-politics).” (Ong 2005: 698) Thus, she also assesses an activation of citizens' capacities based on an rationality of individual freedom, “to make calculated choices as a free self-maximizing individual.” (ibid.)

On the one hand, government is no longer interested in taking care of every citizen, but wants them to act as a free subject who self-actualizes and relies on autonomous action to confront globalized insecurities (Ong 2005: 698). On the other hand, citizenship practices, as in my ethnography, evolve around the “care for 'the other', referred to as 'other-regard', a form of civic consciousness that crucially involves taking the interests of fellow-citizens into account and, by doing so, making it possible to live together in the 'community of fate'.” (Perczynski 2000: 162) This opposes the liberal conception of citizenship which is mainly a “status of the individual” allowing individuals “to pursue their own conceptions of the good life, as long as they do not hinder others' similar pursuits” and receiving in return “minimal responsibilities, which revolve primarily around keeping the state running, such as paying taxes” (Lazar 2013: 1). The “emphasis on rights” has lead to a neglect in responsibilities, as Mekeel observed already in 1944, it is necessary that “citizens acquire a deep and living responsibility to make democracy work.” (209) This re-responsibilization needs to forge “a democratic ideology that fires the imagination” (ibid.: 211). Nowadays, responsibilities are increasingly theorized as a prominent feature of the relation between individual and community. Thus, citizenship is “as much a capacity to act in relation to the

particular circumstances of one's environment, as well as in relation to others, as it is a 'right' conferred by the state.” (Rose 2000: 99)

The transformation from citizenship as possession to citizenship as capacity is embodied in the image of the active and entrepreneurial citizen who seeks to maximize his or her lifestyle through acts of choice, linked not so much into a homogeneous social field as into overlapping but incommensurate communities of allegiance and moral obligation. (Rose 2000: 99)

Rose argues that 'new advanced forms of liberalism' result in “the 'social state' gives way to that of the 'enabling state'.” (Rose 1999: 142) According to the logic of the market, “the autonomy of political actors is to be shaped and used to govern more economically and more effectively” (Rose 2000: 97). Within this context, the citizen is 'an entrepreneur of his or her self' and 'new urban governmentalities' seek “a new role for the political apparatus as merely one partner in government” (ibid.: 95f) Within this realm, what has been called self-making, self-fashioning or the construction of citizenship identity, the notion of citizenship games becomes important.

Citizenship games have implicit or explicit rules and citizens are created through their participation in them (Tully 1999). They further include controversial and conflictual potentials which may produce modifications and thereby innovation (Rose 2000: 97f). Therefore, they hold a high risk, as “what they demand of citizens may be refused, or reversed and redirected as a demand from citizens for a modification of the games that govern them, and through which they are supposed to govern themselves.” (ibid.: 100) This is as the citizen is not an isolated individual and “selfish atom of the free market”, but “made responsible for his or her fate as well as for that of family, kin and neighbours.” (ibid.: 166, 98) The latter is of great importance, as it distinguishes relational citizenship from neoliberal conceptions of capitalizing on every aspect of human life.

This notion of relational citizenship is shaped through commitment and “a capacity to act in relation to the particular circumstances of one's environment, as well as in relation to others” (Rose 2000: 99). This means that it is about a 'politics of the minor', everyday actions in the present “which may connect up and destabilize larger circuits of power.” (ibid.: 100) As the new reference point serves the community, which “is not fixed and given but locally and situationally constructed”, bear transformative potentials of becoming, and initiate processes of citizen formation “necessary for the active construction of an ethical life.” (Rose 1999: 176f; 191; 195)

The citizen is to enact his or her democratic obligations as a form of consumption [...] In these contemporary 'post-political' games of citizenship, and in the new expectations and hopes attached to the ethical comportment of citizens, new agonistic possibilities open up. It is in this respect that we can see, in the new urban activism, the signs of a new radical politics of urban citizenship. (Rose 2000: 108)

Against the backdrop of a general “disenchantment with representative democracy at the local level and the invention of new forms of accountability” (Rose 2000: 107), Rose situates these new forms of citizenship games on “the micro-moral territory of the community, and the emergence of new

games of citizenship that operate in terms of the relations between community and subjectivity, between collective responsibilities and the ethic of personal obligation.” (ibid.: 108)

Historical Trajectory

Catalonia

It was already on my very first day in Catalonia, when I was introduced to the Catalan wish for independence. My flat mate was an outspoken *independentista*, and he explained to me the issue at stake and its circumstances. I realized that the conflict between the autonomous region of Catalonia and the central government of Spain is more complicated than usually represented in the media, and goes far back in time. I could have written a whole Master's thesis about the desire for self-determination and self-government, an unusual and dynamic understanding of nationalism, and a commitment to break away from a fascist past and cultural oppression. However, I decided to concentrate on the municipalist movement in Barcelona which does not make the question of independence an item of their political agenda. Nevertheless, as the political context and atmosphere in Catalonia is heavily affected by this issue, it would be careless to drop it without mentioning. Therefore, I will give a short overview on the historic and socio-political development regarding the Catalan independence movement. In the course of this part, I will depict historic, cultural and economic reasons for the tensions between the Spanish central government and the autonomous region of Catalonia. Thereby, I will describe the narratives and counter-narratives dominating regional and national political discourses, especially in the media.

The Catalan people have been described as a nation-without-a-state (Clua 2015: 64, Clua 2014b: 80). Although the country of Catalonia is part of the Spanish nation-state, there are a lot of Catalans who do not *feel* part of it. Therefore it can be said, that attempts by the Spanish state to create a shared sentiment of a nation within its territory have failed (Clua 2015: 64). As a result, Catalan independence movement grew stronger and gained more and more popular support (ibid.: 67). After years of hidden plebiscites, the conflict between Catalonia and Spain intensified and culminated on 1st October 2017, when Catalan people decided to hold a referendum whether or not to stay part of Spain (UZ 2017). The images of Spanish police forces following violent lines of action against Catalan people, made the conflict even more visible internationally (Sills/Duarte 2017; Schreiber 2017). The day of the referendum was followed by mass participation in a general strike and further demonstrations (Stobart 2017). As a reaction, the Spanish central government - then constituted by a minority government of the conservative Partido Popular (PP) – activated,

with the help of the neoliberal conservative party Ciudadanos (C's), Article 155 which resulted in the proclamation of the state of emergency, the degradation of elected representatives of the Generalitat and the detention of Catalan officials as political prisoners (Publico 2017; Streck 2018; UZ 2017; Montaña 2017). Afterwards, King Felipe VI defended the actions subsequent to the activation of Article 155 (Naiz 2017). Thus, many people throughout Spain felt reminded of “an authoritarian history” and “that the censorship and prohibitions that took place under Franco were returning” (Stobart 2017).

The Relation between Catalonia and Spain

The Kingdom of Catalonia existed with an own constitution and parliament (“which tied the monarch to ruling through agreement with the propertied classes”) dominating the Western Mediterranean in the Middle Ages (Stobart 2017). In 1137 Catalonia and Aragon unified under a common crown and created the Kingdom of Aragon, in which each country preserved their own self-governing institutions, identity and autonomy (Stobart 2017; Llobera 2004: 22). Although the national sentiment among Catalan people developed with buoyancy in the second half of 19th century, its existence can be traced back to the mid-13th century (Llobera 2004: 15), when “the development of a common market system, cultural community and language meant Catalonia was becoming an early nation-state” (Stobart 2017). After turbulent periods with social conflicts, famines and wars, Catalonia was incorporated by the Castilian monarchy through marriage (Llobera 2004: 41). The union of Crowns of Aragon and Castile was originally meant as a dynastic affair and not expected to expand into a union of states – it was intended to maintain own institutions (ibid.: 68). Nevertheless, the Crown of Aragon was already weakened at that time and the fact that Castile experienced successful conquests overseas only benefited its hegemony (Llobera 2004: 69). Increasingly, Castile tried to enact its power by laws and establishing political institutions, also trying to initiate a process of unification resulting in territorial secession which in turn was successful for some countries (as the Netherlands) and failed for others (as Catalonia) (ibid.). In 1714, Catalonia lost the War of the Spanish Succession and forfeited its autonomy (Aragoneses 2015: 45; Kremnitz 2015: 68). Within 1707 and 1716 Philip V. created the Spanish unified state with the Decretos de Nueva Planta (Kremnitz 2015: 68). The new state was based on the rights of the Castilian conqueror which suppressed Catalan language from the public, with the result that Catalan was prohibited on the telephone still in 1896 (ibid.: 69). In the 19th century Basque and Catalan forces attempted to create plural reforms with Madrid which ended in the collapse of the First Spanish Republic (1868-84) (ibid.). Only the Second Spanish Republic (1931-39) brought a

solution for Catalonia in sight with the statute of autonomy of Nuria which made Catalan co-official (Gimeno Ugalde 2015: 12, 16; Kremnitz 2015: 69). It was during the 'revolutionary interlude' in 1936, when anarchist forces came to power in Catalonia (Llobera 2004: 34), that a Catalan state was proclaimed within the Federal Republic of Spain by Lluís Companys (Fabregat 2004: 117f). After General Francisco Franco won the Spanish Civil War, Companys was executed by his forces (after he was caught and handed over to France by the Nazis) (Stobart 2017; Llobera 2004: 4). Decades of cultural repression followed, as Franco prohibited the practice of Catalan language and cultural traditions whatsoever and tried “to wipe out the disease called separatism” (Llobera 2004: 18f). Catalan people have not forgotten its troubled past with the Spanish state ever since which is why there is the wish to create their own state (Frenzel 2017; Montaña 2017; Llobera 2004: 3f).

La Transición

Franco's project to build a nation proper to the Spanish state was based on the national-catholicism of Acción Española and the fascism of the Falange (Saz Campos 2014). These two ideologies were hegemonic during the dictatorship and excluded any form of political plurality or other political cultures (Pèrez Ledesma/Saz Campos 2014: 9f). However, this does not mean that political activity was entirely homogenized and unified among Spanish citizens during Franco's rule. On the contrary, everyday experiences and practices of Spaniards were also characterised by the “capacity of survival” and “permeability, indifference and rejection of the political discourses of the regime” (ibid.: 13). Accordingly, student and neighborhood movements constituted a crucial force for the end of the dictatorship and laid the ground for a democratic culture and the transformation to democracy (Toboso Sánchez 2014).

La Transición commonly denominates the transformation from dictatorship to democracy that took place after Francisco Franco's death in Spain. Scholars often refer to the period from 1975 to 1981 and the peaceful implementation of the political democracy as “a wonder of political engineering” (Tilly 2007: 156). Aretxaga has called this “the power of democracy as a fetish” which is based on “forgetting the traces that linked the Spanish democracy to the former regime (its nature as a reform of it)”, especially since democracy constitutes “an object of desire” as a project of modernity (Aretxaga 2000: 48). Further, she argues that “democracy became under the socialist government the legitimizing discourse for a wide variety of authoritarian state practices” (ibid.). Her observation is affirmed by the counter-narrative among Spanish citizens which became increasingly strong in the past years posing that Francoism has not vanished (Morán 2015: 25), but is firmly established in the constitution, jurisdiction and bureaucratic institutions in Spain. It is often

argued, that in order to maintain a status quo, elites within representative democracies attempt to have a good grip on civil society and minimise claims for democratization (Tilly, 2007: 40; Paley 2002: 475). Before Franco died on 20th November 1975, he appointed King Juan Carlos as his successor. Moreover, the state was built on the basis of existing Francoist structures supervised by former general secretary of the Francoist movement Adolfo Suárez González who became first Prime Minister appointed by King Juan Carlos (Kremnitz 2015: 69). Additionally, even before the new constitution was adopted in 1978, persons who were responsible for crimes during the Civil War and the dictatorship had been granted amnesty (Frenzel 2017). This was done in order to not risk another Civil War and provide peace. However, it also means that the majority of political crimes during that time have been never legally redeemed and neither appear to be soon (Frenzel 2017; baskenkultur.info). Further, many officials and members of Franco's party and institutions – even if they had committed war crimes – remained in the bureaucratic system (Frenzel 2017). In this regard, the conservative PP is often considered as the direct continuation of the Francoist Alianza Popular. Moreover, in the current system, the chief justice is elected according to party membership and exchanged every legislative period (*ibid.*).

Even though La Transición is often depicted as a peaceful process, there were approximately 500 death victims (Kremnitz 2015: 70). Further, in 1981 Officer Tejero of the Guardia Civil crashed the parliament attempting a coup d'état, which was stopped by King Juan Carlos who publicly opted for democracy (*ibid.*). Therefore, although the actual end of La Transición is associated with the Socialist Felipe González Márquez being elected as new Prime Minister in 1982, it seemed the dictatorship had not fully disappeared from Spain (*ibid.*).

The Constitution and Statutes of Autonomy

The new constitution was adopted in 1978 and the Spanish state was organized through 17 autonomous regions with own parliaments which do not share all the same rights (Stobart 2017; Kremnitz 2015: 69). However, this was only achieved by massive demonstrations in Catalonia claiming “We want the statute!” (Stobart 2017; Kremnitz 2015: 70). In the 1980s the claim for independence was not a position of the masses (Kremnitz 2015: 70). On the contrary, Catalan people believed that the dictatorship was overcome in solidarity, so they wished for autonomy and hoped that democratization will solve societal problems with time (*ibid.*). Catalonia regained their institutions “and the Generalitat gained jurisdiction over health, education, social security, and cultural policies” (Stobart 2017). However, it “was not allowed to collect and redistribute its own taxes” (Stobart 2017). Thus, the Statute of Autonomy and the possibility to develop an own civil

law was received, but in turn the Catalans had to abandon the idea of a republic and accept the monarchy as well as the union of the Spanish nation (Bauer 2017).

The Spanish constitution has also been described as a constitutional pact, but not between the central government and the regions, but between Francoist elites open to reform and the anti-Francoist opposition willing to negotiate (Nagel 2015: 18). These oppositional ideological and territorial positions are anchored in the constitution of 1978 (Ribó 2017). As the constitution has only experienced two alterations in 40 years, it is said that it has lost its connection with the societal reality (Bauer 2017). The Spanish society has democratized rapidly and it was thought that political institutions and jurisdiction would do so adequately (ibid.). In spite of the plurality of cultures living within the Spanish territory, the constitution does not take this social reality into account and considers it a contradiction to the indivisibility of the Spanish state (Aragoneses 2015: 46). Against this backdrop, especially the PP defends a constitutional patriotism which understands minorities' nationalism as ethnic and the Spanish constitutional patriotism as open and liberal (Nagel 2015: 18).

Developments since 2006 – The Statute of Autonomy under Attack

Ever since 2010 the independence movement increasingly gained supporters. In 2006, a reformed Catalan Statute of Autonomy was approved and passed by the then Socialist government (Stobart 2017). At that time the popular support for PP was low, so in order to mobilize reactionary votes, Mariano Rajoy collected signatures against the Catalan Autonomy Statute throughout Spain and filed an objection to the Spanish Constitutional Court (Bauer 2017; Montaña 2017; Nagel 2015: 20). The Statute was heavily altered throughout the years (still under the Socialist government) and “left massively truncated by Spain's Constitutional Court” (Stobart 2017; Montaña 2017). These “serious cuts and amendments” referred to “progressive laws conflicting with the right-wing agenda of the PP [...] against energy poverty, fracking and evictions as well as reforms promoting gender equality, social security, taxation on nuclear energy and banks” (Montaña 2017). Altogether, more than 32 laws and regulations that were passed by the Generalitat were rejected by the Spanish central government (UZ 2017). Since 2006 the Catalan government issued 18 times requests for dialogue and political negotiation, and was always dismissed (Montaña 2017). Further, anti-Catalan propaganda mobilized ultra right-wing forces throughout the country resulting in acts of violence against Catalan people (Montaña 2017; Spanish Radicals 2.11.17).

The repeal of the Statute of Autonomy resulted in a mass demonstration with 1-1,5 million participants in Barcelona (Kremnitz 2015: 71). Catalans felt “a desire to make policy changes, gain greater local governance” and therefore the so-called *processism* is a development mobilized by

civil society, as independence was not an important issue in the Generalitat before their massive participation (Kraus 2015: 60). Since 2010 the soberanista movement organizes massive demonstrations on 11th September (La Diada, Catalonia's national day) (Stobart 2017). When the Catalan right-wing politicians of CiU (Convergència I Unió) saw the extent of civic mobilization, it decided to appropriate the claim for independence (ibid.). Artur Mas, the leader of the neoliberal conservative party, saw an opportunity to overshadow the corruption scandals within his own party (which are comparably severe as the ones of PP on national level) and its neoliberal austerity policies (Bauer 2017; Pascual Cortés 2017; Velasco 2017; Albiach/Porta 2015). However, even though it appears as right-wing conservatives are hegemonic in Catalonia, the driving force of pro-independence politics are left-wing parties such as ERC (Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya) and the anticapitalist CUP (Candidatura d'Unitat Popular), the latter being responsible for the removal of Mas and the appointment of Carles Puigdemont as new president of Catalonia in 2016 (Stobart 2017).

The Independence Movement since 2010

National identity is based on expressing and representing difference – the fewer ethnic features there are, the bigger they have to be presented (Llobera 2004: 50). Crucial to the construction of a national sentiment is a feeling of familiarity and belonging based on common roots, traditions and memories, and territory (ibid.: 5, 46ff). Thus, Catalan ethnicity and political identity were combined via the construction of a common nation and citizenship other than the Spanish one (Clua 2014b: 80). However, the country has historically been a receptory poblation, because of its geographical location and the need of workforce due to its industrialisation (Clua 2014a: 36). Therefore, Catalonia experienced multiple intra- and international migration flows – “between the 1950s and 1970s over a million and a half Andalusians, Murcians, and Galicians had settled in Catalonia, attracted by a new wave of industrialization” (Stobart 2017; Candel 1965). Currently, international migration has become very strong, especially from Morocco, Pakistan or the Philippines (Oficina Municipal de Dades/City Hall of Barcelona: 11). Thus, the question how to create a common society based on a concept of bilinguistic integration and plurality is important (Clua 2014a: 38). As a result, an official discourse of inclusive civic Catalan identity emerged (ibid.) based on the statement coined by Jordi Pujol (CiU), “who lives and works in Catalonia and wants to be [Catalan]” can be (Stobart 2017). Although the third wave migrants come from totally different linguistic backgrounds, by modern state technologies – like promoting Catalan as a national language through school education, mass media asf. – newly arrived learn Catalan language more

rapidly (Clua 2014a: 38). Nowadays, other aspects of difference may concern more, like skin colour or religious beliefs (ibid.). This is why a people cannot consider their self-understanding as a people as a given, but need to continuously renegotiate and reinterpret it in respect to current circumstances (Llobera 2004: 12; also see Burgen 2018).

Thus, the *soberanista* movement has not only become increasingly popular since 2010, but also underwent changes in its official discourse. New to the procesismo is that Catalan political identity is now less connected to a traditional cultural narrative that argues its distinction by an ethno-linguistic approach, but more with the concept of citizenship and political participation (Clua 2014b: 81). It shifted towards a more inclusive propaganda that prominently positions concepts of 'good life' in its discourse (ibid.: 80f). Through the *soberanista* movement people are referring to their distinguished national identity as Catalan people, but are going beyond that by expressing their desire for political and social change in general (Clua 2014a: 39). Political participation and democratization are now being called for under the slogan 'Right to Decide' (*Derecho a Decidir*), a claim that goes beyond the call for independence based on ethnic and linguistic difference, and draws attention to the wish of Catalan people to regenerate a seemingly sick political system and to bring about social change (Clua 2014b.: 81). Against this backdrop, independence movement (re-)activates new political actors with differing political ideas and motivations, regardless of their social background and political ideology (Clua 2014a: 38f; Clua 2014b: 87). Thus, one can find among the movement all shades of *feeling* Catalan and supporters who may be not in favour of independence, but are defending the right to vote (Clua 2014b: 96). Beyond that, the Catalan nationalist discourse is stimulated by Spain's refusal to accept or at least talk about multiple national identities within its territory (ibid.: 82). As the Spanish state exposes a regression in social and civil rights (ibid.: 94), Catalan "desire for statehood" (Aretxaga 2003: 394) is due to the wish to manage one's own resources (being it cultural or economic capital) on the one hand, and to the necessity to govern one's own body and mind (material and symbolic capital).

In this regard, as will be clear in the next chapter, ideological proximity to the 15M movement in 2011/12 can be identified. For the *soberanista* movement shares the same central claim for democratization from the bottom up. Its claim for the Right to Decide evokes similar hopes and desires for civic participation and democratic renewal as 15M (Clua 2014b: 93). Against this backdrop, the critique of the events in Catalonia since 1st October 2017 by Manuela Carmena, who became mayor of Madrid as a result of the municipalist movement since 15M, is representative for the municipal movement's standpoint. As a former judge, she confirmed that the referendum did not meet any legal conditions and was thus illegal, however, she stated that a Head of State needs the ability to listen to the necessities of all social groups within a territory and the capacity to

engage in dialogue (Europa Press 2017). Carmena stated that “the law is not the appropriate solution to face political problems” (ibid.). Therefore, instead of pursuing a politics of confrontation, what is necessary is changing the political culture towards a politics of recognition, dialogue and encounter (ibid.).

15M

The global post-2010 social movements, such as the Arab Spring, Occupy! or 15M, had in common that they expressed discontent with their local political systems. Social movement are “mobilized networks of groups which, based on a collective identity, participate in collective action to bring about social change mainly by means of protest.” (Rucht/Neidhardt 2002: 9) In Spain, 15M gathered ordinary citizens occupying public spaces such as Plaza del Sol in Madrid and Plaça Catalunya in Barcelona in 2011 claiming “Lo llaman democracia pero nunca ha sido” (Amorós N.N.) Their indignation was addressed at social injustice, at their lives being increasingly under the dictation of financial markets, and at Spanish politicians endangering the mere existence of people by pushing a vast amount of mortgage owners into an existence with life-long debt. The fall of the Lehman Brothers in September 2008 had had strong effects on the Spanish economy. Comparably depended on the construction and real estate business as in the U.S. After the crash, the already existing labour precariat increased and the Spanish welfare state failed and Spanish people in jeopardy (Rocafort/Medialdea 2013: 6). As being part of the European Union, Spain opted for implementing austerity measures in order to fulfil its national but more importantly international obligations (Montanyà 2013: 18). As a result, the Spanish government announced cutting the salary of officials, altering the retirement age and the importance of constitutional protection of creditors while increasing public debt (ibid.). Further, it implemented a range of labour reforms which diminished historical wins of workers' mobilization, as the collective agreement system, the minimum wage and the exit package (ibid.: 19). At the same time there were financial cutbacks in education and health system as well as other public services (ibid.).

Based on an shared experience of “deprivation” and “dissatisfaction” these problems were politicized by citizens as they were not considered “as self-caused nor as a matter of individual fate” and, thus, resulted in “a sense of community and solidarity” (Rucht/Neidhardt 2002: 9ff) The occupations on the public squares functioned as inscriptions and enactments into space proposing another way of living and doing politics (Greenberg 2014: 68). These propositions challenged a form of representative democracy denominated as 'old' which is perceived as being constituted by a political elite, the *casta política*. In Spain people were accustomed with the fact that there was a

political elite – through the monarchy, the church, and Franco's dictatorship, and it did not change through the implementation of democracy in the 1970s. However, with the extreme rise of unemployment, especially among the young, a reduction of welfare benefits and other alterations (Corsín/Estalella 2011: 20), a lot of Spanish people came to understand that their politicians were taking decisions rather on behalf of the interests of a certain economic and political elite than on behalf of the citizenry. This political elite seemed increasingly detached from the everyday lives of common Spanish citizens, and were found on both sides of the political spectrum. As a result, so-called “ingroup/outgroup concepts” (Rucht/Neidhardt 2002: 12) were reinforced, as the opposition between political elite and the citizenry was strengthened. Ever since Spain had transformed into democracy either PP or PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español) governed with absolute majority (Cué 2013). This so-called *bipartidismo* was connected to an 'old' way of doing politics – a politics which was hierarchical and did not know the necessity for dialogue and mutual recognition (Barcia/Gil 2015). Therefore, what had started as an economic crisis rapidly evolved into a social one questioning the Spanish political system in general and defined as the democratic crisis (Barcia/Gil 2015; Rocafort/Medialdea 2013: 6; della Porta 2013: 81).

As a democratic crisis, the relation between state and citizen and decision-making itself was put in the focus of the attention. Spanish politicians were “falling short of democratic ideals” (Paley 2002: 471) as they showed insufficient capabilities and non-existing willingness to deal with the consequences of the financial crisis in a way that was beneficial for Spanish citizens, were highly corrupt and lacked accountability (Bauer 2017; Público 2009; El País 2009). The corrupt practices of Spanish politicians were publicly known for a long time, but became increasingly problematic, as the “dominant market economic form as self-interested individualism” (Vasavi 2014: 26) started to seriously endanger the mere existence of people. Thus, the protest camps built transversal physical spaces of encounter, where the negotiation of new political visions took place and gave way for new meanings and practices of democracy.

Emergence and Practices of 15M

15M was connected to the global justice movement, anarchist movements, neighbourhood associations and squatted and non-squatted social centres (Fominaya 2015: 150ff; Tilly/Tarrow 2015: 18; Feixa et al. 2014: 91; Corsín/Estalella 2011: 21). Thus, instead of understanding the emergence of 15M as a singular event, I will consider its emergence and the actions put into practice during the occupations in terms of “movement continuity” in order to depict its connectedness to an ongoing activity of social movements in a variety of environments (Fominaya

2015: 149). This is opposed to most descriptions of political protests as spontaneous and unexpected. These concentrate rather on new participants who join the movement, than on the groups and networks of people who bring along their experiences as activists and know how to apply it in crucial moments (ibid.: 142f). Activists and political actors usually pursue their respective interests for years trying to survive their cause waiting for moments of high mobilization and intensity. Therefore, the perspective of movement continuity provides fruitful insights on how collective identity and movement culture keeps on existing and developing in period of relative latency or abeyance (ibid.: 147). According to Fominaya, “autonomous movements in Spain have long rejected the participation of political parties and trade unions in their autonomous spaces” (2015: 145). They introduced 'an open-structured network' which did not serve as a platform for organizations. It rather gave possibility to each participant of assemblies and commissions to take action individually, independent from any organizational background (Feixa et al. 2014: 91). The global justice movement, for instance, developed an increasing desire to integrate 'ordinary citizens' in order to go beyond established activists circles (Fominaya 2015: 144, 150). 15M's attested lack of traditional political structures, the absence of trade unions and political parties is “a result of their refusal to label or identify their groups by recognizable names” (ibid.: 143). Previous autonomous networks already held up internal organizational principles of horizontality, emphasising self-organization, direct or participatory democracy and diversity (ibid.: 145). In Spain, social centres and neighbourhood associations existed since the 1970s (cf. ibid.: 149f, 153; Corsín/Estalella 2014: 3; Toboso Sánchez 2014: 6) offering spaces of collaboration with social movements (Fominaya 2015: 155). These assemblies increasingly moved from specific social spaces out to the public, which served for a better encounter with citizens (ibid.). In 2011, the increasing numbers of people affected by the financial crisis as well as the violent methods of the police towards the protesters during the occupations resulted in mobilization and more citizens joining the protest. Thus, there was “a shift to the local” towards activating ordinary citizens' participation. As a result, 15M had been called also a citizens' movement.

Discussing the occupation of public space in this paper, I follow Rovisco and Ong in defining public space by its “visibility and accessibility and [as] a physical location one can walk into” (2016: 4). Reclaiming public space for a better encounter between citizens was already a crucial claim of *Consulta Social Europea* project (Fominaya 2015: 155). The occupations of squares can be traced back, for example, to *Plataforma 0,7*, a campaign of solidarity in 1994 that took place in several cities throughout the country (Feixa et al. 2014: 87f). In Madrid they had 30 tents at the beginning in the Paseo de Prado. After one week there were 500 tents and over 100,000 people gathered (Fominaya 2015: 155). This movement along with *Cumbre del banco mundial en*

Barcelona (2001), *Protestas contra la guerra de Iraq* (2003), *Movimiento estudiantil anti-Bolonia* (2008/09) and *La huelga general en España* (2010), are highlighted and conceptualized by Feixa et al. as 'proto-movements of indignation' (2014: 88, 91f, 94). All of these movements already contained aspects of political action that developed 'new forms of resistance' (ibid.: 88). An important characteristic of these practices of resistance is that they took place pacifically. This was an important learning applied during 15M, as their actions were thereby legitimised by the authorities and the citizenry. It also means that radical and revolutionary discourse was silenced during 15M, as they were marginalized as incorrect political behaviour beforehand (cf. ibid.: 98).

Online Political Action

Post-2010 protests such as 15M occurred at a time when the internet had become a device for the masses. Because of the significant role of mass communication in nearly every sphere of everyday life for about half the people on earth, scholars already presumed that public space was about to dissolve, as politics would be solely mediated via communication technology (Rovisco/Ong 2016: 3). Occupations of public spaces proved this thesis wrong and emphasised its significance for political action. However, new technological devices did have a big influence on the course of the protest taking place (ibid.: 5). How did it develop? In the 1990s the global justice movement pioneered using the World Wide Web as an activist mean. Nevertheless, back then, digital activism "was strongly countercultural in character", as it understood itself as opposed to mainstream culture creating an alternative form of communication (Gerbaudo 2016: 38). The internet was perceived as a space to build a counter-cultural Utopia by a small group of people. Nowadays, it became rather "a social space contested among different social forces: corporations, governments, social movements, and ordinary people." (ibid.) Thus, digital and popular culture are now thickly interwoven, as the internet became a significant part of mainstream society. Against this backdrop, protesters recognized an opportunity to use new media technology for their cause. They used their digital competence "to construct a political discourse appealing to a mass of Internet users, largely unpoliticised and disorganised yet heavily affected by economic inequality and political disenfranchisement." (Gerbaudo 2016: 38) Thus, e.g. *Democracia Real Ya* called for participation through text, photographic and video posts on Facebook and protesters from the protest camps used hashtags such as #nonosvamos ("we don't go"), #yeswecamp, #spanishrevolution, #notenemosmiedo ("we have no fear"), and #tomalaplaza ("take the square") to spread their messages (Gerbaudo 2016: 48; cf. della Porta 2013: 101). Thereby a virtual public was created that exists next to the physical one. This marks "a symbolic or cultural shift, informed by the populist

spirit of this protest wave” understanding the atomized internet user “as a contemporary equivalent to the 'common man' of traditional populism” (Gerbaudo 2016: 37). As a result, citizens were mobilized who formerly did not participate in social movements.

Nevertheless, the protest campers did not only use new media technology to transmit their messages but also old-fashioned ways such as self-published newspapers (e.g. madrid15m). The creation of alternative media is a common and usual anarchist practice. It is not only used to inform activists and the broader public, but also “part of the process of building alternative worlds” and “alternative publics” (Frenzel et al. 2016: 69f). The proposition of another way of living through protest practices is therefore translated into physical/offline as well as virtual/online spaces separated from the status quo creating solutions and forms of social reproduction through their daily practices in and beyond the protest camps (ibid.: 70f).

Innovating Political Practices

Participants of 15M engaged in a continuous process of intense contestation over which political actions should be practised and which not, and drew on traditions of deliberative practices of the squatting, feminist, environmental and anti-militarist movements (Fominaya 2015: 151; della Porta 2013: 187f). Practices which have been usually located at the “periphery of squatter action”, such as occupying public or non-public spaces, were situated “onto centre stage in the country's most prominent public space[s]” (Corsín/Estalella 2011: 21). 15M manifested as a contested process, which also signified to exclude groups of traditional left-wing political actors which were perceived to slow down the development of deliberative practices (Fominaya 2015: 147, 151). Thus, scholars described spatial and political practices during 15M as innovative as they went beyond political boundaries combining different political vocabularies and spatial modifications, their self-made character and the enactment of autonomy of individual speech engaging in collective action (Corsín/Estalella 2011: 19). Furthermore, scholars and activists focus on the do-it-yourself character and the animation of neighbourhood life in their description of the occupations (ibid.). By mid-June 2011, “consensus-oriented assemblies decided it was time to move from the central squares to the neighborhoods (barrios).” (della Porta 2013: 60)

The occupiers at *Plaza del Sol* in Madrid set up a camp within a short time and brought immediately three assemblies into being: the Infrastructures Taskforce, the Communication Group and the Food Commission; within the next days and weeks these were supplemented by a variety on commissions in areas such as “education, gender, Internet, legal issues, politics [and] economics” (Fominaya 2015: 151). There was even a Respect Commission that was in charge of ensuring that

“discussions and negotiations within the camp were carried out in a spirit of cordiality and consensus” (Corsín/Estalella 2014: 151). Simultaneously, the commissions transformed the plaza in a “city in miniature” wiring it with electricity and the like (ibid.). Further, they “established working areas with reception desks, tables, chairs and libraries” and even a nursery (which “provoked responses” from neighbours, as there was a lack of nurseries in the neighbourhood) (ibid.). Corsín and Estalella argue, that the “structural frailty of the camp” resulted in a “radical exposure of a notion of democratic organization” and thereby revealed democracy as a circuitry of do-it-yourself-actions and patchwork of craft and handicraft politics” (2011: 19f).

Through the occupations and the shared engagement in crafting a common and contested imagination of the future and political vision, participants also opposed the economisation of human interaction by political and spatial practices of 15M. Hart argues that “much of modern ideology emphasizes how hard it is to be both self-interested and mutual. [...] Twentieth-century civilization erected strong barriers between each of us as a subjective personality and society as an impersonal object” (2015: 202). Therefore, he pledges for the creation of new forms of institutions which enable and implement an democratization of economy (cf. Hart 2011: 189). The implemented programs of Spanish politicians, which were not in favour of the citizensry but rather of financial institutions, made clear that “it was no longer obvious where the levers of democratic power are to be located, since the global explosion of money, markets and telecommunications has severely exposed the limitations of national frameworks of economic management.” (ibid.: 186) What has been brought forth was “the subordination of political power to that of money” and the necessity “of developing institutions capable of guaranteeing a plural economy within a democratic framework” (Hart 2011: 189). It is against this backdrop - the deprivations, inequalities, the concentration of power and its linkages to political representation - which made it hard for people to consider their political system as democratic (Rocafort/Medialdea 2013: 6) and economical equitable. In the pursue of something new people took it to the streets, as “government by and for the people is incompatible with entrenched social inequality in the form of political privilege” (Hart 2015: 203). The claim for a social infrastructure taking human needs into account and the creation of political practices of support and conviviality can be understood to reinforce social as well as economic ties and make them more explicit (Vasavi 2014: 26). By a revitalisation of direct encounter with each other, participants of 15M sought out to revitalise the social in politics and defend human dignity. This is illustrated by one of the most visible and significant political practices during 15M, namely *asamblearismo*.

The Assembly as Site for a New Political Culture

The political landscape of 15M was described as “an unfolding structure of assembly formats” (Corsín/Estalella 2014: 150). The so-called *asamblearismo* was used as a form of decision-making process and tool for the creation of consensus and political legitimacy. Within the assembly each voice was considered equal and political representation for other entities than oneself was rejected (della Porta 2013: 82). Further, the assembly constituted a space for encounter, collective reflection on shared experiences and discussion of issues of public concern (*ibid.*), such as infrastructure, working conditions and housing evictions. These debates were embedded in a broader historical context of the Spanish nation-state and global politics and carried critique on neoliberal politics, austerity measures, democracy and authoritarianism. Thereby, the assemblies initiated a process of contestation in which everyone was able to take part engaging in the collective experience to think, speak and debate. Thus, “democratic quality here is in fact measured by the possibility of elaborating ideas within discursive, open and public arenas, where citizens play an active role in identifying problems, but also in elaborating possible solutions.” (della Porta 2013: 84) Thus, “with all its imperfection and malfunctioning, the open assembly as the main decisional space for recent social movements still reflects the call for direct involvement as opposed to delegation.” (*ibid.*: 187)

How did protesters organize the assemblies? All assemblies were facilitated by “a moderator, a secretary in charge of taking minutes, someone responsible for taking turns for questions, and a group facilitating the production of consensus” (Corsín/Estalella 2014: 153f). There was a reserved space for an interpreter who would provide with sign language for the deaf (*ibid.*). However, there was also another kind of sign language used by participants “for promoting conviviality within the assembly” (*ibid.*). These hand signs indicate approval, rejection or discontent with the length of one's verbal contribution (Corsín/Estalella 2014: 153f.). In regard of spatial settings, there was a certain method to establish spaces for participants and the facilitators (*ibid.*). During the assemblies it was important to maintain a “relaxed and respectful atmosphere”, to express support to each other and produce hospitality and consensus (*ibid.*: 155). These aesthetics can be describes as both “therapeutic and ludic” (Corsín/Estalella 2014: 155). Moreover, there were also children's assemblies being hold and their results were integrated in the adult version (*ibid.*). So there was some kind of ethics tried to be implemented and participants actively worked on an agreement on how to conduct oneself in the course of the assemblies. However, to reach the aim of consensus takes a lot of time. This is why the assemblies had not been perceived as “operative or practical structures” (*ibid.*: 156). Rather it can be understood as negotiation and manifestation of a certain understanding of politics and political action. In order to give this sense of politics a form, taking minutes and drafting other documents were seen as most important in doing politics (Corsín/

Estalella 2014: 163). As “in absence of an archival record and adherence to a recognized methodology, there can be no politics” (ibid.: 164).

New Political Actors: Barcelona en Comú and the Municipalist Movement

There are certain circumstances that allowed the claims and practices of 15M to outlive the time of actual occupations. It is helpful to consider horizontal and vertical organizational logics in order to understand how they did. Vertical logics manifest in manifestos, strikes and legal proposals, as their point of departure is the idea that there is a specific place of power – a “resource” or “centre of power” - which they want to occupy (Feenstra 2015: 245). This is why vertical logics result in building parties, developing programmes and to mobilize supporters in order to gain power and implement a program (ibid.). Horizontal logics, on the other hand, manifest in demonstrations, civil disobedience, and promotion of alternative collective projects (ibid.), and do not consider the 'center of power' legitimate, these actions do not recognize the legitimacy of a government. Thus, it is not about moving within an existent institutional framework, as the legitimacy of representational structures are denied, but rather to “undermine the hegemony of existing political forces while prefiguring new types of social, economic and political relationship” based on solidarity and a sense of conviviality (Feenstra 2015: 245). Combining “a thorough mixture of utopianism and pragmatism” (della Porta 2013: 60), 15M created hybrid forms of political action through an interplay of vertical and horizontal logics (Feenstra 2015: 252).

As a pacific democratization movement, 15M did not seek to violently overthrow the existing political system, but to create spaces of democratic action. “Beyond the prefiguration of a different society, the activists already imagine that these spaces [...] are also important in the invention of alternative, but not yet imagined, futures, through what has been called a politics of becoming.” (della Porta 2013: 1; Razsa/Kurnik 2012: 252). Thereby it exposed “a much more sustained, profound and engaged critique” (Fominaya 2015: 154) of institutions that were called democratic as they were put in place during the implementation of democracy in the 1970s and 1980s. Their protest attested for the fact that the ambit of 'citizens control' (Nugent 2008: 26) was cut or limited. By conquering the public space, people were renegotiating their “relationship to a state-like polity, real or imagined” (ibid.: 24). Thereby, their actions blend into social life and “bring about new social practices which operate in part through the constitution of spaces for the creation of meaning. To the extent that they are inevitably concerned with matters of economic and social transformation, they link together economic, social and political problematics within an overarching

cultural field” (Escobar 1992: 407f). Therefore, even though the protest camps have been dissolved, the experiences, emotions and motivations that participants made during the occupations are saved in their bodies and minds. They carry them throughout their everyday lives into other spaces, as their neighbourhoods, where they foster new discursive and practical forms and bear fruit.

As a result of the hybrid forms of vertical and horizontal political practice, new political organizations and actors have formed and entered political institutions. On a national level Equo (2011), Partido X (2013) and Podemos (2014) have formed and merged. On municipal levels many new political actors throughout the country have won municipal elections, among them Barcelona en Comú in 2015. “These new political formations have erupted into the Spanish electoral arena after years of ‘street politics’” and “differ from traditional parties, in demands and promotion of new dynamics (transparency and participation) within their own party structures” (Feenstra 2015: 251). Claims of 15M are now being defended in representative institutions “as an additional strategy to foster political transformation” (ibid.) understanding that it is not possible to entirely reject the representational aspect of politics. Thus, “new parties insist that forms of participation, assemblies, or groups can be incorporated into their internal dynamics”, in order to “avoid the formation of elites, and they remain open to civil society and grassroots activists” (Feenstra 2015: 252). With the aim to change the “daily life of institutions [...] for the purpose of publicly denouncing wrongdoing or injustice” and work towards enhancing institutional processes (ibid.). Thus, “new parties insist that forms of participation, assemblies, or groups can be incorporated into their internal dynamics”, in order to “avoid the formation of elites, and they remain open to civil society and grassroots activists” (ibid.). Thereby, traditional parties are increasingly becoming delegitimized (Feenstra 2015: 254). In turn, political actors of initiatives and movements entered the institutions and are now making alliances, initiating collaborations and support corporations and agencies whose interests “coincide with those of popular movements” (Vasavi 2014: 26). Thus, 15M brought something within the political realm in Spain in motion. The process is messy, chaotic, not ideal at all, ideologically confusing at times, not convincing at others, uncertain and fragmented. However, the block of political immutability and absolutism got fissures and joints, and is slowly, very slowly, changing. Only, towards which kind of ending this transformative process leads and whether there is an ending at all, which does not mean again the instalment of another unchangeable status quo, remains left to say. However, turning to my ethnography, it is possible to have a glimpse on the efforts and attempts being made.

Origins of Barcelona en Comú

In order to understand how Barcelona en Comú is organized as a political organization, it makes sense to have a look on how it was founded. Their story of origin is relatively important, as it already introduces some of the main characteristics of the political organization. Further, as my field work took place within the first year of Barcelona en Comú being in the city hall, the foundation took place recently and their 'jump into the institution' was still prevailing. At the same time, as will be seen, even though there is an Organigram of the organization, how different levels and entities relate to and work with each other was still in the making. These characteristics of being-in-the-making are also significantly affected by the way the organization understands itself.

Barcelona en Comú started as an initiative called Guanyem Barcelona (We win Barcelona). Among my informants, people from different organisational levels of Barcelona en Comú who participated in that very first glimpses of organizational formation, were telling me their unique experiences of that time. Doing so, they transmitted a sense of volition, enthusiasm and hope. Here, I am presenting a synthesis of stories from five informants, four of activists of the assembly of Ciutat Vella and one from an activist of the municipal group (institution). The latter is 30-something anarchist who participated in squatting projects throughout his adult life and is occupied with logistics in the executive branch of Barcelona en Comú. He was among the first circles of Guanyem Barcelona. Another time I met with a sociologist of the assembly of Ciutat Vella who was also one representative of the assembly towards the district and the city hall. We met in a café behind the Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona, and he was the very first member of the assembly I ever met. A third time a member of the assembly invited me to his home, made me delicious tea and showed me youtube videos of their electoral win. The fourth interview took place in the favourite pub of a member of the assembly who was also working as a clerk in the city hall. I picked him up that day at the Ramblas, and we went for a beer and a sandwich.

“Moment zero” was in summer 2014 (Emili 2390:2424). There were different “centres of origin”, such as neighbourhood associations or PAH (Feliu 2123:2333). Around this time around 30 people started to meet and talk about whether it is the time and place for a new political project (Feliu 4177:5425). At that time, Ada Colau was the leader of PAH, and people from different backgrounds as well as from political parties started to approach her saying, “if you want this, you have this opportunity, there is this target, let's say, of people, there is like an empty gap which can be filled” (Feliu 2937:4028). Thereupon, Colau initiated a meeting with people who are the closest to her politically, mostly with people who worked with her the most (Feliu 2937:4028). Thus, “there are circles that we did”, because this is not a “personal decision”, but it is “a collective decision” (Feliu 2937:4028). In this small groups they started to think about the best political strategy to

choose, for example, whether to participate in the national or municipal elections (which were both coming up) and have different advantages and disadvantages (Feliu 2937:4028). At the beginning, some people favoured the first and others the second option more (Feliu 2937:4028). So during this first months, they were trying to evaluate which kind of political project they wanted to establish. After some months, they started to approach their contacts in social movements to see how other people would react (Feliu 4177:5425). Additionally, they did an electoral research which was concerned with "the political opportunity as context" and "the type of the vote", in order to locate where support could come from (Feliu 4177:5425). It was clear from the beginning that ICV (Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds) was decisive to participate and Podemos, which had significant success at the European level shortly before was as well interested (Feliu 4177:5425). After assessing the favourable context, the group of people started to approach the social movements again in order to ask them whether they would like to take the step of forming it together (Feliu 4177:5425). At this point, all participants knew very well up to which point their initiative can reach, but still they decided to put another condition first, to see if there is support among the general public for this undertaking (Feliu 4177:5425). If they receive 30 000 signatures from citizens within two and a half months, they will proceed with their plan, otherwise it will remain a proposal made (Feliu 4177:5425). Within one and a half months, the initiative Guanyem Barcelona had already received more signatures than they had anticipated (Feliu 4177:5425; Emili 2445:2616). One informant described this time before the municipal elections as "the most beautiful phase of all", when many people from different areas joined to self-organize in an informal and precarious manner (Emili 2965:3767). It was informal and precarious, because they had no office and met at different places each time (Emili 2965:3767). At this point they did not represent a stable institution, but a flow of people, resources and artefacts. This movement was constituted by the collective actions of a group of people targeting a common goal. According to him, most of the activists who are now part of the project joined at that time (Emili 2965:3767). Further, it was already at the time of preparations for the municipal election that roles of people within the movement soon-to-become organization were forming themselves. As participants started to situate themselves, designate for themselves their spaces of participation, a kind of separation between those of the territorial assemblies and experts in the thematic axes started to emerge (Emili 4467:5395).

At this moment, as one of the informants told me, he was sure that "a type of new organization movement could come out of this", which motivated him to join (Mateu 2861:3177). Another informant told me that at this time each meeting reached already around 2000 people with the call to create a movement (Arnau 2215:2721). It was then, when "contact was established with

the people from the neighbourhoods constructing the territorial base which later carried Barcelona en Comú to win the elections" (Arnau 2215:2721). A informant describes the making of the list of candidates, that he joined when "the municipal group was already forming" and "the candidates were coming from many citizens' platforms of 15M" where he had not participated in before (Iker 8862:11641). Therefore, the candidates from this early time were coming from social movement elites. Additionally, it is a specific characteristic of the municipalist movement in Barcelona that it is created through social movement and organizations activists early on.¹ This is not the case in every city where local initiatives emerged within the municipal movement in the Spanish territory (field notes²). However, my informant emphasised that everyone could have candidated in that period of time, also him (Iker 8862:11641). The only thing to do would have been "to raise the hand in order to offer himself" (Iker 8862:11641). This possibility was real to him, which is why he did not have the impression that the candidates were "a private clan where the offices were appointed, where they divided the work among themselves, a closed group of friends" (Iker 8862:11641). However, "my candidature would not have had any votes, because nobody knew me" (Iker 8862:11641). Of course, everyone could have voted and he could have mobilized his friends to vote for him and thereby received votes (Iker 8862:11641). The fact that this possibility existed seemed sufficiently symbolic to him (Iker 8862:11641). Nevertheless, the candidates were presidents of neighbourhood associations and social movements living and rooted in the neighbourhood, so "they had a lot of history with the neighbourhood and knew it well" which is why he considered them to be perfectly suitable for the task of taking office (Iker 8862:11641). The symbolic openness, the candidates' knowledge of the neighbourhood and the city and their connectedness with it resulted in his support and motivation to participate. Of course, there were rivalries about political office when someone tried hard to get into office receiving many votes from friends, but without having the support of the group itself. So there was a little "war of political positions" (Iker 8862:11641). However, this passed and the person left eventually, and every since he finds the political organization works well in general.

1 This was also problematized insofar as it is said that social movements weakened through the electoral win of Barcelona en Comú, as their leaders left to take office (Roc 26303:27907). Another reason is that the new government slowly adopts the claims of the social movements and implements them, such as the creation of a anti-eviction service with around five people of PAH working inside the city hall to stop evictions (Roc 26303:27907). Therefore, as will be seen later, in the plans for internal democracy there is also included to strengthen and institutionalize the relation between social movements, political organization and public institution.

2 The conference *Enfortir els Bèns Comuns Des Del Municipalism* took place in April 2016 at the Faculty of Geography and History of the University of Barcelona. Activists from municipal initiatives throughout the country, such as from Andalusia, Galicia, Basque country and other cities in Catalonia, and shared their different backgrounds and perspectives in workshops and panel discussions.

Governing a City

Thus, the self-described citizens' platform Barcelona en Comú existed for one year – ever since they won the election (Arnau 3722:4503). This is the reason why the organization and the people working and participating in it experience an accelerated speed of time: as nobody expected to win, there was suddenly the challenge to simultaneously create a functioning organization based on strong principles of internal democracy, and to govern a city (Arnau 3722:4503). And this, seemingly, as fast as possible, in order to be able to compete in the institutional world of politics. The clerk, while enjoying his sandwich with a pint of beer in the afternoon, said, “this is how it happened that the complications and difficulties with creating a political organization coincided (se ha unido) with the much more difficult circumstances of governing a city – of two million inhabitants”.

Suddenly, people who were mainly activists who worked and lived in social movements and organizations for decades being mainly occupied to work against or challenge the government, had to change perspective. They were confronted with institutional settings of protocol, conduct, accountability and bureaucracy, while shortly before they organized mainly informally in the everyday spaces of the city streets. What does it mean to govern the city? What kind of practices does it entail?, are basic questions that became important. What does it mean to take responsibility and also ask for responsibility of citizens (as an institution)? What does it mean to govern a city: to take account and to be taken into account?, to listen, watch and manage a population?, to think about how to make life conditions better?, for whom?, to attempt to maintain a certain status quo?, to make sure to be able to compete on the world market?, to feel, to be affected, to train in empathy in order to stay connected with the base, the streets, ordinary people? (What are the categories of 'good government' or 'good governance'?) What kind of capacities are required on a personal level within face-to-face relations between a group of people, of whom some are called representatives and others citizens, and how to deal with the double role of being a citizen and a representative at the same time?

All this question are posed implicitly or explicitly in this experiment of democratizing the city and its institutions. At the same time, Barcelona en Comú has to create political and organizational coherence at least to some extent, in order to be practical and functioning. However, against the backdrop of this uncertainties, the organization lacks (están faltos) it often times (Arnau 3722:4503). “Nobody believed we would win the government (la alcaldía)” (Arnau 3722:4503), and all of the sudden these activists find themselves in the middle of an institution of which it is their job to provide for its functioning beginning now. In the spirit of social and political change, Barcelona en Comú is in search of common imaginaries of the good life. Being in the institution,

their objective is to change the relation between them and the people, and therefore how institutions behave and interact with citizens. Therefore, the activists learn how the institutions works in order to maintain a status quo, in order to alter the status quo. The central category is internal democracy to scrutinize this phenomenon. Thus, as “an institution just born, it seems as the organization is always running after reality, barely holding up, and reality ends up running away” (Arnau 3722:4503).

Confronted with a public administration based on hierarchy and high levels of bureaucracy, instead of adopting existing forms of social organization, Barcelona en Comú attempts to feed from known alternatives or create their own principles. The birth of Barcelona en Comú (as being one of the many new political organizations that emerged among the Spanish territory in the municipalities), is fruit of the previous years of political and social mobilization (Silvia 3376:3700). A member of the assembly of Ciutat Vella perceives it as “a change of mentality that took place towards the believe that this can be done and that we want to make another way of politics, and most importantly that we are able to do things, because politics would be cool in a different manner, this we all already know, but that it is possible to do something” (Silvia 3376:3700). Thus, social, political and democratic imagination is seen as the basis for a “politics of becoming-other-than-one-now-is” (Rasza/Kurnik 2012: 241) opening a constitutive process of creating new social and political ideas and practices, which ultimately result into a certain management of life. Further, this statement already evokes a central claim of activists of Barcelona en Comú, namely the capacity of humans to aspire and bring about change, thus, the capability to imagine new collective horizons and invent ways to reach them (Appadurai 2013: 191). As the city serves for the primary site for their undertaking, I will shortly summarize some reflections on the city and its political significance.

What is the City?

The city is produced by and through ideas, actions, constellations of individuals organizing in collectives inhabiting, occupying, dwelling within a limited territory transforming into urban space. At the same time the urban is produced through and produces certain types of individuals whose identity, under capitalism, as “citizens, workers and consumers coincide” (Tilly 2007: 117). The city has proven to be a site of great acceleration and concentration of cultural, social and political conflicts. Based on its particular characteristics in terms of space, texture, and power, it is the city that anticipates radical change of narratives, ideologies and practices. According to Rose,

modern cities are not so much entities but more like accidental agglomerations of forces, sedimented layers and fractures overlaid through time and space, seeping out at the edges, impossible to reduce to any

single principle or determination except that illusion of unity and stability conferred by the proper name.
(2000: 95)

Thus, the city is not a container, but a subject, “space of emergent identities and their social organization” (Holston 1999: 94). Due to their specific materiality, aspects such as urban planning and architecture, modern cities are inscribed by inequalities and segregation which also effects the way urban space is used by inhabitants and social groups which always reveals a relation of power (Caldeira 2000: 231) Thus, the city is “both the text and context of new debates about fundamental social relations” (Holston 1999: 96). As urban life entangles diversity, variation, complexity, and pluralism, Young argues that “an openness to unassimilated others' is the political ideal, one found today in the 'unoppressive city'” which necessitates “discourse and institutions for bringing differently identified groups together without suppressing or subsuming the difference” (1986: 70). This can enable the creation “of new kinds of practices and narratives about belonging to and participating in society” (Holston 1999: 95), because “the state must articulate itself through the city” (Isin 2007 in Lazar 2013: 12).

“The experience of the city is”, as Holston writes, “critical to the insurgence of a new formulation of citizenship” and constitute “strategic arenas for the development of citizenship” (2008: 22). Thus, 'new games of citizenship' “are negotiated, enacted and resisted in the public sphere of the city.” (Rose 2000 in Lazar 2013: 13) This is because “city streets combine new identities of territory, contract, and education with ascribed ones of race, religion, culture, and gender.” (Holston 2008: 23) The concentrated mass of people in the city accelerate the development of new political identities, rights and agendas concerning city life and thereby fuel urban movements' political work (Holston 2008: 23) Hereby, cities, meshed in a network of local and global power relations, are crucial site for the development for new citizenships (ibid.)

The City: Barcelona

Back in the 14th century, Barcelona was not much more than a loose settlement of fruit growers (Capilla 2014:4). At the place where these settlements were are nowadays four *barris* forming the district of Ciutat Vella: la Barceloneta, el Gòtic, el Raval and Sant Pere, Santa Caterina I la Ribera. The historic centre el Gòtic changed heavily during the 18th century caused by increasing urbanization and growing numbers of inhabitants (ibid.: 4f). One of the most known *barris* is the adjacent *el Raval* which combines modernist buildings and cultural spaces of el Gòtic as well as densely populated streets and restricted private living space for inhabitants (Capilla 2014: 5, 58). During industrialisation, mills and manufacturers settled in *el Raval* which is why it became one of

the most densely populated barris of all of Europe (ibid.). Furthermore, el Raval became a place where people of lower classes would settle (ibid.). Therefore it is no wonder that a traveler would encounter people from multiple cultural backgrounds here: the old lady living all her life in el Gòtic as much as the second-generation Pakistani working in one of the (almost) twenty-four hour shops. What is more, the neighbourhood transformed into a 'place to be' for young people, creative and artists (and so-called hipster) which is also intensely influencing the appearance of this area. Another barri is called la Barceloneta, a maritime neighborhood created in 18th century (Capilla 2014: 5). Its narrow streets contain apartments with balconies from which you can have a wonderful view at the sea while smoking a cigarette. In Sant Pere, Sant Caterina I la Ribera one can find medieval buildings, walls and monuments that emerged through religious institutions (ibid.: 92). This is where you find the cathedral, not confused with La Sagrada Família of Gaudí.

Harvey criticizes Pierre Bourdieu for having restricted the notion of symbolic capital only to individuals and explains that it is the relation between individuals and collective forms which is of a greater interest to him (2013: 103). Thus, tourism is based on the “power of collective symbolic capital, of special marks of distinction that attach to some place which have a significant drawing power upon the flows of capital more generally” (ibid.). Barcelona as an attractive destination for people all around the world is based on its “amassing of symbolic capital and its accumulation of marks and distinction” which is the Catalan history and tradition, “strong artistic accomplishments and architectural heritage, distinctive marks of lifestyle and literary traditions” and cultural events (ibid.). The city has invested in the harbor and the beach massively, in order to welcome the masses of tourists passing through every day (Harvey 2013: 103). The nightlife of Barcelona has become “an open panorama of urban spectacle” (ibid.). The city operates, thus, “as an economic actor” based on the idea of “cities of pleasure” which exists at least from the 19th century on and understands it “as a site of a peculiarly civilized array of pleasures” and “promoting certain type of mentality and sociality” (ibid.: 104ff). There are a “multitude of projects” taking place that “seek to reshape the real city according to this image of pleasure not least in order to enter into the competitive market of urban tourism” (Capilla 2014: 106). Therefore, even though “ambience and attractiveness of a city, for example, is a collective product of its citizens, but it is the tourist trade that commercially capitalizes upon the common to extract monopoly rents” (ibid.: 74). Unfortunately, the masses of tourists have heavily affected the livelihood of locals. Apartments and living space is rented out rather to tourists than to locals as the profits are much higher. Inhabitants lose their living space, and on the streets of the neighborhood they are ousted. The whole of Ciutat Vella seems to only serve one purpose: to establish services for tourists and travelers, thus, to focus on profits (Burgen 2018).

Harvey states that “in a highly competitive world” it is “about whose collective memory, whose aesthetics, and whose benefits are to be prioritized” (Harvey 2013: 106). As a result, resistance to the current forms of tourism is forming (La Vanguardia 2017). Thus, “neighborhood movements in Barcelona make claims for recognition and empowerment for symbolic capital, political presence in the city” (Harvey 2013: 106). The neighbors aim at the “production of new urban commons” (ibid.: 106ff). Through 15M's occupations and assemblies, the public squares was an expression of “a struggle over how the production of and access to public space and public goods is to be regulated, by whom, and in whose interests. The struggle to appropriate the public spaces and public goods in the city for a common purpose is ongoing.” (ibid.: 73).

The common is not to be construed, therefore, as a particular kind of thing, asset or even social process, but as an unstable and malleable social relation between a particular self-defined social group and those aspects of its actually existing or yet-to-be-created social and/or physical environment deemed crucial to its life and livelihood. There is, in effect, a social practice of commoning. This practice produces and establishes a social relation with a common whose uses are either exclusive to a social group or partially or fully open to all and sundry. At the heart of the practice of commoning lies the principle that the relation between the social group and that aspect of the environment being treated as a common shall be both collective and non-commodified – off-limits to the logic of market exchange and market valuations. (Harvey 2013: 73)

Harvey argues that “the right to use that common must surely then be accorded to all those who have had a part in producing it.” (ibid.: 78)

The Right to the City

Henri Lefebvre coined the term 'right to the city' and understood it as “both a cry and a demand”: “cry as a response to the existential pain of a withering crisis of everyday life in the city [...] demand to create an alternative urban life that is less alienated, more meaningful, playful and conflictual and dialectical, open to becoming, [...] to the perpetual pursuit of unknowable novelty” (Harvey 2013: x; also see Lefebvre 1974). Harvey states that “to claim the right to the city is, in effect, to claim a right to something that no longer exists” (Harvey 2013: xv). Therefore it is practically an “empty signifier” and “everything depends on who gets to fill it with meaning” and “whose rights are being identified” (ibid.).

According to Harvey the city “has an iconic and symbolic history that is deeply embedded in the pursuit of political meanings” (Harvey 2013: xvi). Therefore he states “the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of life we desire, what aesthetic values we hold.” (ibid.: 4) Thereby, it is a collective right which “depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization” (ibid.). Accordingly, it “is constituted by establishing democratic control over the deployment of the surpluses through

urbanization” (Harvey 2013: 23). Too often the right to the city is understood as in the hand of developers or “a small political and economic elite who are in a position to shape the city more and more after their own particular needs” (ibid.: 24). Protests such as 15M were also an expression of taking back agency over one's own and collective living conditions by trying to “resolve their material problems as citizen bodies in open assemblies” (Harvey 2013: 84). This is because, “the right to the city is not an exclusive individual right, but a focused collective right. It is inclusive not only of construction workers but also of all those who facilitate the reproduction of daily life” (ibid.: 137). Claiming the right to the city is inherent in the political project of the municipalist movement. I will now turn to the organizational setting of Barcelona en Comú in order to slowly unfold their political vision and the ways they attempt to realize it.

Organisation³

How does Barcelona en Comú organize? What did the activists come up with within the first year of their mandate? One of the most significant political characteristics of the municipalist movement is *confluencia*. The collaboration, teamwork, cooperation between different initiatives and political parties entails that every person has to the same extent the right to speak to be heard, and the right to vote independent of one's organizational background. This legacy of 15M is why some offices are taken by independent representatives, such as a local councillor of el Raval, or in departments as 'Immigration, Interculturality and Diversity', or 'Social Economy and Cooperative' who are experts in their respective fields.

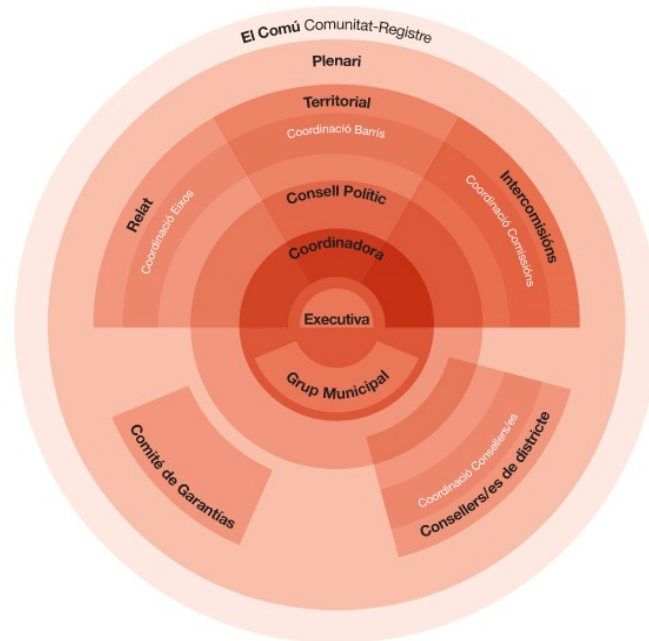
confluence is not a coalition of parties that negotiate always, but so that every person that participates has the same role like any other person who participates, it is not important from which party one comes or if they don't come from any, in Barcelona en Comú there are many people that come from any of these parties (Silvia 16391:17240)

The municipal candidatures also understood themselves as a "federation of initiatives", which ascertained common concerns. Thereby a diversity of social and political processes was given space while centralistic practices and structures of traditional political parties were tamed (Galcerán/Carmona 2017: 110). Most of the members and activist are, thus, coming from political organizations and social movements, neighbourhood associations, and the only proofed politicians are of *Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds* (Catalan Greens). They already have experiences with institutional politics (Catalan parliament, the Cortes Generales). However, there were also other political entities such as ECP, Podemos, ICV, Guanyem, EUA, EPO (Silvia 16391:17240). Among

3 Parts of this discussion have already been published online: Zelinka (2018): „Examining Barcelona en Comú's attempt to be a movement-party“, transnational institute, <https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/tni-examining-barcelona-en-comus-attempt-to-be-a-movement-party-1.pdf>.

the activists some had already made experiences in the collaboration with public institutions. However, certainly not with holding a public office and therefore no experience with being the public institution and the government. Thus, they are not 'professional politician' trained in public administration and are a heterogeneous group of people deeply rooted in the local diverse social and political backgrounds and social movements. For members it is perceived as a citizens' platform to listen to and integrate city inhabitants in bringing about change from within civil society.

Organigram



Quelle: Organigrama⁴

The focus is on the executive and municipal group, which is part of the general coordination, which is composed of: 10 activists from the members' list, 8 persons from the executive branch, 4 persons from the coordination of the thematic priorities, one person from each assembly of the various districts, one person from each technical committee and 4 delegates from the municipal group. It is described as “a global system and very collegial and there the decisions are made among everyone” (Estel 13346:13849). The political council is theoretically formed through it, which is to serve as a deliberative space to develop strategies regarding political organization and municipalist actions, but is not yet in action. Then there are other entities called relat, territory, and intercommissions, which are made up of about 150 people: relat are thematic axes on different topics (e.g. education, housing, gender and sexual diversity), territory is the assemblies in the districts and the intercommission coordinates them among themselves. The Guarantee Committee is responsible for democratic innovation and the functioning of democracy. In addition, there are the assemblies of the

⁴ Organigrama: <https://barcelonaencomu.cat/ca/organigrama>, 9.12.17.

districts (they are organized according to districts comprising different neighborhoods) and the plenum of the registered activists of Barcelona en Comú, which comprises about 1500 people in 2016.

The plenum is a space of political decision-making within the political organization. In the core of the organization there is the municipal group and the general coordinating group. The latter includes representatives of all districts, thematic groups, commissions and neighbourhoods as well sympathizers. Within the city hall, however, it is the municipal group which has executive powers. The group is formed by the mayor, city councillors and secretaries. In practice, the difference between general coordination and municipal group is not always clear for all militants of the assembly. However, the municipal group represents the top levels of the political organization, as these are the people who were elected from the assemblies into office.

Additionally, every assembly has a coordinator who is concerned with the coordination of it (Silvia 7051:7194) and summarizes debates and proposals and transmits them to the general coordination, which in turn transmits decisions and topics with which the assembly shall occupy themselves (Flor 8055:9107). The territorial assemblies are organized by districts which encompass different neighbourhoods. One of them is the city center of Barcelona called Ciutat Vella (old town) which includes El Raval, La Barceloneta, el Gòtic and Sant Pere, Santa Caterina i la Ribera. In these assemblies, neighbourhood matters and actions are discussed, but debates also evolve often around internal organizational issues and the relation between the assembly and the institution (municipal group). The neighbourhood assembly is the most local entity and a site of controversial debates about political strategies and organizational principles.

The Assembly

The group of Ciutat Vella is constituted by approximately 120-130 people of which 20-30 persons regularly attend the assembly every 15 days. It was described as "a typical assembly with an order of the day", where it is possible to propose topics and the neighbours talk and criticize the government (Emili 10765:11540). A local councillor of el Raval explained that the assemblies of the neighbourhoods have the task to create the program of the district, work on topics that affect the district, and to make campaigns regarding these (Roc 1758:2688). One member of the assembly described it as the "eyes, voice and ears of the organization in the territory" (Arnau 4506:4874). Thereby, he refers to the human senses: eyes and ears are used to observe and to take into account. Further, the voice is utilized to share and exchange thoughts and ideas as well as to engage in debate. The creation of a strong public, which is a need that was emphasised in the ethnographic

example of accountable democracy (Paley 2004), is based on using the abilities of humans to make observations, make them knowledgeable and deliberate them. Therefore, not only voice is a cultural capacity (Appadurai 2013: 186). Moreover, I understand listening and seeing (ears and eyes) as cultural capacities, not only as democratic virtues. Also listening, seeing and being responsive based on the perceived “must be expressed in terms of actions and performances that have local cultural force.” (ibid.). Thus, significant characteristics of its political organization are citizens' participation and protagonism (Iker 4659:4959), in terms of rationalization of experiences and making them knowledgeable, and self-organization of the people of the city (Emili 1533:1998) on this ground.

So, who participates in the assembly? What are the personal and professional background of the people taking part? And in which ways are they active within Barcelona en Comú? Overall, it can be said that the participants are generally white Catalans or Spaniards, and the participation of women or men balanced each other. Further, the engagement in the discussions was evenly distributed. Most of the participants of the assembly were over their thirties or middle-aged. Regarding the professions of the participants, it is distinguished by diversity: sociologist, hair dresser, clerk, architect, political scientist, artist, university professor or elementary school teacher. All of them had previous experiences in political action differing in extent and involvement. Some of them had helped a little in campaigns of political organizations, others have been activists in anarchist, feminist or the anti-globalization movements or parties such as PSUC and ICV, or were active in local initiatives pressing for certain topics throughout their lives. It is significant that nobody of the assembly members is professional in politics which means “that we have other occupations and we are all multi-militants” (Estel 9868:10125). Thus, participants have multiple, intersectional, political identities such as being a citizen of Barcelona, being a professional in a respective field, being an activist, being a member of the assembly of Ciutat Vella or Barcelona en Comú.

In terms of capacities, a member of the assembly explained that the majority of the base are people who have not acquired a militant discourse of claim-making, but stayed in the discourses of the neighbourhood (Estel 14490:15104). Others with a distinguished political discourse are mostly people who already enjoyed a kind of training, through their education at the university for example, and mostly ended up in decision-making spaces (Estel 14490:15104). Coming from all these different backgrounds, how did participants of the assembly of Ciutat Vella start their activity in Barcelona en Comú? After the initiative phase of the inner circles, Guanyem presented themselves at schools and social centres in the neighbourhoods in Barcelona. Some of the members of the assembly went to one or another of these presentations, where a lot of people gathered, and left with big hopes motivated to participate (Mateu 1836:2232; Estel 4792:5884). Many started to

support the project by helping in the electoral campaign (Iker 9073:9310; Estel 4792:5884). In one occasion a respondent was distributing flyers with a friend who told her about the assembly and invited her to join, which she did (Estel 4792:5884). The first months she would not say anything in the assembly being too shy, and it took her a while to open up and feel as full member of the assembly (informal personal conversation with Estel). Other members of the assembly started in one of the thematic axes. Some became increasingly active and started to coordinate them and later represent them in the general coordination, as for the case of Roc (Roc 2193:3140). The local councillor of el Raval told me that his activism awoke very late, only when 15M started where participated neither a lot (Roc 1039:1160). Many members of the assembly of Ciutat Vella participated in 15M, even though some told me that their activity was relatively low and they were rather observing than engaging actively. This means that for some 15M had an activating effect on one's political identity, as for others politicization took place well before 15M (Arnau 1024:2109⁵).

For example, one participant of the assembly told me about the helplessness and imposed passivity when he was not able to reach the officials in the institution in order to influence decision-making processes on a certain topic (Iker 1532:4630). At 15M he stood at the margins, but the emergence of Guanyem left a positive impression on him, so he started to participate (Iker 4632:5814, 8898:9060). Another member of the assembly told me that she went to 15M with her partner, to see what was happening and it appeared to her as "the most important thing happening in Spain for quite many years" (Flor 2973:3437). She did not participate, but it appeared to her as "an opportunity, because we were all tired of the two traditional parties PP and PSOE" (Flor 2973:3437). For her Barcelona en Comú is the first political organization she is participating in, as before she perceived herself as rather individualistic (Flor 2546:2658). Thus, 15M constituted an activating moment for its observers and participants followed by individual and personal processing which finally canalised through the foundation of a political organisation into directed activity. The occupations of 15M caused affects such as hope and the creation of belief gradually translating into political action and participation.

Significance of 15M for the Assembly

What kind of traits of 15M are still prevalent and important for the functioning and self-understanding of Barcelona en Comú and further, the assembly? 15M marked an encounter between people able to talk to each other learning that they are not alone as they had thought before (Jacint

⁵ He explained that his political identity was created in his home, as his family was always from the left, his father was a Communist, he himself participated in movements of PSC, trotskyist, and anarchist as well as neighbourhood movements, then there was a long time of relative abeyance, and his activity revived with 15M, and when Barcelona en Comú formed itself he was determined to participate.

4371:4853). Therefore, 15M initiated a process of collectivization overcoming the separation and loneliness set through individualism. This is why 15M was described as “a singular and very special historic moment” that transmitted a feeling of strength and purpose (Jacint 4371:4853). Another member of the assembly shared this perception that 15M showed that “many people think the same and do not agree with the manner things are done in politics, and that ordinary people are the protagonists, which introduced a change from a critical attitude towards a very active attitude” (Silvia 2740:3365). She had the feeling that everyone could participate without expectations (Silvia 1830:2617). It was dynamic, open and generally inclusive (although it was often described as a predominantly white, middle class movement), and “you didn't have to say much or have lot of time ... don't have to have an organizational background, there were people like me who only wanted to approximate themselves watching without doing anything” (Silvia 1830:2617). These factors: participation as an individual, strengthening of ordinary citizens as protagonists of public politics, and openness and inclusiveness are still important characteristics of the assembly, even though there are certain limitations to it.

An assembly member who is also a political scientist interpreted 15M as a site for methodological innovation in terms of the management of participation (Luisa 2466:3469). She explains that “a lot of things appeared spontaneously, such as the sign language which marked how certain behaviour has to function” (Luisa 2466:3469). This was important, “because you cannot just take the mic and talk without respect and without knowing that there is a collective dynamic that there is a manner of being and ability to talk” (Luisa 2466:3469). Therefore, there was a protocol of conduct introduced which was important in order to manage discriminatory behaviour, which was especially significant as “it was assemblies of the multitude” (Luisa 2466:3469). The management of conduct and introduction of an ethics is still important for the assemblies.

Another connection made by a representative with a background in ICV is the “claim for the institutions, the volition to participate in a different manner, to question the rules of the game, is an attitude which is still prevailing today” (Núria 2756:3118). This is because as a assembly member explained: “it is not as they leave the plaza and that's it. What happens is that it takes different forms and it is also a question of how you return to the movements after this experience” (Luisa 3713:4719). Therefore, “15M had a much more flexible form” and thus “maybe it took different lives, it canalized into different manners after that first formulation in the plazas, I think that this keeps to be present” (Luisa 3713:4719). Thus, actors of Barcelona en Comú understand their political project as part of a broader development in the recent years, with 15M being a strong landmark. I will now turn to the political ideology and practical realizations which outlines their democratization movement.

Internal Democratization of Barcelona en Comú

As was shown in the theory section, scrutinizing democratic practice is centrally looking at the relation between different entities and groups of people: in this case, I will thus focus on the relation between institution/city hall and political organization/Barcelona en Comú as well as city hall/representatives and citizens. In order to do so, I will explain on which kind of self-understanding its organizational principles are based on. It will be shown how notions such as city hall, institution and political organization emerge and are differentiated and defined by the people of the assembly of Ciutat Vella and political cargos (elected or not) in the administration. This bears sources of conflicts, which I will depict in the subsequent chapter with a special focus on the assembly of Ciutat Vella and its participants' practices and relations. Further, I will depict spaces of encounter between the political organization and the city hall with citizens of Barcelona, in order to scrutinize the so-called new politics. Whereas the first focus on the assembly will give insights on internal democratization processes, the discussion of external events will give insights on external democratization processes. Both will coalesce into understanding Barcelona en Comú's democratization project, which is denominated as creating a new institutionality. It will be emergent from my ethnography in how far participants of Barcelona en Comú succeed, struggle and fail to alter the relation between different entities and groups of people, and how this relation is characterised and defined by themselves. In the course of this undertaking, I concentrate on participatory spaces, spaces which serve for encounter, deliberation and action between different entities and groups of people.

Assembly Procedures

So, how does the assembly function in practice? The assembly usually takes place every 15 days in the main room of a social centre in el Gòtic which contains a long table with a bench. This was commonly the place where the moderator and the keeper of the minutes would sit. Also, another participant preferred to sit at the table, because he used his laptop during the sessions. Generally, everyone who wished to sit on the bench could do so, but not everyone did. The majority of the participants was sitting on white plastic chairs forming a circle around the table. The moderator was always the same man. The minutes were taken with pencil and paper usually by the same woman.

During the time I participated in the assembly, the number of participants of the assembly ranged between 12 and 20 throughout the meetings. Not all of them would stick around for the whole duration of the meetings. As some lasted more than two hours (starting at 7 pm), there was usually some kind of movement going on, people leaving earlier or arriving later. Generally, the

course of discussion was organized by the order of the day which the moderator would present at the beginning of the meeting, announcing also the time scheduled for each of the topics. As I didn't have access to that platform, I was never able to follow the process of it being established. My respondents told me that "the order of the day is done among everyone in the internet, one week before, „next week we have the assembly, here you have the order of the day“ and it is a link to a document in which everyone can write what they want, everyone can write down their items (Iker 28413:28640). As the moderator explained to me, there are "some fixed items, such as the return of the municipal group and the return of the coordination of the territory which are in the organism of Barcelona en Comú and part of the city, others depend on what is suggested through the assembly members" (Arnau 13901:14280). After everyone has written down their suggestions in the list, which are "often not many", the agenda is send out to every participant via mailing list (Arnau 14700:14958). However, among my respondents there were also long-time participants who were still not fully sure how the order of the day was coming-into-being (Flor 9275:9550).

Regarding the moderator, the role was understood as the only one which gives some kind of structure to the proceeding of the assembly and is further very contested and criticized (Arnau 9723:13628). It is said that the assembly solves its conflicts by itself, however, as there is "no hierarchy, no secretary, no executive", "conflicts go on eternally, and debates take very long, as it is hard to arrive at a yes or no, black or white position, but they always search for compromises, and sometimes it gets very cumbersome, and conflicts aren't solved" (Arnau 9723:13628). Following, I provide with a few ethnographic vignettes to show the dynamic around the host and of procedure:

April 2016

A man with wild curls on his head asks a question concerning La Rambla. Before a woman had asked if she can talk about it and was refused. The host explains again the procedure of the assembly. The painter says that she is a mother of three children and cannot work. The host says that such things should be discussed in the working groups, not in the assembly. During this assembly, the host said repeatedly "shsh", hitting with his pen on the table, in order to create focus and concentration.

June 2016

Silvia wants to say something, but she is not given her turn. There is confusion about who makes the order of speakers. She asks, "who makes the speaker's contributions?" She is indignant. A man asks, "the host?" Host, "yes, me." Man, "then add her to your list." The host, however, lets someone else speak. Silvia talks to herself quietly and indignantly. She says, that she hasn't finished her topic yet. "how shall we proceed?" The man as before says that there is this discussion now and other topics later. During this assembly, the host is commenting humoristically what is said by other participants.

June 2016

There is again a mini-conflict about who is talking next – a participant or the representative of the district. There is not much time left anymore that evening. Nevertheless, the participant elaborates his thoughts. A man sitting next to him says, "there are people who are voluntarily here to make politics of social change,

but I have the feeling that exactly the same thing is happening here, picture of people who negotiate. Here this guy cannot say four words about his idea, even though we talk right now about La Rambla, Tourism and money. I say this as a citizen. One year ago I was at an event with the representative and I thought, this is very cool. And now I am sitting here with her and I have the feeling that the same thing is happening politically like elsewhere.” The host says politely, “thank you”. It is the turn for the representative to talk. The host is commenting something. One of the two men before reacts saying, “you have to enter yourself into the list, you cannot just talk like that!” The host, “don't protest me!” and laughs.

The role of the host has to be conducted with caution, as can be seen through the situations at hand. If it is not conducted correctly, regarding the making of the speaker's list, it otherwise creates confusion and affects such as discontent or anger. These situations also dismantle power relations between him and the rest of the group. He implicitly decides whose voice is more important to be heard or needs to be heard first. Personal histories, circumstances and dispositions can additionally influence decisions during the procedure.

Access to the Assembly

One of the most important ideological points of Barcelona en Comú is the strengthening of the role of the citizen in political decision-making processes. In order to do so, how are newcomers treated or how is the access to the assembly structured? The opinion on the degree of openness of the assembly is diverging among my respondents. One member told me: “The assembly is open, it does not have an organic structure in which one enters and the other exits and there is someone who authorizes this or not – this comes from 15M” (Arnau 13210:13430). Opposing to this, another member explained to me that “at the beginning they are not open assemblies for everybody, for that there are public events, in the assembly there are internal topics for the people of the organization” (Emili 10765:11540). He explains further:

There is absolute liberty in the assembly for everyone to say what one wants to say, we made us an open mailing list and everyone can send what they want, the assembly also elects official positions such as the general coordinator or the councillor. The assembly does not have the character of closed, closed, any person can join our group of the district, one writes us, Hello! My name is Jaume and I am interested to attend the meetings of the assembly of Ciutat Vella. Very good, in the end, we write you on a list and that's it. It does not require more, but yes there is a minimum ... because in the mailing list there are also the informations of what we are currently thinking of, of the organization, themes, acts, activities etc. (Emili 11683:12900)

Thus, the attempt to create open information flows within and through the assembly comes along with caution of the assembly members. Even if they do not seem high, there are obstacles to fully participate. The process of becoming a full member takes time, as Flor explained:

At the beginning it was not easy for me, because I am already elder and I am not shy, I wanna say. If I have to say what I think, I say it. Although if it's not pleasing. I went there in an independent manner, and felt certain reservations within the people who already knew each other towards me – which is normal, which is normal within groups, no? When a person appears who they do not know, until they don't know you a bit better they won't explain you more things. So, at the beginning there were a bit of reservations, let's see, I don't know her, where she comes from, let's see if she is a spy. (Flor 10035:10821)

Thus, to obtain full membership in the assembly requires time and the development of trust. Even though it is possible to announce oneself freely, attend and participate in the course of the debates, to fully obtain informations and explications of context, time has to pass and the new participant has to proof her- or himself. One's presence and voice receives a place in any case, however, a lack of information or the unwillingness of the other members to explain every topic and problem to newcomers does give the latter a disadvantage in the course of debates. I could observe the limits of access in three occasions throughout my research. The first two, which I will describe now, were situation in the assembly, and the third a situation that was concerned with my presence and purpose as a researcher.

It was an assembly at the end of June 2016. It was already later in the evening, when the next item of the agenda was introduced, namely a problem of the internal, online communication. The discussion was tense and heated and participants were talking chaotically. A man who was also a representative of the assembly opted for blocking a person from the online communication platform. A young woman asked for more context. The host said, "you don't understand, because you are new." She replied, "that is exactly why, so I can be more constructive and you are not giving me the possibility to." The host said, "all of us just want to finish with this topic." The discussion proceeded without giving more information on the issue.

I will come back to this assembly later on in order to have a closer look on the conflict that is at the base here. For now, the described moment illustrates how certain conflicts and discussions are tiring to longer member, so there is an unwillingness to share the context with newcomers. Nor to the one who asks neither to others present. Moreover, as the newcomer is not yet part of the online forum and mailing list, she did not know the context of the conflict which shook up the assembly. As explications would take too long and the impact on the decision-making is considered as minimal or irrelevant, it is assumed that it is better to not introduce her to it. Her statement that being an outsider of the conflict will grant her more constructiveness is not taken into account or assessed in the same way. The conflict happened in the past and shall be stopped for the future, thus the affected are entitled to participate in the present.

Another moment that marks the time it takes to become a member or 'seen/known participant' of the assembly took place in the very last assembly I attended at the end of my field research.

At the beginning of the assembly a man at the end of his 50s presented himself saying that he is coming to the assembly for a while now participating in the discussions, but he hasn't presented himself yet. He apologized for that, told the assembly his name, and from which neighbourhood of the district he is from. He further explained that he would like to engage more, participate more and be part of the assembly. A young woman at the beginning of her 30s replied: "no, no it's our fault, we should have done a proper welcome! Maybe we can do a round of presentation now?" Then everyone presented her- or himself.

This situation shows a mode of access to the assembly, which is based on the agency and self-presentation of the newcomer. He makes a statement about the duration and quality of his participation, and expresses his wish to fully participate further. The reaction of the assembly

members is welcoming and everyone present him- and herself. This is the first time during my half-year field research that I observed this, in spite of the fact that there are 'professional gatekeepers' who have the task to welcome newcomers and provide them with information. However, this man has not been approached. His nominal acceptance in the circle is result of his own engagement and pro-activeness and not of formal procedures of the organizational structures of the assembly.

The third example is concerned with access from within the assembly to the political organization.

It was the one year anniversary of Barcelona en Comú being in office. They organized a public feast in the Park of North Station end of May 2016 to report on goals, open questions and challenges and to discuss and reflect on the past months, but most importantly, celebrate the first year together. There were open discussion forums on specific topics, information stands of the different districts, a public speech with Ada Colau and Susana Segovia, member of the executive administration, and a public paella. I spent my whole day in the park, listening, burning in the sun, and talking to members of the assembly. In the afternoon, Iker and I talked about the upcoming extraordinary plenum with Yanis Varoufakis and I said that I would be happy to participate. He replied that he was not sure about how to, because it is necessary to be part of the official list of activists. He sent me to Emili who was sitting on his plastic chair in the stand of Ciutat Vella. Looking at me he said: "It is not so easy and not everyone can become a member of Barcelona en Comú. The event is a closed for people of Barcelona en Comú only and should stay internal." He tells me to go ask Arnau who sends me to Estel. Estel offers me her help and says she will take care of it.

The reaction of Emili agrees with his statements in the interview, that there are some obstacles of becoming a member of the political organization. I was also perceived a special case, because even though I came to every assembly and supported the organisation of a neighbourhood activity, everyone knew I would leave eventually. Additionally, I wished to access for a special occasion. Against this backdrop, their reservations are comprehensive. However, this shows how access can be confronted, when members assess that one does not qualify to become a member. Even though Arnau stated that there is nobody authorizing entry or exit of participants, there is a process of authorization which seems to be distributed among those members who also have a certain role within the assembly. My 'journey' from one member to another does not denominate a hierarchy. As there is not one person who decided or authorized my acceptance in the list of activists of Barcelona en Comú. Rather I walked from member to member who were, first of all, present, were members who are very active in the assembly and also held certain positions within it. Thus, it constituted a kind of legitimization and decision-making process which was distributed among many participants. At the end, I was given permission to participate in the extraordinary plenum with Varoufakis. All of these examples show modes of insurgent citizenship (Holston 1999) on the local level of political community. For the situation constitute struggles over meanings of membership and illustrate that citizenship as membership is not a static, but a dynamic status.

Tasks and Activities of Assembly Members

As was mentioned before, the political identity of participants of the assembly is at times multi-militant. On the one hand, there is multi-militancy being in Barcelona en Comú as well as in other social movements and organizations. On the other, this also applies for engagement in multiple participatory and deliberative spaces within the political organization itself. Therefore, many of them are part of the territorial assembly, but are also taking part in decision-making processes in thematic axes (such as feminism), thematic assemblies of the neighbourhoods (such as sustainable tourism or barri refugi), and commissions (such as the commission of internal participation or the international commission). This means, many participants of the assembly also take a stance in other spaces and groups. Of course, this describes multi-militancy on the horizontal level and indicates that there is an array of different tasks and forms of activity being done by people. This becomes especially evident when assembly members become elected cargos or representatives of the assembly in different areas of the city. Such as the representation of it in the municipal group or the general coordination. Further, there are members of the assembly who are in charge of tasks that are specific for the assembly, such as the moderator, the keeper of the minutes or the treasurer. Regarding internal tasks of the assembly, one example shows how the personal engagement of individuals can make a difference in the organization overall. As in the case of Iker who saw that there was "a chaos of information", which is why he created a virtual office ordering the e-mails (Iker 5921:8372). While doing this, also the concept of the assembly and its functioning took form in his head and he saw "the possibility to make it more functional and practical, and that the assembly really has an importance, it is strong and has an effect on the city hall" (Iker 5921:8372). Therefore, he dedicated himself "to make the assembly work, so it does not only have a symbolic but also a practical function which does effect the district" (Iker 5921:8372). Without asking from my part, a member of the assembly mentioned him very positively and acknowledged his work and motivation.

Working Groups: Internal Difficulties

March 2016

Today the assembly starts half an hour earlier, because later there will be a public concentration on Plaça de Catalunya in favour of refugees. We are around 18 persons. The host is leading through the order of the day, always mentioning the time frame for each topic to be discussed. Who is hosting is decided internally, as my conversation partner has told me before. The second point of the agenda is to form working groups for different issues and decide on responsible persons. It is said to have proposals, discuss them, and then find a person responsible. Several people show their hand to speak, the host notes them down creating an order. One woman mentions that there are other assemblies where specific topics can be discussed. [...] Afterwards a man talks ten minutes about the topic housing, he spreads handouts with several pages, explains that housing should be treated much more like a right and explains a program. He also mentions

another event with Ada Colau about this topic on the following Saturday. After this a man speaks, who is also a representative of the assembly: "This is an example for what the assembly is good, namely, that someone with a topic can present, work on it, interconnect. We connect ourselves in meetings."

April 2016

An older man working on housing in Ciutat Vella spreads some copies of information material explaining that has been done and next steps. The host says that he will be sending out an e-mail with the groups, so people can subscribe and help.

April 2016

We are talking about the working groups. A younger woman helps the organization of the Fiesta de Sant Joan in the neighbourhood. She says that they are still searching for people to help in the working groups: communication, bar, decoration and so on. Who can help? The man concerned with housing is also alone and searching for other people to support this project. The younger woman says that there is a lack of people, there is a lack of people in the working groups.

May 2016

The first point of the agenda gives 15 minutes for the working groups. The man concerned with housing tells about a house at La Rambla which has been bought. It was a house only with neighbours and offices and now there will be probably a restaurant put inside. "With this house we can observe how things are developing, for the future." But he himself is alone and it would be great if someone would join for research.

June 2016

Today I arrived too soon at la Negreta and I am having a chat with two members of the assembly. Then we talk about Ciutat Vella and they tell me that Ciutat Vella as the historic core of Barcelona is losing slowly its identity.

The working groups are very important parts of the territorial assemblies, especially for their self-understanding. As can be seen in this ethnographic example, however, it is difficult for the assembly of Ciutat Vella to build up their working groups. In an interview one respondent told me, that "people do not offer their help, and are not used to work together, if someone proposes something it is criticized why is it done like this and someone else wants to do it" (Silvia 12150:13200).

According to her diagnosis, there is a lack of the capacity to engage in terms of action and not only in terms of discussion and critique (Silvia 12150:13200). She points out, that "critique is important, but there has to be a step beyond that (Silvia 12150:13200). Thus, according to her, the assembly has "little social capital", and there are "few initiatives, activities, thematic works" (Silvia 9576:10271). In her opinion, the "serious situation of living in Ciutat Vella, more than in other neighbourhoods, made people tired to live in this context creating an attitude why collaborating? This increasingly transforms the assembly into a space where people complain about what is happening rather than as a space of work" (Silvia 10540:11635). She says that "in other assemblies it is not like this, they have resources, not only economic, but of training, experience how to construct, not only to relate to the municipal group, but to situate themselves as an assembly in a more autonomous manner" (Silvia 10540:11635). Estel tells me, "moreover on the level of Ciutat Vella there are too few people involved in the assembly who do real work in the streets, there are a

lot of people coming to the assemblies and talk a lot, but then effective work, little, I am not referring to campaigns, campaigns are done easily, you post bills, disperse flyers and that is for a month, my son can do that, but to have initiative, think something through, identify actors and so on, this is a different story” (Estel 22496:23327). According to her “of the 30 persons in the assembly, I can count with the fingers of the two hands who is really effective” (Estel 22496:23327). Thus, political work and, centrally, political action is understood as going beyond deliberation, internal critique and thinking about possible solution, but about actually doing and implementing concrete actions.

Political Vision and Ideal of Barcelona en Comú

Concerning the internal organization resp. internal democracy throughout different organizational levels, I will explain what kind of political project activists of Barcelona en Comú construct, their political ideal and vision, their understanding of the municipalist movement as well as the role of new politicians, which will be summarized under the notion of doing new politics. In a second step, I will slowly enter the realm of organizational levels, depicting once more the working of the assembly of Ciutat Vella and the municipal group in order to scrutinize their relation afterwards. This is where I will focus on conflicts concerning internal matters of the assembly, as well as conflicts regarding the assembly with other organizational levels. It will be soon rendered visible, then, how ideal and practice differ within the political realm and create a gap, filled with affects. Further, by seeking solutions to solve these conflicts and manage this gap, they innovate their political organization. Thereby, it is discussed, how political representation and participation is understood and implemented in decision-making processes.

Central to this are the questions: “how do we organize as a political party? And how do we chose or elect the people who represent us?” (Núria 18131:18282). As Barcelona en Comú is part of the municipalist movement within the territory of Spain as well as in the world, the city as a small territory where economic, social and political change can be introduced becomes important (Jacint 22508:22815). There is an awareness of being the government in a world city, as Barcelona is described as such and of similar importance as London or Paris (Flor 12310:13857). However, it is also described as a fractured city of deep inequalities throughout the neighbourhoods (Jacint⁶; Núria 6047:6220). Winning the election of the city hall of Barcelona includes the metropolitan area as well, such as Hospitalet or Cornellà (Emili 13879:14192). Thus, the government of Barcelona develops a comprehensive understanding of the city as an area and as the basis for politics.

⁶ As the Commissioner of Social Economy and Solidary Cooperativism told me, in some of the ten districts there exist economic indicators of emergency. For example, Nou Barris, Sant Andreu and Sant Martí are among the poorest neighbourhoods, where they have the highest number of unemployment and the income per head is under the average.

The Political Vision and 'Collective Horizon'

One of the objectives of the new government is to "reduce inequality, and empower citizens to intervene" (Núria 5887:5974). As Barcelona is considered an unequal city, they aim at intervention from the city hall to reduce inequalities, but "not only reactive in form of a financial rescue package", but structurally and in terms of social capital, "how power is distributed among sectors, the inequality of visibility and the capacity to influence" (Núria 4578:5046). Their political project is founded on the realization that political action is more than an occasional vote. According to a respondent, "people are transformed into spectators of the vote" (Arnau 16943:17175). However, "the person who votes is the one who actually makes democracy, it is not the system, nor the politicians, but actually the people who are making it" (Estel 32930:33174). Thus, the citizen is placed back on central stage of the political reality – at least when it comes to the wish to live in a democracy. A respondent contextualised the developments that lead to the strengthening of the municipalist movement by saying that "the economic system has coopted the sovereignty of the governments, on European level it perverted the legislative system" and "the interest of the institutions differs from the interests of the majority of the people" (Núria 13544:13861). These statements can be directly linked to what Crouch calls post-democracy. Based on this, there is a "necessity to think about how to combine representative democracy with participative democracy, not voting every four years and stop" (Flor 20120:20265).

Thus, municipalism serves as a foundation for their political project, as "understanding political action in the service of the people, public power closer to the people, the development of public politics in terms of diagnostics as well as application has to be based on the participation of the citizensry", which is why a central term is "co-production of politics regarding diagnostics as well as determination of which politics and the execution of these politics" (Jacint 11027:11623). Therefore, "to be a democratically elected government does not give you a white card assuming all executive power and public responsibility, but we have to be permanently linked to the citizensry in general" (Jacint 11875:12438). This is why Jacint explains that there are "two characteristics of municipalism: democratic profoundization, the real execution of democracy, and the co-production of politics associated with a permanent state of evaluation through the population" (Jacint 11875:12438). This is the political ideal which is shared by participants and activists of Barcelona en Comú on all organizational levels and constitutes them as a community. As will be seen, the way and form of how to actually implement this notion of politics is continuously hotly debated (Jacint 11625:12134). However, "the will for transformation", "the sense of the common", and politics which is "oriented toward the benefit of the citizensry, opening the possibility of an agreement with other political forces" lays ground for political involvement of activists of Barcelona en Comú with

differing backgrounds (Jacint 23349:24461). This is also illustrated by a respondent's statement, "we will fight together to change Barcelona" meaning that "fighting together equals maximum participation" (Mateu 36704:37411). However, the objective of creating maximum participation also entails a change the role of politicians.

The New Politician: Citizen, Accountable, and Transparent

"We will never forget who we are, where we come from and why we are here" (No oblidem mai qui som, d'on venim i per què som aquí) is the slogan of political leaders of Barcelona en Comú (and of En Comú Podem on regional and national levels). Towards the public, they construct themselves as citizens and neighbours which conveys a sense of proximity, closeness and accessibility. This construction negates being a politician as a professional career, as it is connected to the creation of political elites based on social advantages, such as coming from a certain family background (Silvia 31336:31653). The family background is a traditional source of the formation of centralist elites, and hereby called into question in order to facilitate political participation independent from one's personal background. This is also why a respondent told me that she would not call them politicians, "because now it is a profession and I think it should not be", but a "political cargo who does new politics" (Estel 26270:27863). Moreover, it is said that nowadays, given the technological developments, "the possibility to have good relations with citizens is bigger" (Silvia 31336:31653). Apart of the opportunities that are given online, activists of Barcelona en Comú give offline, real experiences a high importance. As one respondent explained, "we do not shield ourselves from the people, we are well known in the neighbourhoods, people know us, our names, they ask us directly, complain, protest, but there we are, there we are, there we are, and they see you in the street, we talk to each other" (Emili 21279:21609). Emili explains that they are perceived as "normal people in the institutions" who are "new, with no experience with politics before and I have the sensation that the citizens are grateful that we articulate our opinions openly" (19300:20061). Regarding the propagandist slogan mentioned at the beginning: 'who they are' is citizens and neighbours, 'where they come from' are the neighbourhoods of Barcelona and spaces of political activism, and 'why they are here' refers to the change they want to bring to the city and institutional politics in general.

As Roc explained, "the city hall is a government of proximity, we want to enter the everyday, the political to enter in the everyday, to take decisions together with everyone" (Roc 16571:17021). This proximity is said to be created through the political the entering of the political into the realm of the everyday apart from the institutions. Its aim is to normalise everyday political participation of ordinary citizens. It is distinguished by two factors: closeness to the citizens and

their life realities, regarding the comprehension and rationalization in terms of what is said as well as how it is said, accountability and transparency. Thus, a new politician has to break the distrust between people and politicians (Arnau 22720:23976). He also gave Ada Colau as the example non-plus-ultra for a new politician, because “when she talks people understand, this is very important, it generates trust around her” (Arnau 22720:23976). So there is a kind of levity and informality around the way how the elected cargos present themselves, which is considered as very important. This is why one respondent told me “there is the need to multiply those moments when Ada or Gala (regidora of Ciutat Vella, a/n) descend to the plaza anew and explicate, but not to the militants of Barcelona en Comú, but to the general citizensry” (Estel 29153:30045). To publicly explain what they are doing and which kind of problems they encounter was done more at the beginning, but within the first year of the mandate they did not keep up with it. According to her, “Gala has to do it, Ada drinks coffee with the neighbours, explains and this is useful” (Estel 29153:30045). Along with the exchange between representatives and citizens, spaces of encounter also serve for accountability. This is crucial as the “public audience neither the plenum of the district are sites of accountability, but places where the citizens interpellate” (Estel 29153:30045). Mechanisms of accountability are perceived as necessary, as to maintain the aforementioned continuous exchange between institution and citizensry. One way of creating a ground for this is the ethical code which was signed by all political cargos of Barcelona en Comú. The ethical code entails regulations concerning the representatives. The most frequently mentioned were the wage limit, a limited mandate, a restriction to work in one's professional area once the mandate has ended, and public agendas. The wage limit was discussed at length by one respondent as the most important aspect for her (Flor 16749:17674⁷). The political cargos are only allowed to earn an average wage or the amount one has earned before in one's job.⁸ Nevertheless, there is a limit and it amounts to an average Spanish wage. Then, the terms of office a political cargo can have are limited to two mandates, and only in very exceptional circumstances a third term. A third regulation, is that once the mandate has ended, the political cargo is not allowed to work in one's professional field in order to avoid clientelism. This is problematic to many of the current cargos (Roc 28285:30703). Lastly, all of the political cargos have public agendas online, so the citizen is able to have a look on their calenders, who they are meeting up with and “see that one has taken a decision in interest of

7 She said: “The first very important difference, which is not done by anyone else, everyone is a lot of blabla, but if someone touches their wallet, no, the wallet cannot be touched. All cargos of Barcelona en Comú have given themselves a wage limit and the rest is used for other things. And this is for me a very important and fundamental difference, because it is very easy to say there is equality and inequality of a power, but my wallet shall not be touched. I think, that the wallet needs to be touched (...)” (Flor 16749:17674).

8 „Set a maximum monthly net salary of 2,200 Euros, including expenses, in the understanding that this amount guarantees decent conditions in which to carry out the responsibilities and tasks of the office. This salary will be adjusted in line with responsibilities“, which is point 3.4. in: Governing by obeying. Code of political ethics, <https://barcelonaencomu.cat/sites/default/files/pdf/codi-etlc-eng.pdf>, 22.7.2016.

everyone without having a lobby pressuring behind, and also not the lobby of hippies that are your friends” (Estel 33391:33850).

Therefore, transparency is a method to serve for accountability. As one respondent explained, “until now it was also a topic that politicians would not have a public agenda, therefore it appeared that for example an interior minister met up rapidly with a president of the hotel industry in Barcelona between two appointments, the content of the meeting is not transmitted, but moreover nobody knows about it, and then a decision comes out and nobody knows where it comes from” (Emili 25759:26902). He goes on, “we made great advances in that realm and also in the transparency of open data”, and as a result the government publishes the budget and how the money is spent, so the information is accessible to the citizensry (Emili 25759:26902). Thereby, they wish to reduce any possibility for corruption, because “public money is sacred” (Emili 23925:24214⁹). This remark introduces a religious aspect into politics, as a belief system and a behavioral directive for political cargos. There are some things or principles that are sacrosanct, and touching and misuse them is tantamount to a sin.

A respondent working in the city hall believes that “the government and institution should be totally transparent, because I am the institution and therefore I am representing and moreover I have the capacities of distributing public resources, and therefore people have the right to know with whom I meet” (Núria 15865:16734). Nevertheless, she makes a difference between general transparency and transparency during political negotiations, as she says that “political negotiations are partly spaces of trust and relaxation, this is human, it means so that I can trust you and you understand me, because we never arrive at an agreement if you do not understand me and I do not understand you, if there is a camera in front and I have to expose all my weaknesses and strengths, because finally this is what generates empathy, this is certainly difficult in front of millions of people” (Núria 15865:16734). Her statement illustrates that there is a certain limit to transparency, and up to which point it is useful for the political work that is done in the institution. This contradiction creates differences between the political organization of Barcelona en Comú and its institutional prolongation. The limits have different meanings to people inside and outside the institution. Inside they are understood as being necessary in order to not endanger the political project. Outside, however, even though the assembly is the source of elected cargos, it means to not receive information equally. This is why trust among all actors is a crucial component of democratic political organisation. This contradiction facilitates qualitative differences between militants and representatives.

9 "because for us the money is sacred. It is sacred, because now we already know, 50 000 euros provide you to make outdoor clothes for playing cricket in el Raval which are being made right now and if they don't have it, they cannot make them." (Emili 23925:24214)

The Way of Doing Politics: Dichotomy of Old and New

So what is the new about the new manner of doing politics by Barcelona en Comú and the municipalist movement? The definition of the new is made in contrast to what is denominated as old. Linking up with what has been described in the previous chapter, it is “a form of making politics, a manner of representation in the city hall, but moreover in the Generalitat (Catalan parliament, a/n) and in the central government, which marks a great distance between people and the political. Leaving corruption aside, these gentlemen have little closeness, little proximity to people.” (Emili 21711:22338). This is opposed to what is being done, with the new government, as “in the last eight months we met with everyone, to get to know each other directly, to deal with each other, to show one's face” (Emili 21711:22338). Moreover, the old is denominated by “a relation of clientelism, I do something for you, you vote for me, on all levels, district, region, without a transparent distribution and make decisions behind closed doors, on the left and the right” (Roc 8383:9069). Further, “the right and the social democrats have the support of capital, media, and other resources, whereas the left is dependent on the people on the streets and their mobilization” (Mateu 4466:5835).

Also, the wage limit of the new cargos is highly important as there are “no financial cuts on the salary of politicians and on their privileges, such as diets and official cars” (Flor 17677:17989). As mentioned before, their trajectory differs inasmuch as “the politicians usually enter in youth groups of political parties, and then start a career and at the end arrive at organs of power. Because of that they are always talking between themselves” (Roc 16289:16569). Regarding the participation of citizens, there were spaces of participation, “but they were poorly articulated” (Roc 10309:11718).

This generates distance to 'outsiders' contains them within their own lines of thinking and experience of reality, which is very different of the ones made of the general public and its implicit diversity. It further conveys a sense of political actors holding office that are part of an 'inside', which makes it possible for activists of Barcelona en Comú to construct a notion of outside, as in “we are the people from the outside, from the citizensry” (Roc 16289:16569). The outside denominates the place outside a certain circle of persons which is generally called an elite, and being outside the institution, and thus outside decision-making processes. This also calls into question who is governing whom: is it a distinguished group of people which is composed based on factors such as social, financial and economic capital (creating certain advantages regarding access) governing the masses, or are the masses governing themselves, as one respondent said, “we are citizens, we entered in politics and we govern ourselves, we do not let ourselves to become a party, and we do not want to” (Roc 29622:30348). This is further explained in the following quote:

Many say, I do not want to be a politician and I am not here to stay, this is very good, because if you are a politician what you want is to maintain as a politician, you have to do very little things, you have to avoid generating rejection. What is the best way to not generate rejection? Almost doing nothing, doing very little, no? (Roc 29622:30348)

As Barcelona en Comú attempts to change the functioning of the institution, their political project entails 'doing very much'. This undertaking bears the risk of causing rejection. However, their understanding is that democratic practice and democratic politics does not exist without contradictions and opposing perspectives. Instead of minimizing these by creating a rigid rule of political opinions which generates a static status quo, they rather attempt to integrate the contradictory logics of democratic politics into their organization and way of government. In this regard, the static status quo also involves that “old parties such as PP have some people in positions for over 30 years, this is really the political crisis that there are people who cannot be removed, but all cargos are revocable” (Emili 28827:30305). Flor agrees, “people stay in their positions, or in positions of power for eternity” (Flor 19711:19801). Against this backdrop, the limitation of mandates of political cargos shall enable rotation, thus, dynamization and movement. Emili explains, “if someone lacks dedication, does not work sufficiently, does not communicate sufficiently, then change the official” (Emili 28827:30305). This organizational principle was realized by the removal of an elected cargo of the assembly of Ciutat Vella within the first year, when trust and support was retrieved (Emili 28603:28826). Further, in some positions political cargos are changed every year, such as in the general coordination (Estel 15306:15600).

This description of the old and a group of people “who are used to act in certain manners” is called the political caste in Spanish left-wing populism (Emili 20888:21136). This term emerged through Pablo Iglesias, party leader of the political party Podemos, and refers also to corrupt practices in politics. As Flor told me, “in a representative democracy people are elected and then they do what they do, and often times they are corrupt” (Flor 18931:21393). In her opinion, it is difficult to decide everything through assemblies, but it is possible to learn from others. Hereby, she emphasised the human capacity to aspire for change and the capability to learn from existing examples. After giving me examples of direct or participative democracy in Switzerland or Great Britain she said, “here they do not account for anything, they stay in their cargo and do not account for anything” (Flor 18931:21393). What was quite interesting during my field work, was that the corrupt practices of politicians especially in the central government was naturalized. When I would watch Spanish TV, read the news or talk to strangers, people would often say, especially in regard of the newly emerged political parties and organizations, that 'of course, the people from Podemos are not corrupt, because they are new, just wait until they are working in the government for 40 years like PP, and they will be just as corrupt!'. Mentioning this note to a respondent during the interview,

she replied “the acceptance of corruption as something natural when doing politics is the greatest damage that has been done to the system” (Núria 17469:17785). To change this is a great challenge, because it is necessary to not only create spaces of participation and mobilize participants, but further to spark political imagination and an aspiration for change.

Aside from the ideological ideals and visions and their propagandistic methods of constructing a 'we' and a 'them', a 'new' and an 'old', Barcelona en Comú is a left-wing oriented political organization. Therefore it entails policies that are located within alternative left thinking, such as contracting firms that meet criteria of responsible management¹⁰, and subsidizing kindergartens, public schools, and accessible as well as affordable housing (Flor 18019:18765). The latter is very difficult in Barcelona, as the real estate market puts a lot of pressure and “the city hall has the capacity its budget has”, and this is often not competitive (Roc 5193:5727). A successful example in this regard is that the municipal water supplier wanted to increase the prices, an inquiry which the new government rejected and further lowered the price of water (Arnau 21743:22289). Barcelona en Comú also makes regular campaigns in order to inform and build awareness of specific topics. Regarding this, a respondent said, “no party ever did this” (Mateu 2351:23632). This is helpful in order to increase the capability of citizens to make concrete proposals. For in order to make new politics, concrete proposals are needed from neighbours with their knowledge of everyday life.

This is also important regarding negotiation, as Roc explained, “most of the people, the people from Iniciativa yes, but the rest are former activists or just normal people and not used to political negotiation. Besides we do not like it, well, we believe that the negotiations are not made among politicians, but among citizens, officials and politicians, between everyone” (Roc 11870:12467). Thereby, negotiations are seen in terms of co-production of different groups of people making up society, which also is an attempt to strengthen this relation. In regard of participation, Silvia thinks that nowadays there is “better knowledge on how to make participative processes and technology gives the possibility for collaboration in many ways, for example drafting up a document and sending it to different groups, making it accessible is much easier nowadays” (Silvia 31561:32426).

10 „The Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) is a set of socio-economic measures that may be formal or informal, individual or collective, which prioritise meeting the needs of people over making a profit. They are also independent from public authorities, guided by values such as equity, solidarity, sustainability, participation, inclusion and a commitment to the community. They are also promoters of social change. (...) Social and Solidarity Economy initiatives are present in all sectors of economic activity, from energy to culture and food. Barcelona City Council is fostering the establishment of economic structures in the city that are more social and supportive, by consolidating and nurturing the already thriving network of cooperative, social and solidarity economy organisations in the city and promoting new initiatives.“, <https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/economia-social-solidaria/en/what-Social-and-Solidarity-Economy>, 15.6.2016.

The Assembly as a Site for Innovation

As doing politics is mainly based on talking, exchanging ideas, drafting proposals and reach decisions, my ethnography is made up of discursive fragments, discussions, debates and thinking aloud. Political actions and innovations are often incorporated into “artefacts of modern knowledge” such as plans and drafts in form of documents and other printed material which can be circulated (Riles 2006 in Greenberg 2014: 118). Contradictions and correlations between what is being said and what is being done can be further observed in everyday actions before or after the assembly. Some solutions of current problems have been just thought of and implemented after my research had ended. However, the attitude of addressing critique honestly and freely within the assembly, as the political organization itself is in a constant process of evaluation, re-negotiation and transformation, enables an understanding of how far certain problems can be tackled and others not. The ethnography shall show the challenges militants as well as representatives are confronted with, and their different qualities. So how is the assembly perceived by the militants who form it every two weeks, and the political cargos who work with it? What kind of conflicts emerge internally and how are they solved or not by the assembly members?

A participant called the assembly the “most innovative part, which is really provoking the change, the assembly is the new, the different, which gives a different character to politics, nevertheless it is still necessary to find the manner how to do it” (Iker 17042:18434). Generally, he says, it is a “place to speak and to be heard”, but “not as an office of Barcelona en Comú where politicians come to make speeches, like within ICV or PSC” (Iker 32826:33987). It is “not a small group of militants versus a group of people who form part of a party, and if you appear there you are a stranger, and they give you a cookie and invite you for coffee, but you are not like an ape, no! No! Unless you have a special interest in joining the party, there is not much sense in going to the event” (Iker 32826:33987). He went on explaining, “in the assemblies it's different, in the assembly nobody asks you to join the party, neither it is asked of you to be in favour of the party, you can go there to complain „oy, to scream i dont know!“, you can go there and say that it is all shit! And you have your place, you have your moment to talk and to say it and you can keep on coming every week and nobody will kick you out because of it” (Iker 32826:33987). In order to describe how the assembly works, Iker uses a negative example of spaces of other political parties. Thereby, he references also a political party which is part of their confluencia (ICV). He claims that at spaces of other political parties one is invited to be present, but real participation, in the sense of having voice and being heard is limited or non-existent. In this sense he depicts how an exclusion of information and decision-making processes is taking place. At the same time, he constructs the assembly as not being of the institution, but of the neighbourhood, where one can meet militants and political cargos

in the institution, but is able to participate freely as a citizen and neighbour receiving the liberty to self-express. Following I provide several ethnographic vignettes from my field work.

April 2016

A woman speaks. She says that she is a painter from La Rambla. Some ask here whether she has contacted the assembly beforehand to say that she will be coming. She says she hasn't. She says she is here to listen and, "I don't believe in any political party". She states that she is here in order to try something out. People are nodding. She repeats that she is not believing in any kind of political party. The host of the session says "marvellous". She asks whether she can talk now about Las Ramblas? The host say that no, because now there is the part of the order of the day where they talk about groups and proposals. Shortly there is a little bit of confusion, people ask why she wouldn't be able to talk about it now. The host explains that it is necessary to keep on with the order of the day.

In this account the new participant can freely tell her reasons for her attendance. She expresses her statement which inherently rejects the assembly as being part of a political organisation which currently also functions as a political party in the government. The participant is able to share her opinion without being sanctioned for it. Her participation is not restricted because of her opinion, as the members want her to share her thoughts and also protest to a certain extent when this was refused. It is the procedural setting which does not allow her to proceed, as the order of the day structures the execution in a certain way.

June 2016

The next point of the agenda is concerned with internal, online communication. The discussion is tense and heated. People are talking chaotically. A man who is also a representative of the assembly opts for blocking a person from the online communication platform. A young woman asks for more context. The host says, "you don't understand, because you are new." The young woman says, "that is exactly why, so I can be more constructive and you are not giving me the possibility to." The host says, "all of us just want to finish with this topic." Another man says, "blocking him is like censorship for me." A man says that there should be a vote on it. A woman comments, "we are here for debate, to discuss political actions in the neighbourhood, not for personal disputes." Another participant says, "in order to block someone there has to be a concrete proposal and a vote." The host turns to the man sitting on my right side and tells him, "your e-mails have disturbed a lot of people in the last year", and that he should stop writing these kind of things on the platform. Later in an interview I learn that he had posted negative and insulting things about members of Barcelona en Comú in the online forum and a lot of people feel as his statements undermine the trust and collaboration in the organization.

In these ethnographic accounts, it is rendered visible that freedom of expression is practised in the assembly of Ciutat Vella. The person who misbehaved in the online forum is present, at the end of the discussion he is addressed directly and given possibility to respond. His statements had caused discontent and rejection to an extent, which introduced the idea of exclusion. However, understood as censorship, this solution was dismissed. Instead they decided to address the person directly to attempt to make him understand, that his kind of actions are not acceptable. Generally, statements can be made without fear of sanctions as long as they agree with the the unwritten ethics of conduct based on mutual respect.

As a space for expression and deliberation, the territorial assemblies shall “function as a prolongation of the city hall” (Iker 32826:33987). However, as it is an organizational unit which did not exist before in institutional politics, it is “not taken into account by other political parties in the city hall, because their officials are not used nor aware of it, and for them it is not existent” (Iker 17042:18434). Nevertheless, what is his emphasis of the assembly based on? In every order of the day there is one item which is 'the return of the municipal group', which is an institutionalized encounter with one's representative. Thus, this is when the (elected) political cargo working directly in the city hall returns to the assembly after 15 days in the institution, in order to present what has been done, inform the assembly members and discuss the content. As Iker explained:

before if you wanted to talk to an official or local councillor or any other politician of the district, you had to give in a form at the city hall and wait for their answer if they wanted to meet or not. It was very difficult to handle with them. Now every 15 days you see them, you have them in front of you and you can tell them in the face what is happening and I found that this is very good. It is a very, very important difference that needs to be cultivated, maintained, alimanted in a way and wanted, wanting this organism. (Iker 5921:8372)

Using verbs such as to cultivate, to maintain and to alimnt indicates growth, the passing of time to develop, and a pragmatic politics of the present which does not claim for definite solutions at once, but modifying construction over time. The assembly is seen as the site to foster this construction, as it is a space of encounter, information and communication between different groups of people and organizational levels: the militants, political cargos, and neighbours inasmuch as the political organization Barcelona en Comú, the city hall and the neighbourhoods of the city. As will be seen in the course of the following explanations, especially the coordination between political organization/assembly and city hall/municipal group generates a lot of tensions and conflicts. When the election was won and the activists entered the institutions, they hoped the movement would encompass the institution. Instead they increasingly had the sensation that the institution swallowed the movement. Against this backdrop, differences and separation emerged among activists who were part of the same movement before, and shortages of communication and organizational abilities came to the fore.

So, what is the municipal group? Feliu who works in the logistics department of the government says, that “the municipal group is the people who work in the city hall” (Feliu 9285:9344) The difference is actualized by Luisa who is a political cargo inside the city hall, “the municipal group is different from the organization” (Luisa 18041:18567). This means that the difference is made by both assembly members, and political cargos. The logistics specialist explains: “the municipal group is the maximum political organ, it is made out of eight people, but it is not very effective. They are working for Barcelona en Comú, but they are not thinking from the perspective of the

organization” (Feliu 94717:9674). He claimed that this was not, “because they do not have the will or do their work badly, but they do not have time” (Feliu 9417:9674). Being inside the institution limits the time the political cargo can think from the perspective of the organization, as they are confronted with the requirements of the city hall. This generates a sense of distance between different organisational levels.

Conflicts between Political Organization and City Hall

Having discussed discursive ideals, visions, ideologies and approaches of activists of Barcelona en Comú regarding their political project, I will now turn to conflicts regarding their internal organization. By reference to specific situations and discussions within the assembly of Ciutat Vella, I will discuss the relation between assembly and the city hall. In order to do so, I will depict the self-understanding of the assembly and the differences that are constructed with the city hall. Discussing the relation between political organization and the city hall, aspects of democratic ideals and practices such as representation and legitimacy, governable spaces, the self-making of citizens and qualities such as inside/outside and their mutual influence are scrutinized.

Self-understanding

There are two sides to the role of the assembly as an organizational entity within Barcelona en Comú and in relation to the city hall. On the one side, there are their aspirations and ideas about it. On the other side, there are shortcomings and conflictual potentials they criticize. The gap between the two is illustrated by the ethnographic examples added with the descriptions in the interviews.

March 2016

The discussion goes on, several requests to speak. Sometimes people are referring to each other, but they don't know all of each other's names. The word arrives at a younger woman. She says that the city hall and the assembly are two different things and it should be important to evaluate which are the distinctive roles that both play. Another woman mentions that she is already tired of that topic, stating “we are not the city hall”. An old woman says that “we search for solutions, but we are not the city hall”. Now, also the host turns to speak: “We don't have an institutional role, we are not the institutions. When the elections took place the role of the assembly was clearer defined and very important. But we still work for Barcelona en Comú.” A man says, “I am here because of the great hope that I have since the municipal elections. I think we need more young people, but okay, everyone is here for a reason, because of specific topics. We work here because of shared hopes.” Another man says that their politics is not yet determined, it is rather plural and diverse. It also depends on motivations for specific topics, which are important in the context of Ciutat Vella. Some topics are not specifically for Ciutat Vella, but more openly connected, like recently the refugees. Another woman says that the assembly is a political entity, a politic group, which is coincidentally in the proximity of the city hall. A man says: “People in Barcelona have problems. If they go somewhere to talk about them, they get an automatic answer and they are not helped. This assembly is a space which works differently.”

April 2016

I look around. People are dressed differently. One man wears a simple and casual pullover with a necktie. Another man wears a suit with a tie. A woman asks: "are we political party or not?" Another woman says, "I haven't seen any new people, except of you." She addresses me with her finger and asks me for my name. I tell her. She says, it is an important topic to talk about. There is not sufficient work. A man says, "we are 15 persons, sometimes less. As an assembly we are well organised. There is a lot of political debate. Advancing politics is advancing debate. Are we a political party or not? Or are we a social movement? The city hall are we." A man sitting at the table says, "we are a political party. The difference lies in something which is usually not a general objective of a political party, namely, which society do we want? Until now it is a sentiment, but we don't have a common idea. Which are the objectives? Important are projects in order to change the society. What is our role as assembly? Maybe it is not so clear, which is why less and less people join. We are the base of Barcelona en Comú and the base of the municipal group. We are supporting, but we support critically." The younger woman gives an input in saying, "we are an organ which gives critical support. This is not a contradiction, but a creation of an equilibrium. We should do more activism in the neighbourhoods, we are not doing enough things. It is difficult to do everything as the city hall, but we shouldn't be too pessimistic about it. We will not transform into outside activists, but into something that we have to find out continuously." The man with an elegant pullover says, "when the elections took place there was a good and critical movement and a lot of enthusiasm. Afterwards it decreased. Who are we? People who voted, from a lot of different backgrounds. We are part of a core of Barcelona en Comú and there are lines along which we are unified, for example to change the system and so on." A woman says, "what can the assembly be? We are what we are. Everyone of us feels responsible. Everyone has its specific background, but we can all feel it." People are coming through the door crossing the room and leave through another door. On the terrace next to us, there are other people from an other group assembling. Two women are getting restless, I don't really understand what is going on. Then a man with a tie talks, "this is a group like an embryo, because of the social history there are a lot of expectations. But there are no new things happening. For example regarding the topic of tourism. Three weeks before I was commenting the same thing. We could do more. Mostly we are just receiving a lot of infos, this and this and this. I don't get a real stimulus. There is news, expectations and then there is another news and its over." He laughs in a way that he fears to be received negatively. While he was speaking most of the others were listening with kind of unhappy faces, mostly because they were not agreeing with him. A women comments, "oh, please, no! You didn't come to the last assembly!" Another woman comments shaking her head, "no, now we have...". There is laughter. The man says, "the things that are done have to be done more effectively. For example, what is with El Raval? One year has passed, I thought that things would go faster!"

There is a continuous debate on the question of the role of the assembly. Thus, the assembly is highly self-reflexive. Some members understand it as critical support of the institution. However, members of the assembly are very critical, as one respondent told me, there is a tension between participants of the territorial assembly, the thematic axes and the city hall, thus, a tension between inside and outside (Roc 20878:2133). This is based on the assumption "that the assemblies are spaces of decisions, but there are not quite, they were at the beginning when the program was written and before the election, now they are not anymore, but the idea is that they are spaces of decision-making" (Roc 20878:21330). This is intensified through the fact that Barcelona en Comú forms a minority government and cannot impose their proposals of plans as they wish, on the contrary, "everything is negotiated, and very slow" (Emili 6079:6792). This is why voices are starting to get louder which are critiquing some aspects "in terms of participation and internal democracy, things that could be done better" (Emili 6079:6792). Thus,

we ask ourselves what we serve for, we have very little contact between top and bottom, we influence very

little that what the city hall is doing, they inform us, we receive information, and they do that very well, but we do not participate in the process of what is being done, in general what they do in the city hall is very good, because what the city hall is doing is based on demands made by social movements and associations which were very clear, however, we always ask ourselves what we do as the territorial assembly, we do not influence and now the truth, of course, we meet, we do things, but without knowing very well what it serves for. (Mateu 6868:7928)

This statement describes the challenge to create an useful participative mechanism with continuous influence on the decision-making process. At the same time, the assembly is seen as an important site for creating a relation of city hall and assembly as support or help (Iker 6006:6993). Further, “a lot of times the have to give response to some problems or agendas that the institution imposes and the assembly is not taken into account in these agendas and in these time frames and calenders. Then, the assembly claims to be taken into account, that it is asked, that it is questioned and informed before the decision is taken. Then, it seems like there is a lack of communication, but it is not a lack of communication, because really the politicians want, need the assembly” (Iker 18828:20662).

Against this backdrop, Iker says, that the new politicians have to first learn how to work within the institution, as “the time in-between, the transition to this new state, environment, set of tasks, was very short, bound to a certain moment in time, the election, as they had never candidated before, and never held a public office, to have certainty to tell us yes, this is what should be done, they need the feedback of the group of people, and this communication exists which is very important” (Iker 18828:20662). Mateu explains that “they said the assemblies have to do what they want to do, it is not as they tell us, we have to do what we want, the problem is that we do not know what it serves for” (Mateu 13467:13748). He goes on by saying, “in the assembly there is a lot of talking, a lot of discussing, but it does not transfer, the assembly exist for being, and we have lost the hours in an assembly and afterwards what we did died there” (Mateu 17468:17649). “What is needed”, as another respondent told me, “is a compromise from the executive and the general coordination to take into account the assembly and debates taken place within the territory” (Estel 16268:17312). Arnau sees the reasons for this organizational difficulties in a lack of time, as he explains, “Barcelona en Comú did not have time to understand itself yet, neither that we look at us in a mirror to see who we are” (Arnau 7924:9583). Moreover, he thinks that the “organization needs to support the municipal group, in form of critique, proposals, information on what is going on in the neighborhoods, but the channels of communication are not functioning, because of a lack of time to organize, every party, political organization needs time to consolidate, organize itself, to understand who they are” (Arnau 7924:9583). According to him, it is a “great effort to be participative, and

yes, we know more of each other, tell each other, but everyone has an impressive agenda, it is difficult to come together, the everyday is eating them up, and then there are topics that are more urgent and come to the forth and there is no time to talk about other topics and topics that seem less urgent are put aside” (Arnau 7924:9583). As a result, there is the constant contradiction that it is “either solved in the everyday or in profound debates” (Arnau 7924:9583). Against this backdrop, the political cargos in the institution have to work within a different time frame than the militants in the assembly, and this leads to tensions. For some decisions have to be made “overnight”, and they lack the proper tools and working dynamics to serve for effective information and communication channels (Iker 1888:20662). This was illustrated by a saying that was mentioned by two respondents, and goes back to a cartoon called Mafalda by Quino, is that “the urgent does not leave you time for the important” (Roc 7340:8145; Carme 12647:14210).



Quelle: Mafalda asks the construction workers, “Searching for the roots of the national?” One of the men answers, “No, girl, a gas leak.” Mafalda walks on thinking, “As always: the urgent leaves no time for the important.”¹¹

Information

The problem for the militants of the assembly is that “we are too enthusiastic (laughs), and we want to do too many things” (Estel 22496:23327). In order to be able 'to do', informations have high value, and “the work has to be distributed, which is not taken place sufficiently” (Mateu

¹¹ Comic: <http://mafaldaylavidacotidiana.blogspot.de/>.

17839:18270). In this regard, there are two possibilities of information channels: based on encounter and based on online tools. The latter is done in the following way: “after each meeting there is a document which is shared via e-mail including what has been discussed and decided, the only who does not share a document is the municipal group, but from the others every reunion there is a document” (Flor 9275:9550). This statement already implies the critique of limited access to information which is dealt with within the institution and not distributed to the political organization and its organizational entities. Further, it is difficult to maintain regular interaction, because the councillor is often not able to come, because of a lack of time, and the aforementioned difficulty to construct the help and support of the assembly (Silvia 8032:8957). According to Silvia, this problem is similar in all spaces (Silvia 8032:8957). Thus, it is critiqued that there is not enough coordination “between the city hall and them who work inside the city hall and us, each of us have their own work and are quasi volunteers” (Flor 6271:7277). Subsequently, there are ethnographic accounts concerning this topic assembled.

June 2016

The host is telling different things. Two representatives from the city hall of Ciutat Vella are coming in. Among them is the topic of what happened in the neighbourhood of Gracia in order to clarify. A woman says, “let’s clarify! Because we only know what we know from the press!” The councillor says she can tell a bit more about it, if they want and clarifies how it happened.

June 2016

There is a point on the agenda concerning the relation between the municipal group and the assembly. A younger woman says, “we have noticed outside of the assembly that there is a lack of direct communication with the councillor regarding specific topics. If we have questions or doubts, how should we proceed? Should we send an email? How shall we establish contact?” The discussion goes around. A woman says, “we as people from Barcelona en Comú are capable to think. We need information and documents, what shall we do without them? There is no constant information flow!” The councillor says, “one week there are meetings with PSC, the other there are meetings only with people from Barcelona en Comú, it is rotating. Often I am overwhelmed of all the different topics, especially when I am not an expert myself. But I come to this assembly. There is actually a lot of documentation, but sometimes we cannot share everything, because a lot of these documentations are under construction.” The same woman says, “it is not about more information, but about enabling more discussion. One thing is information, the other thing is discussion. It looks like there is you from the institution and us from the streets. Last year at the Fiesta de Sant Joan, here at La Negreta, you were sitting at one table and we were sitting at another. This year it was the same. It is not accidentally.” The councillor, “we need more space for political discussions.” He goes on describing when the councillors meet each other and that the councillor of the district is rarely present, just around once per week or so. The man at the table says, “We need more spaces for debate. To communicate is to work between us. There are different entities: the municipal group and the neighbourhoods.” The discussion becomes chaotic, people are talking messily. The host is trying to bring order into it. A man says, “in some areas it is like we are not Barcelona en Comú. You can write us an e-mail, I don’t know anything, we don’t know anything, it is not good.” The discussion goes on. A younger woman says, “we need to be informed about scheduled dates. Without information we cannot be proactive.”

As could be seen, the militants of the assembly perceive a distance and separation between them and the people inside the institution. However, it is possible to debate this issue directly and openly,

and the reaction of the representative is acknowledging and empathetical. Nevertheless, the account of the debate shows that the representative creates transparency and trust by giving a detailed description of his everyday and admitting his own personal flaws.

The information channel is said to work well bottom-up, so that “the assembly of the territory communicates the results of its debates to the general coordination” (Estel 16268:17312). However, Silvia does not perceive this relation of communication as “a collaboration between the two”, but “simply a transmission of information” (Silvia 8039:8747). Further, somehow these results seem to get lost “between the general coordination and the executive, there are no mediating actions on the level of the territory” (Estel 16268:17312¹²). Further, Estel observed a kind of nepotism among the political cargos in the institution: “not like with PSC, that one is friends with the councillor, but officials of Barcelona en Comú are coming from social movements and are still friends with the people they have worked with, so information reaches to the friends of the social movements before it even reaches to the assemblies, because they do not identify us as inside their circles of militant friends” (Estel 19817:20642). This poses a big problem to the functioning of the organization. An approach to tackle this issue is illustrated by the following ethnographic account:

June 2016

There are approximately 20 people present. At the beginning of the assembly they discuss their wish to write a letter to the consellera in order to position themselves as the assembly of the district. They want to express that they wish to be more valued and that issues concerning the district, like tourism etc, should first arrive here.

Thus, the critique is that the municipal group “does things at the top and decisions come to the bottom of the organization in a way as ‘we ask you for approbation of a decision that has already been taken’” (Arnau 7924:9209). In return, the municipal group complains that it does not have the support of the organization in form of critique, proposals, and sufficient information on what is going on in the neighbourhoods (Arnau 7924:9209). This is also important in regard of another problematic which is the lack of coherence within the political organization. As one respondent put it, “the organization does not have a coherent position, neither organs to achieve a common position, which is why the municipal group finds itself disoriented, because the organization is not capable to give one voice or direction” (Arnau 7924:9209). Thus, Arnau describes it as having the feeling that the organization loses its identity towards the municipal government (Arnau 6424:7116).

12 This is illustrated by an example the same respondent gave to me, as one time “the assembly of Sants (district of Barcelona, a/n) decided to not go to the plenum, because they had not received the documents in time to prepare it, so they sent a letter to the entire organization, afterwards the way of doing changed, because there was a lot of pressure” (Estel 16268:17312). Thus, the municipal group has a reactive manner of dealing with issues, so that the political organization only influences the city hall if they build a protest which is loud enough (Arnau 7924:9209).

Debate

There are members of the assembly who criticize that it is not clear who decides on the topics dealt with in the organization, and the speculation that it is happening according to a top-down logic.

Thus, one respondent explained, “what I see is that the executive puts the topic on the table. The territory can bring some topics to the general coordination, but generally political topics are mostly coming from the executive, this is a problem for me, who decides the topics that are treated is an organ that is composed by some few people who are moreover trained persons, there is restricted possibility for people to identify problems, talk about them, decide among everyone” (Estel 13851:14382). Also another respondent criticized, “I think that normally it is them who inform the assembly, it is not the assembly saying, we want to do this, but they inform us that they are doing this, the direction is top-down, it is not bottom-up” (Mateu 11261:11549).

Feliu who is working inside the city hall told me, that they had a pre-entry ideal of permanent consultation and the political organization would be part of the everyday of the city hall (Feliu 5626:7655). They have now learned that “this is absolutely impossible” (Feliu 5626:7655). He explained that there are “around 50 decisions a day”, and it is “impossible to have debate in all spaces as part of the decision-making” (Feliu 5626:7655). The people work 12 hours a day and are overwhelmed, and they “are slowly learning that it is necessary to advance and have an accountable rendering a posteriori and later in the fundamental phases there is a consultation, but questioning for each topic, it is impossible” (Feliu 5626:7655). The problem is summarized the following by one respondent, “decisions are voted, but there is a lack of debate, or there is debate but no vote” (Silvia 23526:24177). In general, however, the same respondent emphasised that “there is a lot of debate, only there were so many elections in the past years that some topics were put aside, and then when the decisions come up there is a lack of time to debate, such as it was with PSC” (Silvia 23526:24177). I will look at the pact with PSC at greater detail depicting the debates around it in the assembly.

April 2016

The third point of the order of the day is concerned with possible municipal pacts. They talk about PSC. There is fear that they enter the government and take specific power. Some say CUP cannot enter, others say that they don't know that. The question is whether or not to make a pact with PSC. What can be said in favour and what against it? One fear is that PSC will use their spaces of power and dominate the city hall of Barcelona. A man notes that it could be a strategic support. A woman says, “we feel badly treated and ignored”.

May 2016

Next point of the agenda is the government pact with PSC. The woman who takes the notes says, “I am not in favour. I am not in Barcelona en Comú so things are going like this. I am here, because I think that political decisions can be made together and with an active participation of people. I will vote for no.” A younger woman comments, “do we want a government which is competent and able to act which is different from the one before? In case we don't want the pact with PSC, we should maybe write a letter or something,

because in a vote, it is not possible to say why not.” A participant says, “we won, because we want to do a different kind of politics, we want to do politics in a different kind of way, we want to do politics in a different way. With PSC this is not possible. My stomach hurts from this vote. Should I be pragmatic? I don't know how to deal with this vote.” Another woman says, “we should hope that the party can change and I think that they can. Why are we here at this situation now? Because we are not totally capable to do the work yet.” The younger woman says, “we want to show the citizens that we are able to make a pact. I would be happy about a yes. The justice system and the administration are hard to mobilize. I don't think that everyone is lost. There are chances for synergies.” A man says, “I don't know what I will vote. I don't know what I will vote. I don't make propaganda for either of the choices. For me the only possible pact is with CUP, but they barricade themselves from the very first moment on. Esquerra blockades and is outside.” Another participant says, “there will be little participation in the vote, but it will show that the political organization works. Barcelona en Comú is able to influence PSC and PSC is a valid force for a city hall of change. It is also a historic moment for Barcelona.” Another woman comments, “we need trust in ourselves and there is no other possibility. You can already see in the Diputació how they work and I agree, they lack motivation.” The host says, “I don't think it's such a disaster. Hereby, we will open a certain discussion about organization. But we cannot trust in PSC. They will try to undermine our program.” A woman says, “I don't think they are interested in change. I imagine they will want to work with PP.”

The pact with PSC was a very conflictual topic during my field work and hotly debated over the course of several months. As was shown through the ethnographic examples, the main critique is that the topic “arrived very late in the organization” and could not be debated with profoundness as there were “not all informations at hand to reflect, and the information flow was very closed” (Luisa 18000:21559). Luisa who is a non-elected political cargo asks, there are “factors that do not allow to open the information, so how can be a process installed in spite of that?” (Luisa 18000:21559). The councillor of participation of the city hall explains that the lack of internal debate on the pact with PSC “is weakening the organization” (Alba 6085:6465), but also “it is not necessary to give all the information” (Alba 7241:7383). The pact with PSC was accepted reluctantly, and Mateu had the “impression that people in the organization were against it” (Mateu 8983:9310). Additionally, this form of executing the decision-making affected people's motivation and belief in the political project. As Iker explains,

With this pact the people really started to demotivate. It was understood that it is a necessary pact. In order to govern. We understood that the group of the government really were, let's say, they were in a difficult situation. But on the other side I believe that the municipal group knew to listen to the rejection or discontent of the people and I believe that the municipal group is in a process of re-structuring their decision-making process. (Iker 22007:25121)

His estimation that they “knew to listen to the rejection or discontent” is due to the fact, which is also in the ethnographic examples at hand, that the representatives came to the assembly in order to reassure them that they need and wait for the approval of the territory assembly and watch out to do it differently the next time (Iker 22571:22850).

The entrance of PSC is not noticeable to the same extent in all departments. In others, such as 'Feminisms and LGBTI' they do enter in debate with officials of PSC, but do not directly work with them (Luisa 21716:23403). Nevertheless, it is an interesting exchange, as Luisa who works in

the department of 'Feminisms and LGBTI' told me. Sometimes they have antagonistic positions, for example when it comes to prostitution or the Plan of Gender Justice, which shocked them (Luisa 21716:23403). This did not come as a surprise for her, as in her opinion, they do their way of politics unchanged for over 30 years (Luisa 21716:23403).

Decision-Making

The provided ethnographic accounts also inherently pose the question, who takes the decisions within Barcelona en Comú? There are different techniques of reaching a decision: based on the ethical code everything has to be created in a collaborative, open and participative manner, so there are votes in the plenum, or online (as for the pact with PSC). Or the local councillor has to make a decision, consults with the respective thematic axis and decides it together with them (Silvia 21710:23393). According to Silvia, “a lot of decisions are made in the general coordination, some do not reach to all spaces, because they are often fast decisions” (Silvia 21710:23393). The more critical voices within the assembly centrally claim that decisions are taken in the city hall, and not within other organizational entities which were spaces of deliberation and decision before, and results in a crisis of identity (Mateu 6994:7928). Mateu presumes that “it is a very small group of people which takes the decisions and sends them to the general coordination, which alters them a little maybe, but generally accepts them, and then they arrive at the organization” (Mateu 8291:8982). He emphasises that he is not complaining, because he approves the decisions that are made, however, he shares these critical stories from inside (Mateu 26795:27447). For on an organizational level it is not clear to him who decides what, and instead of decisions going from bottom-up, “until now”, he says, “almost all decisions came from top to down” (Mateu 9393:10216) on the municipal level inasmuch as on the level of the district (Mateu 13116:17311). He is a very critical voice within the assembly, who says that “Barcelona en Comú as organization does not participate in the decision-making processes” (Mateu 13116:17311). This is partly because of the ideological diversity within the organization which makes it hard to build one unified voice, as mentioned before (Arnau 4877:5440). As this plurality is not yet effectively organized (Mateu 13116:17311).

Against this backdrop, there is a confusion about Barcelona en Comú as a political organization and the city hall, as their positions do not have to be the same (Mateu 14103:15655). He illustrates this with an example regarding the street vendors in Barcelona. He tells me that from Barcelona en Comú emerged the idea to make a citizen card for street vendors, but on the way up to the city hall the idea died, and it was said it could not be done (Mateu 15658:17292). Then, there

were debates on the budget, and CUP proposed the same idea and it was confirmed and implemented as a proposal of CUP (Mateu 15658:17292). He states, that this happened, “because the city hall and the organization are not connected, and there is not sufficient communication from bottom-up” (Mateu 15658:17292). Therefore, this idea was implemented as a product of negotiation between the political cargos in the city hall and other political parties (Mateu 15658:17292). Moreover, there was no official position of Barcelona en Comú, only from the city hall (Mateu 15658:17292). According to him, there is the “necessity of creating positions of Barcelona en Comú where people of the organisation participate, so to be able to present the position and render visible differences to the negotiated results” (Mateu 14103:15655). He states, “this step does exist in the program, but not in reality” (Mateu 14103:15655). Feliu agrees that “the organization needs to have their own objectives” (Feliu 11688:13534). As the executive “has to be careful, cannot say or do something which results into a great problem”, it is necessary that there is a differentiation between them and the political organization, so they have their “own project that alimENTS the struggle” (Feliu 11688:13534). This links up with the question of Mateu, “why is it not possible to make proposals of Barcelona en Comú for the district? Instead there is the proposal of the local councillor which is not the same.” (Mateu 25143:26880). To him, “the government is negotiating with the other parties, lobbies, neighbours, but it is not Barcelona en Comú, it is the government, it has the negotiation, Barcelona en Comú needs to have a clear position of its own” (Mateu 25143:26880). Thus, they argue that there is a gap between government and political organisation which needs to be established and strengthened in order to an independence and autonomy of the political organization from the city hall.

As for the aforementioned reasons, the fear is articulated that they are already institutionalizing into a traditional political party (Flor 10923:12166). This entails that there is a hierarchy and top-down decisions without consultation of the bases, and at the bottom they obey and at the top are the major with her power firends (Flor 10923:12166). She also told me, that she does not see this risk yet, maybe in the future (Flor 10923:12166).

Attempts of Innovating the Internal Organization

In spite of the internal critique that occurs, there is an indication to a pragmatic approach towards the innovation of the internal organization. Thus, Iker explains the organisation is basically working well and “there are and will be always flaws and weaknesses” (15152:16161). He states, that it is a slow process of thinking, rationalization and analysis, which would also require a position who is concerned with the task of evaluation and development of plans of innovation (Iker 15152:16161).

Nevertheless, Iker states, “we are not perfect and we will never be”, and that there are always situations that need to be fixed along the way (15152:16161). These statements also indicate that there is a gap between political ideals and realities, namely flaws and contradictions, which have to be continuously dealt with. Greenberg called this “politics of disappointment”, which denominates living in contradiction – between expectation and regret (2014: 8f). However, this does not include an absence of hope. On the contrary, the statements indicate optimism and a pragmatic approach to the constant challenges of everyday (political) life.

Additionally, Silvia describes the first year as very improvised, as doing without really thinking about it, without a real plan about how they wanted to organize themselves (Silvia 4399:5426). As the organization is still young, there are organizational entities which had been planned from the beginning, but have been not activated yet, such as the political council (concerned with the political positioning and strategy of the organization) (Arnau 4877:5440). Regarding this example, it is a result of the crumbling down of the status quo every since 15M in Spain (Arnau 18414:19479). The economic and political crisis also resulted in a time of constant elections on all administrative levels, which steals them the tranquillity and sensitivity to elect a political council, as “the reality always eats us up” (Arnau 5443:5828).

However, based on the rising critique of a lack of internal democracy, the general coordination conducted a diagnostic within the whole organization and initiated a process of re-structuration (Silvia 4399:5426). This process is based on a document called the Plan of Organizational Strengthening which wants to enhance the organization in the areas of internal politics, internal and external communication, concrete relations and strengthening, feminization of politics and participation and transparency (Silvia 15321:15674).

July 2016

Next topic on the agenda is the Plan Enfortim. The host says, “the summary was spread via e-mail. It is about phase D and how we develop the organization and function of Barcelona en Comú. It is about general objectives and projects.” She explains the plan. She says, “in September every assembly and space decides autonomously about the plan.” A woman asks, “a plan for what? My critique is that it is all words and no actions. But it could also just be my obsession...” The host says, “This plan is about how to create which kind of organization. It is not about which kind of public politics. It is a plan for us how to organize ourselves. There is another meeting where they are working on it and we in the assembly shall talk about it and decide on it.” The discussion evolves. The scientist says, “I don't agree. The diagnosis and plan wasn't debated, but they just gave us a ready-made plan. And this plans is concerned with everything.” A woman says, “there are things in the plan that I like and others I don't like. For example, what kind of collaboration can we have with other social movements? We are in the city hall and it appears we are more and more organised like a political party.” The host says, “in September we make our plan and if we don't agree, then we don't agree. This plan is being made for a long time now and it is possible to engage in constructive critique on it for equally long. The plan is concerned with democracy in general. There are shortcomings in the process and the opinions of the assembly are not sufficiently represented, everyone knows that. There are a lot of topics to work on and in the internet, on the online platform everyone can engage in and work on it.” Another woman comments, “there is a lack of internal democracy.” A woman says, “there are spaces where

things get discussed and then later, in reality, it doesn't work. We meet every 15 days and in this time everyone gets loaded with opinions and incidents and we feel the urge to talk about it. So there is too much discussion for such a limited time. We should also ask ourselves, in terms of campaigns, which topics do we want to work on? And how can we maintain the motivation, which is also hard to do." An older man says, "the question of internal democracy. We need channels of participation and democratic decision-making. We need to install them. What about the relation between Barcelona en Comú as a political organization and the municipal group, the municipal government which is now with PSC? Sometimes we as Barcelona en Comú the political organization are against what the government is doing. But how can we make it visible? How can we participate?" A woman says very angrily and loudly, "Barcelona en Comú does big things well, for example the water supply, etc. Individually, I do campaign for Barcelona en Comú and its politics in my neighbourhood, in my street. They do diagnosis and don't have time for work in the streets, which would be the task of the assembly in my opinion. I am very dissatisfied with the relation with the municipal group. Barcelona en Comú works like a political party and doesn't help with the work in the streets." A man says, "some people are angry about what is being done in the municipal group. Who does the politics? Not Barcelona en Comú." A man at the table says, "there is the coordination group where people of the municipal group go to and people from the assembly, this are other spaces with more time, exchange and explanations." She names the people from the assembly who will go there from now on: six members who are generally very active within the assembly.

Regarding the assembly of Ciutat Vella there are also innovations taken place based on the articulated critiques. One idea is to start a commission for thematic debates one time a month (Estel 19348:19815). This shall install more time to discuss the respective topics properly. Further, in order to enhance the information and communication channel between the territorial assembly and the municipal group, in the last assembly which I attended they decided to send two members of the assembly to the meeting of the municipal group (Arnau 15382:15678). There they do not have the right to vote, but the right to participate and have voice which enables them to represent the assembly in the debates (Arnau 15382:15678). They did not agree on further directives yet, such as e.g. whether they will be rotation of the representatives, however, the members attending the meetings of the municipal group are supposed to 'return to the assembly' and inform them on content of debates and decisions (Arnau 15937:16006). This installs an additional channel of accountability.

Finally, there is the critique that also the members of Barcelona en Comú who originally come from already existing political parties, such as ICV, are still used to be and work in a certain manner within the political realm and lack imagination (Mateu 19194:20807). One respondent remembered a situation before the elections were won and the initiative was still called Guanyem, that there were working groups and one participant with a background in ICV asked Mateu, "do you know what Guanyem should be?" (Mateu 19194:20807). He answered, "yes, a movement" which generated the reaction of rejection saying "no, it cannot be a movement, that is not possible" (Mateu 19194:20807). For my respondent this example illustrated that there is still a mentality of what is possible and what is not within the political realm, and a lack of political imagination (Mateu 19194:20807). Even though it is difficult to be movement and political party at the same time, it is

necessary “to understand it as a movement that entered the institution and to use the people who entered, and that we also entered in the institution somehow” (Mateu 19194:20807).

The Relation between City Hall and Citizens

The city hall as structure and the capacities of political cargos

“The city hall of Barcelona has a very technical structure of bureaucracy, it is independent and works very professionally” (Emili 24605:25578). Emili, a member of assembly and district's representative explained that, “when we entered we revised what has been done and what has not been done, there were things that were not very good, but in general we do not have the suspicion of corruption, there are things that are not very transparent, for example the relation between the hotel lobby and CiU, but we did not detect any corruption, that one gentlemen was involved somewhere, no, we did a series of controls” (Emili 24605:25578). However, the city hall poses other challenges with its rigid forms of organization, and the fact that it is “a machine which is working in a certain way over 30 years” (Estel 23400:24742). The activists who entered the city hall suffer under constant lack of time and are overwhelmed with the working load, which “sucks their life” and creates “a lack of sufficient relation with the organization, a distance” (Silvia 27331:27855).

One of my respondents who is the local council of the neighbourhood el Raval explained that his usual day starts at eight or nine in the morning with tasks such as “responding, discussing, writing things, then a lot of meetings, infinite meetings, with technicians, people from the house, people who come and have a meeting, later generally in the afternoon I talk to neighbours about specific things or you go to many spaces regulated through participation” (Roc 3239:4596). As the local council of el Raval he participates in debates, presents content there and also dynamizes the debates (Roc 3239:4596). He explains that “there are government spaces which are consultative committees, plenums which are more political, the district work the same as the Casa Grande, and there are councils of the neighbourhood, health, education etc. and then there is the public audience which is more with the councilwoman” (Roc 3239:4596). Núria who is from ICV told me about her everyday: “there are different days, some parts are reserved for resolving urgent topics of management of the services of the city, another part is listening to and meeting with the neighbours, associations, movements, give response to situations that exist, meetings with government team, visiting neighbourhoods and see situations” (Núria 3826:4564). She explains further, “sometimes you start at eight in the morning and stop at nine in the evening and each hour there is something else, without a pause, without having a moment to read or think, very intense, and sometimes I do

not know how I manage (laughs), basically it happens and sometimes you would like more time, but what frustrates me the most is the inertia of the administrative processes” (Núria 10889:11355). She emphasizes moreover, that “every week there is a commission of the government where we approve central plans, then debate, review of the municipal groups, every month there are a lot of commissions and plenum where things are debated, but then we also go to the neighbourhoods” (Núria 18916:19329). She also says that being inside the institution necessitates “time, empathy, and serenity” (Núria 12949:13391). In order to shape the process of democratization, Luisa explained that being inside the institution is to “be always put in the game, in doubts” which necessitates “carefulness of the forms, sometimes one does not see when one excludes, practice, repetition, to be mistaken, patience, to be humble, to leave some certain ideas about success, to situate it in something slow, cautious, tranquillity, understanding that there is no final objective, the process is so important, a manner of being: more attentive, more permeable and more connected to the things” (Luisa 15360:16738). Thereby, being inside the institution and being in the government constitutes a management of life, not only of others, but also of oneself. The political cargos express their political vision through a habitus which translates into specific action. This entails an incorporation of certain values, beliefs and norms which result into a specific way of existence within the framework of the political institution. As most of the political cargos are former militants coming from the social movements, there is a lot of outside pressure resting on their shoulders to do good work, as there was the “thinking that the good ones are put in the city hall because they will do it well” (Feliu 15012:15913). Therefore, between democratic ideals and the reality of democratic practice is a gap, and expectations and contradictions have to be managed.

However, the ideology of 'having sufficient debate' can also be problematic for some political cargos who consider themselves “more about action than about reflection” (Carme 14858:15498). Other representatives may be perceived as not having the capacities to sufficiently fulfil his or her tasks as a representative. In this regard, one member of the assembly criticized a representative of the assembly in the district of Ciutat Vella, as she had the impression that he was overwhelmed, not having the best memory, and is not as organized as the other representative of the district (Estel 17598:19346). Explaining, “if he does not tell you in the moment you pose the question he starts talking about something else”, which then cause problems of communication.

New Institutionalality

Summarizing, the notion of new institutionalality denominates a political culture of proximity which also decentralizes geographically (disrupts the logics of centre and periphery) and in terms of

participants (elite and the masses) (Beatriu 19593:20658). Moreover, it is understood as a management of public services shared between the public and the common (Alba 2205:2700). This entails that it is a government which “listens to us, that is not directing us in an interventionist manner” (Beatriu 13139:13673). This is why the institution gets an active and reflexive role: “the institution asks, dares to ask, thinks of asking” as well as “dares to learn, be interested in learning how to” regarding participative processes (Roc 16792:18742). However, a new institutionality effects the people inside the institution inasmuch as the citizens outside of it. Inside the institution, activists of Barcelona en Comú aim at introducing logics of connectivity opposing the “machine which is always fragmenting and dividing up” (Luisa 24495:24960). Luisa explains that they try to “animate, and bring people inside into movement so they get motivated for change, which at first was like a cultural shock for them (laughs), but then they slowly got motivated for change, independent of the ideology of each person” (24932:25497). As they created also new departments, this initiated movement inside the institution, as clerks and employees were animated to change their working place (Luisa 26349:26914). This is due to the fact that “people worked the same way having ever the same tasks over years and now others come and say let's do it another way, this also generates motivation” (Luisa 23809:26128). Roc explains, “they have 40 years of a certain manner of doing politics, with politics, criteria, objectives that are different from ours in many cases, and to change this dynamic is very difficult, the city hall is a great boat which goes with a very clear direction and in order to move a great boat you need a long while to change it, so it goes in another direction” (Roc 4824:7110). For this undertaking it needs skills and imagination, as sometimes they have to work with “teams with people who are not adequately trained which doesn't permit to finish stuff” (Luisa 23809:26128). People inside the institutions “have a certain habitus of the administration which is used to do things in a certain way and now we are there and want to change this, I think that was a little bit like a short circuit at the beginning (laughs)” (Luisa 23809:26128). However, both respondents agree that “it takes time for them to start thinking that it is possible to do it in another way” (Roc 4824:7110; Luisa 23809:26128). Thus, it is a cognitive process of imagination which has to be initiated. This introduces an “ethics of possibility” into the institutional realm expanding the horizon of hope and imagination, as proposed by Appadurai (2013: 295).

At the outside, one respondent argues that “in order to combat inequality and exclusion people need to create social connections, and put themselves in relation as well as create common spaces” (Núria 6685:7011). This is illustrated by the personal story of a member of the assembly:

I know how it is to have a good time at home, behind closed doors without doing anything, and be watching what is happening outside without having the possibility to do anything to change it. I can't stay in my house anymore and moreover if you work on the level of your neighbourhood there are things you see everyday which affect your- my life not, because I am very privileged, I have a very good work, I earn my life very well, I don't have problems with my health, no dependency, the crisis didn't affect me, on the opposite, my

situation bettered in the last years, but I don't live alone. I see how my neighbourhood transforms into an escape for tourists, who kick out the neighbours, I can't say there is nothing I can do and this is like normal. Also I have a son, I don't want to leave him a horrible world, I have to be an example, I can't say the things are fine and nothing and then you stay in your house and do absolutely nothing, if you say take care of your neighbour (*preocuparte por el próximo*), then you have to make the words account for something. (Estel 8416:9623)

She illustrated with her own story, that the will for change and motivation to be active has to come from people putting themselves in relation to their environment. Observing that her direct surrounding is changing for the worse, results into a sense of solidarity. Further, the respondent has a future-oriented perspective, because of her son, and sees the necessity to act in the present in order to provide a sustainable future. The idea of sustaining the future in the present could be also seen in the course of the ethnographic descriptions at hand. As Appadurai argues, the future as a cultural fact is a difference based on imagination, aspiration and anticipation (2013: 286). A point often neglected is that these capacities and the imagenaries resulting from them are collective, and not only individual (*ibid.*: 187).

Moreover, her approach can be described with the notion of relational citizenship, as one's political identity as a citizen and actions that come along with it emerge relating to others and one's environment. On characteristic of a so-called new institutionality is the objective to foster capacities for the creation of collective visions of the good life, and put the attention on the way how it is possible to relate to each other and act collectively (Bretherton 2015: 5). This conception also encompasses those without legal (citizenship) status, as all those are being reinforced to participate which share the common space of the city (and the metropolitan area). This political vision turns away from the hyper-individualization which originated in the late 20th century and extends into the 21st century, and tries to strengthen political belonging and allegiance in terms of community which is as inclusive as possible.

However, this re-activation and re-definition of political identity throughout the general public and the masses is challenging. As Alba says, “changing the democratic culture is not an objective of the four year mandate, and if it comes from the city hall it would not be so democratic, no?” (Alba 10666:10912). However, as was shown, the institution can give impulses and initiate processes. In this regard, a new institutionality denominates a new quality of political organization with new forms of institutional behaviour and procedures that are now being invented and attempted to be implemented (Silvia 20901:21425). As Mateu put it, “to be a potent social movement, mobilizing, and a party in the institution” (5980:6052). Hereby, he describes the concept of a movement-party (Rucht/Neidhardt 2002: 24) which “is necessary to invent” in practice, as “not only something to think, but to break the inertias and to go and be something new that does not exist

yet” (Mateu 20169:21126). Thus, as the political party is understood as an organizational entity distinguished by hierarchy, coercion and internal unification, it becomes a site for innovation and democratization itself (Budge 2000: 199). Part of this innovation is to create a constant and continuous engagement of social movements and citizens in the relation with their political institutions. As Appadurai states, “democratic practices [are] not automatically reproductive” (2013: 176). Therefore, the new institutionality goes beyond having a new party with a good program. Further, it shall create an environment where social movements and citizens can hold accountable, create proposals and new leaders. In order to transform Barcelona en Comú as a sustainable political project, it is considered necessary to be connected to a civil society in movement.

***The Feminization of Politics*¹³**

One of the most important objectives of the democratization project of Barcelona en Comú is the feminization of politics. It is a principle of equality which “needs to be implemented in every public politics, urbanism, infrastructure, culture, sports, to decentralize politics and democratic principle that you need to include as administration to not provoke more inequality” (Luisa 9203:10108). According to her, “every government produces inequalities”, therefore, how is it possible to manage them as good as possible? (Luisa 9203:10108). This lead to the practical side of this discussion. Such as the critique of Silvia, that the host of the assembly is always a man, and the keeper of the minutes is always a woman (14636:15109). She explains it with a generational conflict, as there are many older participants in the assembly which “just don't see a problem in it” (Silvia 14636:15109). Also Estel describes defined roles, “women always end up dispersing propaganda, the small hands of the organization, including me, men don't make their hands dirty with this work, the logistics and territorial organization on the everyday level keeps on falling on women” (Estel 34999:38073). She finds it important that women make others attentive of this and refuse to be dominantly fulfilling this task in the next campaign (Estel 34999:38073). A very important symbolic gesture, which she mentions, is that there are spaces for children to play at the plenum of the organization (Estel 34999:38073). For her this is fundamental, in order to enable women to engage, as her own motherhood has been an obstacle for her militancy (Estel 34999:38073). However, there is still room for improvements, as the hours when the meetings are hold are often impractical when having little children (Estel 34999:38073). She explains, “if you look at the women militants, there are either very young and don't have kids yet or they are grandmas and don't have limits” (Estel

13 I have discussed the topic of the Feminization of Politics in greater detail in a presentation at Depot, Vienna in December 2017. A summary of the presentation is available online: https://www.vfw.or.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Zelinka_Feminisierung-des-Politischen_2017.pdf

34999:38073). She gives an example from the assembly, a woman who “has two kids, she never comes to the assembly, sometimes her husband does, but also not often, because it is a time in which they can't, either one of them has to stay with the kids, and as we are in a sexist and patriarchal society, it is clear that the women stay at home” (Estel 34999:38073). She goes on, “this is a discrimination that we create and in then you lose ten years that can be very interesting, frankly ten years, because these girls in this time they are dedicating themselves to their children” (Estel 34999:38073). Against this backdrop, having a female mayor is a strong symbol. According to her, Colau talks about problems she encounters as a woman inside the institution or inside her family realm. This very good to put the finger on these things that are still prevailing” (Estel 34999:38073).

The Relation between Institution and Citizens

Activating Citizenship: Mobilization, Autonomy and Self-organization

A general critique within the assembly is that the political organization focuses too much on elections and the work in the city hall and does not enter the social texture of the neighbourhoods enough (Flor 14161:14955). Núria was less critical about this stating that they are already entering the texture of the neighbourhoods (Núria 19451:19831). This is interesting in terms of positions of power as well as professional background of the representatives. As the optimistic statement of Núria can be interpreted as a rhetorical manner of giving buzz words that are suitable in an interview context. It can also be an indicator of different degrees of optimism and criticalness of individuals. Nevertheless, at the centre of 'entering the texture of the neighbourhoods' is the objective of an activation of citizenship, people living in the city, an activation of people's minds, criticality and thinking (Emili 14323:15367). Regarding this, the activists in the city hall are confronted with another problem:

The government cannot be more radical as the society, positions have to emerge from within the population in order to be represented in the institution, the lobbies, other parties etc. they wait that you come forward too strong, and do something that the citizensry does not want, so it is necessary to create things outside, and when things generate outside and this societal framework is created, then the city hall can execute it. (Feliu 16457:19013)

Explaining this, he constructs a dichotomy of old and new. “The old resisted some forward thinking positions from outside, whereas the new feels like sometimes there is nobody having the forward position, nobody cares, so they have to drop it” (Feliu 16457:19013). This is why some activists of Barcelona en Comú value mobilization very highly. For Mateu it is a problem to wait for the participation of the neighbours, and without mobilizing social movements it is difficult to reach and activate them (Mateu 28564:29372). According to him, “participation is not that a neighbour comes

and says he wants to plant a tree there, but participation means to think about necessities of the neighbourhood, its life, and how to organize it” (Mateu 28564:29372). Against this backdrop, he thinks that “strong associations and social movements are necessary to pressure that the city hall organizes well-made participative processes” (Mateu 28564:29372). Regarding mobilization, another respondent working in the city hall explained:

Mobilizations is generally seen in terms of demonstrations, taking the streets, but there are also other forms which are slower, smaller, for example at the university, when a lecturer is analyzing the system in terms of feminist theories of inequality with her or his students, then it is in the everyday of these professors to motivate and modify processes. (Luisa 29111:30863)

Hereby she describes that there are channels of pressure that are often “not looked at closely, but they are still strong, so they should be valued, however, they are not taken into account when thinking about mobilization” (Luisa 29111:30863). She gives another example of women who do not take the streets, but bring their daughters to the educative system (Luisa 29111:30863). In her opinion, these very small actions “are modifying the country and need to be recovered when thinking about democracy” (Luisa 29111:30863).

Thus, a central wish is that autonomy and self-organization among the citizensry is initiated. The local councillor of participation in the city hall stated that “the population should organize itself in forms that are not the traditional ones” (Alba 10559:10648). At the same time she explained that

there is a need of an array of channels, self-organization has to come from the citizensry and cannot be done by the administration, what the administration can do is accompany and listen and collect and then open some communication channels with the citizensry with maximum inclusiveness, the objective is to create a strong society or social organization, the problem is, however, how to do this from the institution without intervening too much, without leading or controlling the process, what is clear is that the channels have to be diverse, some groups self-organize, others do not, and it is also important to reach the people who are not interested (Alba 15205:16536).

Also another respondent who is a logistician in the city hall states, “the city hall shall help and catalyze the creation of autonomy and self-organization” (Feliu 19215:23403). However, stating that “democracy will never be perfect” he emphasises the need for the invention of new forms and the will to democratize (Feliu 19215:23403).

Participation

It is said that the empowerment of the citizensry is difficult, because not every citizen wants to participate in the political realm, thus, it is necessary to demonstrate the virtues of participation (Roc 21333:23578). The objective is to change “the democratic culture through doing little things, a process, taking a decision, to have the experience of being there and people are taken into account, it moves, the pressure influences” (Roc 21333:23578). One of the challenges in this regard is that “people are sceptical towards spaces of participation, what is needed are spaces of participation that

take the complexity and credibility of the citizensry into account, and a lot of work towards making clear that the participative undertaking of the government is taken seriously and believed in, creating mechanism for participation and that the opinion has influence on the respective policy” (Beatriu 14998:15586). Therefore, the objective is “the realization that even if it is not what one particular person wanted, yes participation led to an agreement of everyone which is taken into account in the official decision-making process” (Roc 21333:23578). Thereby he describes what Paley has called accountable democracy. Roc differentiates between activism and citizens' participation: “activism is to give an impulse and put pressure based on the desire for change, whereas citizens' participation is not located on the level of change, but the capacity of citizens to have an opinion on what kind of city they want and make decisions” (Roc 21333:23578). Mateu understands the injection of a will for change as crucial, as “participation is not only how to organize a consultation, but how we achieve that people are organized to think, not only to propose, but to think which changes they would like and afterwards mobilize to defend it” (Mateu 29641:29872). This is why, he argues, “democratic culture needs to articulate spaces of decision, because the culture of radical democracy is one of the everyday, taking decisions together”, as “we are all political animals and we all have to enter the political spaces, everyone according to their interests and capacities obviously” (Roc 21333:23578). In his statement Roc is referring to radical democracy, a concept which goes back to Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. In this conception, it is central how conflicts, which are understood as inherent in a democracy, are dealt with. Laclau and Mouffe construct a peaceful antagonism of political positions instead of political enmity as a solution for democratic management (2012).

The aim is, thus, to strengthen the political identity of the citizens and initiate their activation in the political realm. In order to do so, the new government is in search for mechanisms of representation to build a structure that makes participation possible, as there are factors which restrict citizens' participation such as “hours, conditions, language, and type of communication which prioritizes white men of the middle class” (Feliu 21398:22300). According to Feliu, “it is necessary to think about how these spaces of participation need to function”, as “a latina single mom cannot go to the neighbourhood group at 8.30 p.m. to say what she thinks, if it doesn't have a kindergarten, so she can come with her children” (Feliu 21398:22300). Further, given the cultural and social diversity of Barcelona, it is necessary to think about how neighbourhood assemblies are announced, whether off- or online, and in which language (Feliu 21398:22300). These are reasons why “the diversity and plurality of the reality of the city is not represented in assemblies and debates” (Beatriu 17733:18661).



Quelle: Reaching out to different neighbours in the neighbourhood – in Catalan. Foto: Andreea Zelinka

In order to create a political culture of proximity, a new institutionality, to articulate the masses, and organize the complexity of ideas and perspectives (Iker 31217:34623), it is seen as necessary to use “the collective intelligence” which makes the emergence of new ideas possible (Emili 10112:10550). As can be seen, my respondents did not state that the organization of a plurality is impossible or not achievable, as it is argued by some political theorists. The institutional adaption to the life reality outside of it does constitute a challenge. Nevertheless, it is understood as organizable, even though it requires a lot of thinking and work. Thus, “the pressure of the neighbours is fundamental” (Roc 6520:7110), and it is necessary to work together with associations and entities (Beatriu 17733:18661).

Within this realm very important notions are 'co-production of public politics' and 'co-responsibilization'. According to Iker, to delegate one's responsibilities and expect that the others in charge will do just fine is an error (31317:32808). He explains agitatedly,

The things are done well when we are doing them among everyone. Then, the things are done well. If you let others do the things that have to do with you, it will be done badly, because your opinion will not be represented there, because you won't be saying what you need so the things are going well and the people

being there will not know anything of you. (Iker 31317:32808)

Thus, to have voice, to express one's concerns and ideas, to let others know and be heard and understood, are seen as fundamental aspects of democratic action. Ideologically, for him there is no representation as powerful as self-representation.



Quelle: Reaching out to different neighbours in the neighbourhood – in Farsi. Foto: Andreea Zelinka

Opposing the normative democracy (Nugent 2008), in which citizens cede their powers to others, he argues for participatory democracy not only as a duty and obligation, but moreover as a possible to be seen, heard and taken into account oneself. The latter is crucial, as in this case it is constructed less as a moral project, but as a prerequisite for the political institution to be able to do democratic politics in the first place. It is said, the more people participate and self-represent, the better does a political organisation work and creates vividness in the neighbourhoods (Iker 31317:32808). What needs to be conveyed is a sense of possibility that participative spaces are possible, and citizens' involvement is taken into account, as he said, “where the people involve themselves, where the people express their wishes, their opinions, their necessities, and these necessities, opinions, and wishes are heard and taken into account, and finally they are converted into public politics, no?” (Iker 31317:32808)



Quelle: Reaching out to different neighbours in the neighbourhood – in Tagalog. Foto: Andreea Zelinka

Thereby, what is aimed for is to go from a clientelistic relation towards a participative one, which means that decisions are not based on a persons or entity's level of influence on officials in the city hall, but that everyone's influence is perceived as equal (Roc 8383:11718). In the spotlight are the necessities of everyone which are defined in spaces of participation (Roc 8383:11718). This is crucial, as he points out that some interests of certain groups of people are more visible than others, as the groups are more capable of putting pressure (Roc 8383:11718). An example is given by children and elderly people, and the fact that the needs of the latter usually dominate the needs of the first (Roc 8383:11718). Thus, “what has to be done is to search for the kids and let them tell and then find a way for a pact of equilibrium between neighbours and kids” (Mateu 30196:31761). A fundamental belief is that too often “decision-making processes are based on the access of a few who asks for access and insist on their interests over all, but even if the interests appear to be good subjectively, Barcelona en Comú believes that what needs to be done is not to take decisions based on the pressure of a certain group but among everyone” (Roc 8383:11718). Thus, participative democracy is based on the wish that as many people as possible take part of decision-making processes in order to create and realize collective goals (Nugent 2008: 36). Part of this, is not only

to be able to learn how to engage oneself, but moreover develop a sense of well-being for one another within a political community (ibid.: 39). This ideology results into a manner of and attitude towards doing politics which is noticeable in the city hall, as Roc tells me that “the technicians say that the change from PSC to Convergencia was not noticeable, but the change to Barcelona en Comú is” (Roc 8383:11718).

From the institution it is therefore possible “to open channels of communication, support initiatives of the citizensry, and make educative programs about democracy” (Alba 9752:10353). However, it is a “very slow change”, which has also account for “the specific structure of society”, which is, according to Alba, “right now capitalist, and individualist, and the battle over the values we have not won at all” (9752:10353). In the implementation of participative processes, there are different levels of participation: a process, a consultation, and the official's role is to define the framework of participation and its limits (open/close, for how long, in which way?, who is asked?, the party or the citizensry?) (Roc 14481:18741, 20430:21330). Up until now the mechanisms of participation that existed were “desintegrative, not inclusive”, and minority communities did not take part in shared spaces of participation, but organized and approached the officials themselves (Mateu 30196:31761). This is confirmed through my observations at the council of the neighbourhood, where participants were generally white, old (50+) and coming from the Catalan middle class.

Thus, there was an absence of people from other communities noticeable. Mateu explains, “they are organized and know how to, up until now they meet with the local councillor, negotiate with her and achieve something, the fact that they do not go to the council of the neighbourhood does not mean they do not participate, which demonstrates also that the mechanisms of participation did not work well” (30196:30900). At the time when I was doing my field work, the councilwoman of participation in the city hall explained that “certain communities have their channels but rarely participate in shared spaces, our objective is to reach these communities, give them voice, so we are currently doing a diagnostics, where are they, where can they be met, how are they organized, what are their demands, and to go there, not to make them come to the institution, but there is no sole strategy or magic formula” (Alba 11507:12091).

PAM PAD

During my field work, the city hall was working on their plans of the mandate for the metropolitan area as well as for the districts. This was done through a participative process called PAM PAD

which was open to the citizensry in order to decide which are the priorities of the politics of their mandate, and later create a document (Emili 8357:8991). It is normally proposed when a new government starts in Barcelona (Emili 17216:17752), and “was done before, but more like a company guy goes to the city hall politician and they talk, with the technical staff on the high levels, and Barcelona en Comú's process was more like, this is our proposal, let's debate it, and it was the highest level of participation ever” (Roc 15086:16287). There was a strong focus on presencial meetings (Núria 18463:19329). However, they also renewed the website 'Decidim.Barcelona', where online meetings with representatives took place and the opportunity for Q&A with Ada Colau and other representatives were given. Residents of Barcelona could register, write proposals and vote, whereas non-residents could also enter and make proposals. Overall, it had more than 15 000 participants (Núria 18463:19329). However, a respondent made clear that “it is from the city hall, this time more connective and participative, but it is the city hall, not Barcelona en Comú, Barcelona en Comú goes to PAM PAD, but there is no PAM PAD proposal from Barcelona en Comú” (Mateu 24282:25008). The same respondent also stated that “changes will be seen when the PAM PAD results have direct effect on the budgeting” (Mateu 27963:29889). Following, I provide with three ethnographic accounts of discussions that I attended during PAM PAD.

March 2016: „El Soroll A Ciutat Vella. Com Garantim El Dret Al Descans?“ (The Noise in Ciutat Vella. How can we guarantee the Right to Rest?), CCCB, 18h

The meeting takes place in Room 1. In front of the room there is a poster stand and a table, indicating the meeting. Behind the table sits a woman who collects information of the people attending on a list: Name, affiliation, contact information, signature. I receive a little bag and a pen afterwards. The discussion is facilitated by Raons Publiques. The room I enter is a big, only half of it is in use. There are chairs as one can find at schools, with a little table to write positioned in half circles around the wall on the right next to the entrance. On the wall the team has put up a poster to write on it. There are between 30 and 40 people present. Two men and a woman are opening the session in Catalan and in Spanish. They already mention at the beginning other upcoming events in April. One of the men says, “we have prepared problems and proposals from the organization and citizens which we want to discuss. Afterwards we will form working groups in which further proposals shall be developed. At the end we present these proposals to each other.” The other man realizes that they haven't introduced themselves properly. They explain that the organizational team tonight consists of three men and one woman. A woman raises her hand and says she is from Raval Nord. The woman from the organization team goes to the poster and makes a mark. The neighbour from Raval Nord starts to talk about her experiences in the neighbourhood. Afterwards many more raise their hands and talk about their experiences. Occasionally more people drop into the meeting and have a seat. One of the main topics is La Rambla and the skaters in Ciutat Vella. Regarding the skaters, individual discussions are starting. After a woman asks where the forbidden zones are, the little discussions break off. The discussion goes on with one speaker after the other. Meanwhile one of the facilitators draws on the map of the poster wall. Occasionally someone shows approval, “exactly!”. One of the men in the organization team points out that speakers should be attentive towards the time management. They shall let each other talk, and shouldn't take away time to talk from each other. The neighbours are very emotional about this topic. A woman says angrily, “the city hall leaves us alone, the city hall leaves us alone!” A lot of people attending are middle-aged or older who live in the neighbourhood for decades. One man says that she lives in El Raval for over 30 years now. However, there are also younger people present. All of them are white. A woman says she is a representative of a citizens' organization. She says that the noise is also responsible for bad health. She has a proposal. Many participants are mad and angry. The organization

woman tries to appease them, she says, “there is a lot of resentment, I understand. Nevertheless, the meeting is until 8 o'clock and we need direct proposals.” As many are very angry and complain much, the facilitators have to repeatedly explain, “we are here to work on proposals.” While they are talking, people interrupt them continuously. Next the organization team wants to collect “things that have worked.” Then the chairs are moved together into little circles in order to build little working groups. While neighbours are discussing the noise in the neighbourhood, I talk to one of the facilitators. She tells me that these meetings are open to everyone, which is why they are especially interesting. A lot of different opinions are coming together here, as participants are coming from different backgrounds: for example, an owner of a night club inasmuch as a retired person. This is why there is more friction and conflict. The working groups write their proposals on papers. Many participants leave after the working groups. The groups read their proposals in front of everyone using a microphone. A staff member of the organization takes pictures. The organization team is mostly standing, whereas participants sit on chairs. A facilitator asks the participants to leave a sticker on the poster at the door, in order to evaluate the meeting. The poster shows circles and the stickers indicate how satisfied one was with the course of the discussion. The nearer the sticker is positioned in the centre of the poster, the more satisfied was the person. It is a question of subjective feeling.



Quelle: The entrance of a room at CCCB, the poster being prepared on the door before the assembly. Foto: Andreea Zelinka

March 2016, “Què volen els joven de Ciutat Vella” (What does the youth of Ciutat Vella want?), Casal De Joves Palau Alòs, Carrer de Sant Pere Més Beix 55, 18-20h.

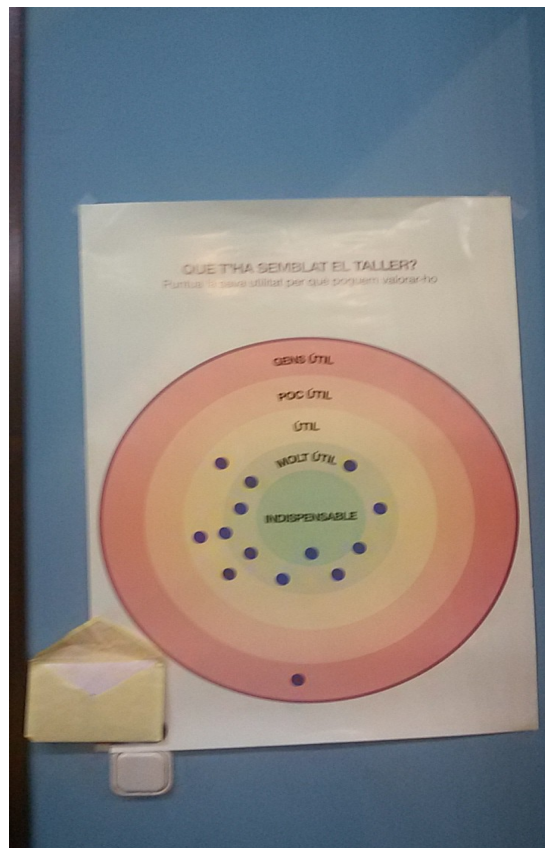
In order to give adolescents voice in the development of the Municipal's Plan there is today a meeting. When you enter the room where the meeting is taking place, on the floor in the middle there is a map of Ciutat Vella and its neighbourhoods. Around it chairs are forming a circle. At the end of the room there is a little stage and a table with material for the facilitation team. Around 40-50 children and youngsters are present. The beginning of the meeting is delayed, because some school classes are arriving late. I can see them passing by as I am sitting outside in the corridor. In the circle there are mostly sitting adolescents, but occasionally there are also adults. The participants seem to have diverse backgrounds. A lot of youngsters with migratory backgrounds. There are many boys. Two women are opening the meeting. They are explaining how the process will be. A third man is spreading green, red and blue papers. Meanwhile new participants arrive. The atmosphere is unconcentrated and restless. The youngsters are shy. It is only when a man makes a first contribution that a boy says something, laughs, then people start laughing and clapping their hands. A

facilitator explains the reason for their meeting: they are also citizens living in the city and this is why they should be part of this process. Someone from the participants asks, whether it would be possible to repeat what has been said in Spanish, so everyone can understand. The facilitation team changes to Spanish. They explain that there will be three working groups: facilities that lack in the district, public spaces that are unused or needed, and education. The groups are dispersing to different rooms available, according to the colour of the paper they have received. The discussions are in Spanish and Catalans. I remain seated in the big room. Approximately 22 participants form a smaller circle of chairs in the middle of the room. This room is about public space. The organizer says that there is one minute to introduce oneself to the person who is sitting at one's side. Then there is a round of presentation when everyone presents the person they just met. The facilitator asks, "do you like soccer?". Some youngsters stand up, then they are supposed to change seats. Next question, "who uses the streets?" Some stand up and change their seats. "Which streets are you using?" The youngsters list the ones they use. Next question, "who thinks that there is a lack of sport facilities in public space?" Some youngsters list what they feel is missing, other say that there is everything and nothing is missing. Next question, "who does things at the weekends?" Everyone stands up and changes their chairs. "What is lacking to do?" Some youngsters raise their hand and tell what they miss. Now the facilitator puts the map in the middle of the chair circle. The youngsters sit around it on the floor. The facilitator has little signs with images like 'skaters' or 'meeting'. The youngsters are supposed to put them where they think it is missing. Then, the groups are changing the rooms. The green group goes in room one, the blue group comes inside. There is a short round of names and then they shall say what they have been talking about. Can they say three main points? They say, no. Are there some important points they found out? Slowly, one or two issues are mentioned. Then the games begin again, the facilitator asks the same questions, the youngsters stand up and change their seats. During the discussion, this group is a little more active than the one before. The facilitator takes notes. A helping hand from the organization team comes in and gives a sign 'five minutes' without saying anything. Change again, the third groups comes in. The same dramaturgy is taking place. The facilitator says in Spanish, "he was never asked what he thinks how the city could be bettered." This time he plays a game, where someone has to make a movement and the rest has to copy it. There is a lot of laughter, and hand clapping. He says, "this gives a bit more energy!" The facilitator supports what has been said with comments as, "genial!" Also the woman who takes notes makes comments every now and then. Repeatedly, the children are directly addressed, "those who are not talking", "I take it, for you is this good". The facilitator always establishes direct eye contact. The other groups are coming back. The groups are supposed to present what they have been discussing. The facilitator asks a girl, "what came out in education?" On the other side of the room kids start to knock on carton in a rhythm making sound. A woman from the facilitation team comes and plays the maestro moving her arms. In one group, everyone is presenting one proposal which is written down on carton signs. The facilitator says, if someone agrees they can wave their hands. Sometimes more or less youngsters are waving their hands. The organization team notes that down. The other groups are also presenting their proposals. There is a lot of waving. Someone says, "more facilities for you!" The youngsters exclaim "Yay!" and wave their hands. The facilitator explains that the vote is important, because when they wave their hands the proposal is taken seriously and is noted down. The atmosphere is energetic. The different groups have prepared their proposals on posters and their proposals are supported with loud exclams like "Yay!" and other approving expressions. Sometimes comments are made by the participants regarding certain proposals. At the end, the facilitators ask the youngsters to leave a sticker on the poster at the entrance to evaluate their satisfaction with the meeting. Then they say goodbye.

March 2016, "El Consum Conscient I Transformador. El Pla D'Impuls Del Consum Responsable" (The Conscious and Transformative Consumption. The Impulse Plan of Responsible Consumption), Sala d'actes Casa Golferichs, 18-20h.

The house where the meeting is taking place is a beautiful, old building with detailed and lovely ornaments out of wood and stone. We are meeting in the attic. When I enter the room I am welcomed with an inscription list as always. On the list, I can see that the majority of people participating are coming for entities and organizations which occupy themselves in any form with the topic discussed tonight. In a corner is the poster for later evaluation. There are between 20 and 25 people present. Participants are mostly middle-aged and white. A middle-aged man who is a representative of Barcelona en Comú opens the event. He says, "the new government should also be understood like a business model, like a company which has to take

responsibility.” A woman takes over the moderation and explains the process of PAM PAD. She explains the website *decidim.barcelona* and shows an explanatory video. The moderator asks whether there are any questions and explains how it is possible to establish contact if wanted. She explains the process for tonight and that there will be three working groups discussing several aspects of lifestyle and consumption: alimentation, public spaces regarding mobility and transport, products for the household. The proposals from the city hall are being presented. The working groups shall develop further proposals which will be collected at the end. There is a clarifying question of an older man who asks what is happening if the residence is not in Barcelona? The woman moderator explains that it is still possible to participate online and to make proposals, but it is not possible to vote on them. The participants build three working groups and move their chairs fastly and without any interruptions around tables. In every group there are approximately 9 people. As a first step, the participants present themselves and explain where they come from. Afterwards someone reads the existing proposals aloud in order to discuss them. The representative of the city hall joins one of the groups. There is a child who plays on the floor next to a group in which her parent is participating. The facilitation team exist of three women. One hosts the session, another one walks around and gives impulses, the third is taking pictures. I talk to one of them, to present myself and tell them what I do. She says it is no problem, I am not the first one. I sit in a corner and observe the scene and listen to one group nearby. The discussion is very concentrated. People are listening carefully and attentively to each other. Some switch between groups and join another discussion. In one group I hear that it is not quite clear what a proposal can be. I see them reading again the material they have received, discussing it, trying to understand, exchange ideas. Together they discard ideas or support them. Then they also indicate their approval with gestures, some nod and say, “yes! Yes!” Someone in each group is taking notes. There are groups where speakers are constantly changing and almost everyone is having a word. In another group the word is less distributed and there are kind of main speakers. In the group where the representative joined, he is talking at length and detailed. The participants listen and the discussion is not as dynamized as in others. The organization team collects the proposals that are written down on papers and rotates them among the groups. The facilitator explains to me, that the topics that are discussed have been chosen by the official of the department of consumption of the city hall before. Then, it is time to present the results. The presenters go to the front of the room and explain the proposals with a microphone. The participants have moved their chairs, opened the smaller circles and dispersed in the room. Some people are taking notes, some are on the phone, some are quietly talking to each other. The representative states in his final comments, that “these proposals have a common sense” and “these proposals are coming from you and they will be respected as such”. After the meeting many people are approaching the representative wanting to talk to him.



Quelle: The poster marked with stickers: “How did you like the meeting? Please put a sticker how useful it was to you so we can evaluate it”, and then in the center/green to the periphery/read, with yellow and pink in between, “indispensable, very useful, useful, a little useful, not useful at all”.

Another respondent told me that “participation is a process, although beautiful it can be risky, because one day it works fine and the other not, like one day there are mainly complaints, and the other there is a meeting concerned with housing which was fantastic with architects, people of the housing office, neighbours, professor of architecture, it was very interesting, and the list of proposals created in pa pa pa pa, no time” (Emili 8977:10110). As the same respondent explained to me, a proposal such as “we want a politics in favour of youth and that the kids in el Raval have more space” is an understandable statement, however, not suitable as a proposal (Emili 18560:18981). Better would be “we want a youth center in el Raval and 500 social housing apartments in el Gòtic”, which includes criteria on which the government can be evaluated (Emili 18560:18981). This makes accountability a posteriori possible (Emili 17800:18167).

These ethnographic examples also show that the emotionality attributed to citizens is empirically valid. However, this does not mean, that citizens are not capable of engaging in constructive collective thinking and deliberation. Rather, it seems necessary to educate and foster capacities needed in order to do so. This is opposing to the kind of citizen which has been raised in the recent decades: alienated from any political identity, with a reduced capability for autonomous, critical thinking, interested not only in the fate of one's own self, but also of others. However, the

reactivation of political identity and development of political and participative knowledge is possible. In the first meeting on noise in the neighbourhood of Ciutat Vella, participants did come up with concrete proposals. After having used the offered space to get rid of their anger and disappointments, they engaged in a form which was beneficial for everyone and “evolved new competences” (Segert 2016: 103). The children's meeting confirms this as it shows how even at a young age humans are capable of adopting to certain procedures and engage collectively in issue of common concern. The third discussion on responsible consumption assembled people who were working in NGOs shows how people incorporate deliberative practices in an effective way. It is shown how cultural and technical developments (Segert 2016: 104) beyond the political make this form of participative decision-making process possible.

Through the experience of a democratic process which emphasises interaction, empowerment, and mutual recognition, a specific type of the “good citizen” is constructed (della Porta 2013), which is beneficial for the kind of new institutionality Barcelona en Comú wants so create. Through building political capital, the relationship between political regime and political community is restored (Band/Dyrberg 2000). Characterised by a plurality of opinions, deliberation can result in workable agreements – called proposals in my ethnography – which restores and strengthens the sovereignty of the people (ibid.). These proposals are based on an “ethics of everyday life” and on discernible ends (Appadurai 2013: 292) Thereby, participants engage in the development of a vision of the common good as well as in the discussion of shared concerns. Barcelona en Comú applies different democratic techniques in order to frame common imaginaries. Thus, the hope for change brought into public institutions constructs them as a site for collective action. Relational citizenship is therefore connected to a re-responsibilization of the citizenship, and the institution as I would argue, and a commitment to engage in so-called citizenship games (Rose 2000: 108).

Media

An obstacle activists of Barcelona en Comú are confronted with is that within the general public and through the media perception dominates as nothing is changing (Estel 2013:26116). As Carme explains, “in the media it is like Barcelona en Comú didn't do almost anything, but things have been done, and there are not invisible, but the media attack us and talk very little about what we are doing and it appears as we do not go forward” (2012:14856). In the media there is a strong discourse of crisis, brutal cuts, and incrimination of citizens, which alienates them even more from their institutions (Roc 2012:25670). The logics of the municipalist movement is that “citizens say

no, start to self-organize and jump into the institutions” (Roc 25282:25670). However, Arnau thinks that “democracy in the Occident is overvalued”, as it is merely “a spectacle, nobody is interested in a serious political program with serious arguments that are documented, about the reality, politics, the economic and social situation”, the only interest is in “rising passions and feeling based on emotions” (Arnau 17523:18240). He argues that this is how Brexit happened and how politics worked in the past ten years in Catalonia (Arnau 17523:18240). Also Núria wishes for “less mediatic show on topics, we don't have communication media which construct debate in a positive manner” (Núria 20927:21090). All in all, she wishes for “less theatre in politics” (Núria 21193:21540).

Capacities of Citizens

Against this backdrop, there are capacities which are understood as necessary for citizens to relate with the institution. Most importantly, citizen formation is based on education that enables them to think critically. As Estel explains:

When people are not educated well, you can sell any kind of shit to people, education and school is focused on making our children into workers, it is important that children learn how to think themselves, critical thinking, to understand that society is a product and result of a loads of thinking, religious movements, historical flows, in order to be able to put in perspective what is happening, for instance, in Spain they want to remove philosophy from the educational program, so children will not be able to assess their actions and thoughts anymore, and to maybe identify arguments of fascist thinking, in a liberal manner they make people buy a house, enslave themselves to a mortgage and if they are less educated the better, school does not teach thinking anymore, but only becoming profitable in capitalist circuits, however, if you do not have free citizens and critical thinking, then you do not have democracy, because the person who votes is who makes democracy and if the person who votes is conditioned to vote ever the same (clicks her tongue) we do not go about very well. (Estel 31720:33175)

This is why she opts for “a lot of education, a lot, think more, organize more discursive events, debates, and not always focused on what we are already sensitized for, make them think themselves, its has to start on the micro level, in the neighbourhoods, and use the schools as trampolines” (Estel 33851:34570). This is linking up with the statement of Núria, saying, “there are people who have much more capacity to inform themselves, much more resources, then it is a question how to exercise this capacity to involve oneself, there is a lack of collective culture, not only thinking in particular interest, but also in common interests, there is lack of innovation in liberation, not only participating, but also to advance together in debates” (Núria 20248:21090).

Conclusio

Having proposed a detailed theoretical approach, I touched upon many topics which have been emergent from my ethnography in more or less extent. I decided to provide a close-up of my material in order to show the general political project composed by narratives, discourses and practices of actors of Barcelona en Comú. Moreover, as I wrote an ethnography of left-wing informed democratization, I intended to depict the continuous process of contestation these actors engage in. Turning to my initial research questions, I will summarize theoretical arguments and ethnographic results in the attempt to answer them. Thus, in a first step I ask, how is the relation between citizens and government perceived and in which way attempted to be altered? Which specific form of relation between citizens and public institutions are actors of Barcelona en Comú imagining and which consequences does this have for the role of citizen, militant and holder of office? Which kind of concepts of alternative political solutions emerge? In a second step I ask, how does democratic practice on an everyday level look like? At the end I will reflect on possible further research within this realm and note some thoughts on current global developments against the backdrop of my results.

Relation of Power: Civil Society and Public Institutions

Against the backdrop of democracy as a modern phenomenon and its ideological premise of universality (cf. Paley 2002) as well as the hegemony of liberal (representative) democracy (Nugent 2008), the occupations of 15M called political representation and the workings of public institutions throughout the Spanish territory into question. Threatened with existential precarity, citizens perceived the Spanish politicians as failing them as they were “falling short of democratic ideals” (Paley 2002: 471), which made people doubt the normativity (Nugent 2008) and universal promise of liberal democracy (Paley 2002). This brought back the question what democratic means in regard of elected representatives and the workings of democratic institutions. Asking this question publicly served as a shock for the status quo, and weakened the political elite as well as created spaces of re-negotiation of public consent between citizens and the government (Tilly 2007: 40). Along these lines, the protesters emphasised a difference between those being inside the institutions and those outside of it, between political representatives and citizens, and between a so-called old and new politics. These narratives strengthened after the protests in public spaces had ended, and gave way for a left-wing populism which made 'the jump into the institution' possible for new political actors.

As part of the aftermath, actors of the municipalist movement formed political organizations such as Barcelona en Comú in order to participate in municipal (and regional) elections. As I have

shown, the growing loss of trust and accountability in the political representatives of the ruling political parties (della Porta 2013: 24f) posed the question anew where the levers of power are to be located within a political democracy and resulted in a strong discourse around democratization. In a time when revolution seems impossible, an increasing hope for gradual progress and change was established. This agrees with Greenberg arguing that “political and social movements are increasingly shifting away from Cold War models of revolution to a language of democratization or democratic revolution” (2014: 185). However, as I have shown, what democratic means in a specific context can vary widely (Paley 2008: 5). Therefore it is crucial to consider the specifics of a discourse of democracy within a social movement. (Especially since this discourse of democracy grew stronger within social movements on the whole spectrum of political orientations: right-wing social movements are applying a discourse around the notions of a people and nationalism, whereas left-wing social movements utilize claims for the good life, self-determination, voice and/or human rights.)

Democracy describes a certain power relation between citizens and the state distinct from other political systems and democratization denominates the attempt to change this relation in specific ways (Tilly 2007: 12; Nugent 2008: 24). This is ethnographically emergent as actors of Barcelona en Comú attempt to create a so-called new institutionality, which changes this specific relation on an everyday basis. In order to make comprehensive how it is possible that at times opposing understandings can be subsumed under the umbrella of democracy, I have discussed the elitist and the participatory model of democratic theory (Segert 2016) which are concerned with the question how a democratic government is ideally organized. In social and institutional reality, these are interwoven and intricately interlinked. Thereby, I contextualize the political project of Barcelona en Comú within political theory as opposed to an elitist approach of democratic organisation emphasizing a participatory conception with citizens being protagonists having the central role in the process of legitimizing power (della Porta 2013).

As could be seen, actors of Barcelona en Comú dominantly describe the city hall as a dense and cumbersome bureaucratic structure which is incorporated by clerks and politicians. The latter represent a closed group of people separated from the general public or citizensry. This separation between a so-called political elite and the citizensry is being distinguished by self-interest and a disinterest of politicians and the government to act “in conformity to the expressed demands of its citizens” (Tilly 2007: 12f, 58). Thereby, the very original meaning of democracy as government by the people is being evoked by Barcelona en Comú. Accordingly, the old politics is constructed around a professional political career which results in corruption, clientelism, and bureaucratic inertia. It is considered as the real tragedy by actors of Barcelona en Comú that offices are hold by

ever the same people which cannot be hold accountable nor removed when they are not meeting the expectations of the citizensry. This results in a distance to the citizensry and its everyday needs. Opposing to this, new politics is distinguished by elected (or not) political cargos with ethical principles (e.g. understanding public money as sacred) who negate privileges which come along with holding an office, who do not pursue a political career and are thereby characterised by a higher proximity to the citizensry, its everyday life realities and thus as possible to be hold accountable. Further, through the utilization of technological developments such as the internet, the daily agendas of political cargos are made transparent online. Thus, a shift to the local was done in several ways: in terms of ordinary citizens as (central) political actors becoming political cargos, of transparency of their political doings and of proximity which makes them part of everyone's everyday life (within the political community of the city).

In order to facilitate political participation of citizens independent from their personal backgrounds, and the implementation of political decisions which benefit the well-being of the citizensry (as a inclusive notion), the formation of centralist elites is called into question and attempted to be hindered. I described the conflictual process of translating an ideal understanding of participatory democracy into organizational reality at length. Their struggle reflects an understanding of accountable democracy which, based on a critique of liberal democracy, argues that beyond public deliberation there need to be a sphere of citizens' control on political decision-making (Paley 2004: 499ff; Nugent 2008). Substantially, this is what actors of Barcelona en Comú attribute to the word 'democratic': a consensus which is generated through proximity between citizens and public institutions as well as through a deliberative and co-produced decision-making process shared by representatives, citizens and social movements which form the basis for a notion of 'everyone'. Thus, accountability is a dynamic concept of multiple and reciprocal relations, namely to be taken into account as a citizen as well as to hold officials accountable for their actions (Paley 2004: 499f, 501).

In this realm of reactivating political voice, current liberal (representative) democracy is criticized as a design for disempowerment, as elections are understood as ceding one's voice and power to representatives (Nugent 2008: 56). Against this backdrop, the critique of electoral politics as the most important democratic tool for legitimizing power is crucial, as the access to public institutions is perceived as limited and restricted to certain individuals with specific social, political or financial capital. Therefore, actors of Barcelona en Comú doubt the representativeness of these politicians, as they seem to not make part of the everyday life of the citizensry. However, based on the economic support, these candidates and political parties have advantages in the electoral arena. As modern democratic power is calculated power (Rose 1999: 200), this is a very important issue.

For electoral democracy is a ritual reiterated through collective participation in order to sustain a myth and status quo and thus maintain social cohesion (Banerjee 2008: 66f). Based on the critique of post-2010 protest movements such as 15M and the municipalist movement, elections increasingly prove to be insufficient when implemented as sole democratic tool. In Spain and other parts of the world, for instance, it does not serve for social cohesion, but turned into a graphic illustration of societal polarization. (Very close election results indicate a deep polarization and the emergence of hard oppositions in Western societies. However, instead of implementing other democratic tools in order to assess the opinions and standpoints more elaborately, current political leaders harden these oppositions even further and use them for their political ends.) It is argued, that the alienation of political parties, elites and institutions increased and identification with existing political parties as intermediaries vanished in the past decades (della Porta 2013: 24f). This is part of a diametrically opposed development. On the one hand, established political parties are perceived as rather endangering the well-being of the citizensry than stabilizing it, which is why new political actors decided to found representative political organisations on their own. On the other hand, it can be observed how many citizens and voters turn towards established political parties agreeing with their hierarchical organisation and conservative, and often right-wing, politics. In this regard, there is a broad gap between national and municipal (as in local) politics. In case of the latter, and especially Barcelona en Comú, the described developments influenced a discursive turn away from a politics of political opposition towards a politics of dialogue and confluence as well as redirected the attention back on other democratic qualities (ibid.: 5).

Democratic Qualities: Internal and External Democratization

My ethnography has shown how the political party itself is seen as the site for political innovation (Budge 2000: 197) which can enable the activation of marginalized democratic qualities, capacities and practices. As a result, actors of Barcelona en Comú focus on creating channels of information and participatory spaces of deliberation which shall enable a so-called co-production of public politics. This agrees with theorizing the activation of “civic democratic engagement” and the capacities of citizens such as information, deliberation and association for building political capital in order to create critical citizens (Band/Dyrberg 2000: 146; Sawad 2000: 4; della Porta 2014: 4). The co-production of public politics is illustrated by the attempt to create participative mechanisms and spaces internally (within the political organization) as well as externally (between city hall and citizens). Through the participation and interaction in the participatory spaces which I have described, it is attempted to create a “negotiated consent” (Tilly 2007: 58). Thereby, they enforce

the cultural capacity of 'having a voice' which is necessary in order to produce consent (and should not be taken for granted) (Appadurai 2013: 184ff). Thus, the ability of citizens to exercise and participate with their voices in political processes (Nugent 2008: 56) is fostered. This enables the initiation of a negotiation process, as it is through voice that the collective engagement in norms, ideas, ideologies and experiences shared by the participants of a community takes place (Appadurai 2013: 186). Thus, in spite of its universality, voice can be understood as a specific local cultural force (ibid.). As a result, creating participatory spaces of encounter and deliberation such as the assembly of Ciutat Vella, actors of Barcelona en Comú enable the creation of meaningful relationships between government resp. political regime and the political community (Band/Dyberg 2000: 157). Further, as the participatory spaces attempt to be a platform for exchanging the plurality of opinions and life realities, the objective is to create 'workable agreements' (Budge 2000: 195), which were called 'proposals' in the ethnography, based on generating a consensus/status quo within a political collective (Appadurai 2013: 184). Thus, 'being recognized' in order to have impact on proposals is central (cf. Kastoryano 2002: 123). However, this negotiation is a highly contested process of "regimes of truth" which creates mechanisms of conferring legitimacy on political leaders, authorities, and institutions (Rose 1999: 197). Throughout my ethnography it was shown how the assembly as a community is inherently conflictual and "resist the 'urge to unite'" (Lazar 2013: 9).

Both internal as well as external democratization are understood in terms of participation and citizens' engagement. However, for actors of Barcelona en Comú political participation does not provide itself for the creation of a democratic regime (Tilly/Tarrow 2015: 71). This is why my respondents indicated, that a participative process needs to take into consideration the circumstances through which it is created: is participation initiated through the city hall or the citizens, are the discussed topics proposed by the city hall or the citizens, are the results of the debates agreements among participants coming from as many social backgrounds as possible, or did a rather homogeneous groups participate in the process? These questions need to be tackled in order to fulfil an understanding of democratic organization which is centrally based on an inclusive notion of citizenship. Thus, everyone is understood as citizen who participates in the making of the urban commons and the urban life (Harvey 2013). Beyond a formal citizenship status, the spontaneous, civil, and informal is becoming increasingly important in the institutional realm (Sawad 2000: 218).

Thus, as could be seen, central to my ethnography is the assembly as the main site for political innovation. During 15M it was not understood by scholars as "operative or practical structures" (Corsín/Estalella 2014: 156), but mainly as a pre-figurative form of political action which translated into drafts of documents (ibid. 163). Within the political project of Barcelona en

Comú the assembly received a prominent role and was attempted to be rendered practical. As “with all its imperfection and malfunctioning, the open assembly as the main decisional space for recent social movements still reflects the call for direct involvement as opposed to delegation.” (della Porta 2013: 187) The assembly as an open space for deliberation, debate and encounter between citizens, militants and representatives is an organizational entity which has been introduced to modern institutional politics by Barcelona en Comú. In this regard, it is valued within the political organization of Barcelona en Comú and by the city hall through the political cargos of Barcelona en Comú who form the minority government. However, beyond their own political organization, actors of Barcelona en Comú claim that it does not have an effect on other political parties and realms. Nevertheless, the assembly as an organizational entity is reinforced, as “democratic quality here is in fact measured by the possibility of elaborating ideas within discursive, open and public arenas, where citizens play an active role in identifying problems, but also in elaborating possible solutions.” (della Porta 2013: 84)

Democratic Practice in Procedural Terms

During the first year of the mandate, the assembly of Ciutat Vella found itself in an identity crisis regarding its role in the decision-making processes. There were many discussions which rendered visible that the assembly's role is internally differently perceived as well. However, in general, respondents agreed that the assembly is a site for continuous pressure on the government through citizens, as to hold the political cargos accountable, create and debate proposals, produce new leaders and help to maintain a participative relation between citizens and institution (Paley 2008: 149). Most importantly, the assembly is a connecting point to the neighbourhoods of the city, as it was described at the place where observations from the streets could be articulated. However, in the course of my field work it was repeatedly observable how the assembly members had troubles activating the resources of its participants, as for example, to contribute to working groups. This is why it was said that political work in terms of action was done by a rather small group of militants. Nevertheless, the existence of the assembly as a regular space for encounter between militants, citizens and representatives is crucial. The institutionalized encounter between political cargos, militants and neighbours was constantly highlighted and meant a significant political innovation for actors of Barcelona en Comú. As the assembly is not a place for representative to hold speeches, but an organized space for regular encounter between representatives and citizens. Thus, the latter can be informed, heard and are able to respond to their political cargos. Thus, in terms of deep democracy, the assembly supports a relation of proximity and fosters local activism which

maintains and makes the development of democratic practices possible (cf. Appadurai 2013: 176, 155).

Drawing on my ethnographic results the development of democratic practices in terms of deep democracy (Appadurai 2013) was shown. (I did not depict the inter- and transnational actions of Barcelona en Comú, however, in the course of my fieldwork the international commission was already an important entity, which grew even more important in recent years.) I could show, how the actors of Barcelona en Comú attempt to make participation of citizens possible. As for the design of participative settings they consider individual circumstances such as language, working hours and created, for example, a playground for children at internal assemblies. According to Tilly, “procedural definitions single out a narrow range of governmental practices to determine whether a regime qualifies as democratic”, for instance, “whether genuinely competitive elections engaging large numbers of citizens regularly produce changes in governmental personnel and policy” (Tilly 2007: 8). As I have showed various times, the procedural aspect of political participation is in the foreground, which is why there was a lot of reflection on aspects such as: for how long is a participative process open and closed, what is asked, who is asked, and can be the results considered as democratic based on the actual participation of citizens. My respondents mentioned that the activation of citizens is a challenge, as not every person is interested in participating. However, as could be seen, my respondents did not state that the organization of a plurality is impossible or not achievable, as it is argued by some political theorists. The institutional adaption and re-organization poses challenges. Nevertheless, it is understood as possible and organizable, even though it requires a lot of thinking and work.

Inclusive and Insurgent Citizenship and Political Participation

As has been shown, actors of Barcelona en Comú construct an inclusive notion of citizenship, which is distinguished by its locality, namely the neighbourhood and the city as reference point for one's political community (Rose 2000; Lazar 2013). Throughout the description of my ethnography it was rendered visible how citizenship is constantly being culturally and socially produced (Bretherton 2014: 4) based on individual engagement and activity which results in the embodiment of performances of political visions (ibid.: 5). Political democracy entails individual rights and obligations which take a specific form in terms of citizens' participation dependent on the specific understanding of democracy. Thus, citizenship reflects the conditions for political participation within a given political community and in relation with the state (Nugent 2008: 22). In the course of their contestation inside and outside the institution, actors of Barcelona en Comú engage in 'new

games of citizenship' (Rose 2000) and embody an insurgent citizenship (Holston 1999: 94ff) which renegotiates the terms of being recognized and member of a political community in Barcelona. Thus, citizenship is revealed as a dynamic relation and identity and insurgence as a process of constant counter-acting (Holston 2008: 34). Thus, the city, but moreover the assembly can be understood as "strategic arenas for the development of citizenship" (Holston 2008: 22). Against this backdrop, the discussions in the assembly do not only refer to the deliberation on issues of city life, but also of general questions such as what kind of life the political community in Barcelona wants to live and what kind of people they want to be (Harvey 2013: 4). Regarding the right to the city, which actors of Barcelona en Comú are evoking, it is a collective right which "depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization" (ibid.).

Similar to the Apristas in Northern Peru, political participation is understood as obligation and responsibility which is attempted to be activated, "that ensured that everyone would be actively involved in making decisions about, and in sharing responsibilities for, the well-being of everyone else." (Nugent 2008: 36) The attempt of responsabilization could be observed in external as well as internal democratization processes. However, in order to do so it requires to foster a sense of possibility among citizens. Internally as well as externally, the political actors need to make clerks as well as citizens believe that a different kind of politics is possible and taking responsibility extends into the everyday of their neighbourhoods. Internally, respondents described how clerks in the city hall were at first overwhelmed by the new ways of working and had to get used to the new government. Externally, one of the institutional challenges is to convince citizens that the institution is seriously interested to take their opinions and life realities into account. In the case of the latter, additionally, as could be seen at PAM PAD assemblies, the emotionality attributed to the citizenship by theorists (Segert 2016; Lorey 2012) could be observed. However, does not mean they are not capable of engaging in constructive collective thinking and deliberation. Rather it is a question of education and fostering capacities of a critical citizen. Thus, during assemblies it was necessary to point out to citizens that beyond sharing their annoyance and affects, they are supposed to think about concrete proposals, which they then did. This is opposed to what is raised in recent decades: alienated from any political identity which is connected to one's own activity, with a reduced capability for autonomous, critical thinking, interested in only the fate of one's own self.

In the course of the assemblies it was moreover indispensable to be respectful and to let everyone speak. If that was not the case, conflicts could emerge and sanctions could be a result. Thus, the participatory conception of democracy enforces a 'civic morality' among participants of the assembly of Ciutat Vella and actors of Barcelona en Comú which results in the management of behaviour through "new forms of discipline" (Nugent 2008: 53). Thereby, participants were to

become 'cultured' individuals (ibid.) which constituted a process of constructing good citizens (della Porta 2013: 7).

The question who makes democracy?, is answered with, the person who votes, who debates, who participates, and who, finally, decides. Through the municipalist movement, with the city as renewed reference point for the political community, a shift to the local took place. The central actors of their democratization project is the ordinary citizen within a smaller political community than the territorial nation-state. Municipal politics does entail a higher responsiveness to local conditions and the possibility to build meaningful relationships among each other as well as new collective identities claiming the right to the city and thus to something which ceased to exist and is yet to be created.

Capacity to Relate to Others and One's Environment

As have been argued, citizenship marks political belonging (Tully 2002: 155) and a form of allegiance (Rose 2000: 98). As the municipalist movement attempts to strengthen the city as the main reference for one's political identity, the ethnography shows how “living together in a community of fate” reinforced the 'care for the other' (Perczynski 2000: 162). Through participatory spaces where citizens were invited to talk and debate about topics which are a concern of everyone living in the neighbourhood, responsibility as the prominent feature of the relation between individual and community is established. Therefore, I used the notion of relational citizenship in order to describe how political actors of Barcelona en Comú, but moreover the participants in the open assemblies used their capacity to act in relation to others and one's environment (Rose 2000: 99). Thus, they engaged in common concerns and practiced an active political citizenship which “stresses not only entitlements but also some obligations to participate in public life on different levels” (Perczynski 2000: 161). Thus, I depicted the endless discussions in order to show how citizenship is realized through engagement and thereby incorporated in terms of “self-making and being-made” (Ong 1996: 80). This reciprocal constitutive process is increasingly organized through making own choices and the decision to make an active part in “the construction of an ethical life” (Rose 1999: 87, 195). Thus, hereby “new forms of accountability” are produced (Rose 2000: 107), as through the assembly and the return of the municipal group. Therefore, what has been observable in the ethnography is the emergence of a “new radical politics of urban citizenship” based on a form of consumption which is coupled with citizens' behavior based on ethical principles (ibid.: 108).

My research agrees with the anthropological theorization of democracy insofar as it is not a monolithic, ahistoric concept which can be implemented in a technocratic manner at any given time

and place. It is thoroughly historic and entails the creation of interwoven social, cultural and political identities, which are distinguished by their local circumstances. Within this nexus, their political project and government can be described as a proposed mode of existence (Rose 1999) which reinforces the role of the ordinary citizen and their capabilities to act and to utilize their voice as a cultural and political capacity in the process of relating to each other. This also results in the realization that an ethics of government poses not only the question of how to govern others, but also how to govern oneself (Aristotle). The latter is especially important in regard of people inside the public institution who seemingly rather govern others than themselves, which results in a problematized relation between institution and citizen.

Institutional Challenges & Organizational Innovation

Along with the question of how the relation between institution and citizens is perceived and attempted to be altered, I posed the questions how democratic practice on an everyday basis look like? Thus, on an everyday level it entails practices such as: observing, listening, thinking, speaking, discussing, and writing. These are practices which become political within a democratic framework on an everyday basis. The quality of this democratic framework seems to reveal itself, as soon as conflicts and limits of the political organization emerge. As “new forms of democracy, however necessarily imperfect, are made in practice, in ways that are always contingent and shifting.” (Greenberg 2014: 183)

Thus, in her understanding of democratic practices, Greenberg emphasizes their conflictual characteristic which results in everyday affects such as discontent and frustration among political actors (Greenberg 2014). Her notion of a 'politics of disappointment' is a “political possibility that rejects the ideal of the future (or the past) for the compromises of the present” (Greenberg 2014: 49). It constitutes an approach to understand how political actors deal with contradictions and challenges on an everyday level in the institutions (ibid.: 8). As she emphasizes, this does not entail an absence of hope and possibility, but pragmatic political action in the face of the incoherences of the political present (ibid.: 8f). As I could show, political actors of Barcelona en Comú are confronted with organizational limits and conflicts on an everyday basis which results in frustration among them inside as well as outside the institution and within the political organization. I described in detail the clash of speeds and temporalities between different organizational levels. These cause dynamics of separation between them and pose personal and professional challenges on an everyday basis. Inside the institution political actors are left with little time to think strategically from the point of view of the organisation, as they have to decide many decisions

rapidly on a daily basis. Outside the institution this is problematized by political actors in terms of lack of information and influence on decision-making processes, which is said to hinder their political action. Thus, the institution is slow due to its bureaucratic protocols and procedures, which are implemented in order to create a certain quality of comprehensiveness, but slow down the procedures. In contrast, within the movement things are done quickly with a hands-on mentality. Thus, deliberation and information does require a certain time to be realized and the challenge is to organize an adequate communication on institutional level. Summarizing, the institutional behaviour is reactive, whereas the movement is pro-active. However, their politics of disappointment results into organizational innovation, such as the participation of members of the assembly of Ciutat Vella in the discussions of the municipal group.

Anti-Utopian Pragmatic Politics of the Present

What I was able to observe, then, was a 'pragmatic politics of the present', as the collective idea “of idealized futures are best understood as processes of making and interpreting life in the present” (Greenberg 2014: 19, 10). This is inherent in the ideal of the so-called new institutionality. Therefore, institutional behaviour shall be open towards the citizensry, with the urge to constantly ask citizens for their participation. The new political actors reject the idea of one ideal, utopian society. As “the democratic era has ushered in a new pragmatic politics of the present in which the contradictions of democratic representation become terrain for political action” (Greenberg 2014: 26), their political project as a movement-party is a shift to the present and the re-entry of political action into the everyday. Therefore, political actors in the institution, in the political organization as well as ordinary citizens are thought of having a reciprocal relation. Further, democratic politics is understood as an “open-ended process” (Rasza/Kurnik 2012: 252) or “open-ended construction” (Paley 2002: 470) of becoming “that will involve unexpected new forms” as the political futures are not yet imagined (Rasza/Kurnik 2012: 252). As my ethnography suggests, I emphasise democracy as a contradictory and constant process of re-definition (della Porta 2013), as public space is an inherently conflictual space (Lorey 2012; della Porta 2013). The conflictual potentials of democratic politics are attempted to be institutionalized within the functioning of the municipal government and result in incoherent political practices, thus I stress the point that democracy can be understood as a “set of processes unevenly enacted over time” (Paley 2002: 470). Against this backdrop, my respondents were aware of the imperfection of their political actions, which resulted in a pragmatism to be able to develop their organization as a collective project further.

Humans as Future-Makers

The political project of Barcelona en Comú is based on an anti-utopian, future-oriented perspective. Constructing the good life as “a landscape of discernible ends and practical paths” within a cultural framework of futurity” realized through the “capacity to aspire” (Appadurai 2013: 290, 292).

Additionally to proposing a plan of redistribution, they initiate to change the ways politics is actually being done. In this regard, their ideological belief is that changing the way politics is being done in the present will create a sustainable future for everyone. Political actors of Barcelona en Comú attempt to put this into practice and translate it into organisational and institutional reality. Their political project is thus based on an ethics of possibility (Appadurai 2013) conveying a sense of a better future, as it denominates “thinking, feeling, and acting that increase the horizon of hope, that expand the field of imagination, that produce greater equity in what I have called the capacity to aspire, and that widen the field of informed, creative, and critical citizenship.” (ibid.: 295). Thus, as could be seen ethnographically, democratic ideals can be ever so high, if they are not translated into democratic practices and capacities which unfold in the present of everyday life, they will not be realized and stay political wishfulness (Budge 2000: 195). Further, “ethical commitment is grounded in the view that a genuinely democratic politics cannot be based on the avalanche of numbers – about population, poverty, profit, and predation – that threaten to kill all the street-level optimism about life and the world.”

Thus, it is fruitful to look at the future as a cultural fact, as Appadurai suggests, as a difference based on imagination, aspiration and anticipation (2013: 286). As could be seen in my ethnography the imaginary of the future and the good life are thoroughly collective and created through imagination, anticipation and aspiration (ibid.: 286, 187). Against this backdrop, my ethnography agrees with Bretherton's diagnosis of a “deficit of institutional imagination” in contemporary times (2015: 286), as political actors attempt to activate the capacity of political imagination.

Political and Institutional Imagination

On the 1st of May 2016, I was in Can Masdeu, an anarchist squat at the outskirts of Barcelona. This festive day, the house invited Barcelona en Comú to do a workshop of collective reflection on the first year in office. Visitors divided into working groups according to different topics. At the end of the first welcoming, when the course of the day was presented, the hosts asked the visitors whether there is an additional topic they would like to discuss. Someone proposed a discussion group on political participation, which then I was part of. The facilitator of the discussion introduced us with

the words: “What we are here for today is to plant *semillas del futuro*, seeds of the future, of our collective future.” This statement impressed me, because it brought back to my mind the fact that any envisioned future is only created and made possible in the present. Accordingly, “imagination is a vital resource in all social processes and projects, and needs to be seen as a quotidian energy, not visible only in dreams, fantasies, and sequestered moments of euphoria and creativity” (Appadurai 2013: 287). As was repeatedly shown, democracy is “a floating signifier that can be filled with any number of meanings, it is hardly “hyperreal” in the sense of being disconnected from institutional referents” (Baudrillard 1988, see also McDonald 1993: 100f in Paley 2002: 477), which makes it a site for institutional imagination. Thus, ever since 15M a constitutive process was activated (Lorey 2012) which resulted in the re-imagination of the status quo and of political practice itself.

However, democracy is a political narrative which conveys a strong sense of universality and is dominant, normative and thereby hegemonic. Aretxaga has called this “the power of democracy as a fetish” which is based on “forgetting the traces that linked the Spanish democracy to the former regime (its nature as a reform of it)”, especially since democracy constitutes “an object of desire” as a project of modernity (Aretxaga 2000: 48). The rise of the nation-state and the loss of community bonds resulted in a hyper-individualization of the individual. A citizen is “an atomized individual confronted by the collectivist power of the state, not a person rooted in family and social groups with which she is used to act, which can then form the basis of other mediating institutions.” (Budge 2000: 199)

The hyper-individualization of the neoliberal project since Reagan and Thatcher came along with the destruction of labour unions and disrupting the bonds to one's political community in general. Simultaneously, the force of binary norms was perpetuated such as certain traditional ones (e.g. small family unit) and others discouraged and suppressed (e.g. political association). The only affiliation, allegiance and community of fate was to be the nation-state, and its subjects were on their own while pursuing their individual prospect of the future and a good life. However, faced with increasing exploitation of resources and climatic change, among many other circumstances of uncertainty and destabilizations, this loss of particular community was rendered tangible. The course of global events took form in diverging ways. Especially, when it comes to the distinction between local, national and global realms in their specific geographical contexts. In the case of Barcelona, and many other places throughout the territory of Spain and the world, it initiated the urge to build new communities starting in the neighbourhoods. As a political organisation, Barcelona en Comú performed a shift to the local with transnational ties (deep democracy), and a shift to the present as a pragmatic anti-utopian future-oriented politics of the left. In Catalonia and in the rest of Spain, this was done against the backdrop of a past which has not resulted in a break

and conviction of a fascist past under the dictatorship of Franco (Morán 2015: 25). However, considering the liberal aspect of the Spanish democracy, it brought new freedoms for its citizens. Compared to countries such as Germany, where Nazism is part of German consciousness and the condemnation and conviction of this historical past is internationally declared and nationally reflected in their school history books and culture of remembrance, the shift to the right is still taking place, and a thorough global phenomenon.

Returning to Spain, it is heavily argued in the public that Francoism did not end, but is firmly established in the constitution, jurisdiction and bureaucratic institutions in Spain (Morán 2015). It is often argued, that in order to maintain a status quo, elites within representative democracies attempt to have a good grip on civil society and minimise claims for democratization (Tilly, 2007: 40; Paley 2002: 475). Established Spanish political parties maintain their political power. However, ever since 2014 the political landscape of parties, especially on national level has diversified and shattered the long-term practiced bipartidismo, and changed the composition of the Cortes Generales. It also resulted in electoral wars, as Spain had to repeat the national elections of December 2015 in the following June 2016 while in Catalonia there were also elections (or hidden plebiscites) in the Generalitat calling for independence.

As seen, the discussed phenomenon fits into current theorization and analysis. The loss of trust in public institutions and doubt whether they work for the benefit of all citizens can be observed in different variations. For example, there are people who become fatalistic and surrender oneself to their given status. Betimes this is coupled with an unarticulated wish to belong to another socio-economic group which translates into a vote for a party which is actually lobbying for other interests. More often, people claim that every other alternative to the current system has failed. Along with the hyper-individualization and depoliticization of citizens, there is a loss of political imagination among people of so-called Western civilization.

Moreover, it is a loss of institutional imagination, as I have argued. For we entered a time of constant uncertainties, state of crisis and emergency, the reaction of many is to hold on to a corrupted status quo embodied in a strong, male leadership as they can be found among right-wing politicians. From liberal democracies we moved to serially implemented authoritarian democracies. There are diametrical developments on local, national and global political levels, which make it difficult to describe and understand current phenomena. However, the polarization of the citizensry, and the choice against what keeps us alive and for what keeps us secure, is fragmenting the ties of one's social and political community on a direct, local level even more. Thus, “the contradictions of democratic representation become terrain for political action” (Greenberg 2014: 26), and social and

political imagination. This is the ground for seeds of the future to be planted, in order to grow new collective horizons and futures. As democratic practices are not automatically reproductive (Appadurai 2013), political actors of Barcelona en Comú entered public institution in order to create administrative and organizational innovation. Thus, in this regard every assembly can be seen as a seed of the future.

The political project of Barcelona en Comú, although it is connected with an international nexus of so-called fearless cities of the municipalist movement, is of course one specific case highly dependent on the distinct characteristics of its cultural, social, economic and historic context. Against the backdrop of increasing opposition, polarization and diametrical global developments, as well as the unabated success of international right-wing politics, and the shift to the local by left-wing politics, there are many realms, topics and phenomena that could be interesting within an anthropology of democracy. For example, how universal political projects are being maintained in spite of a highly globalized world. In this regard, what is forming as a very important field of inquiry is the diminishing of critical citizens coupled with the rise of social media and the world wide web. The political manipulations based on misinformation that is being done nowadays through social media as a weapon of international warfare is outrageous, and people are only now beginning to grasp the full extent of it. Further, the role of corporations in times of financial capitalism is worth glancing at. Another interesting point might be the election of strong, male leaders and the simultaneous disacknowledgement and negation of human rights and the international arrangements and shared spirit after World War II. These sound like big topics, and they are grand narratives that shake our contemporary world. However, anthropology has a very important contribution to make, as it assesses these phenomena and developments not only in terms of quantitative causalities, but through qualitative thoroughly local research on-site. Furthermore, I opt for a turn to the countryside as an under-researched field of inquiry. In order to grasp an understanding of contemporary political developments, we need to understand how global ideological narratives and technological developments influence life realities in rural areas, and find out which kind of democratic ideals and practices as well as collective horizons of the future emerge there.

Appendix

List of Interview Partners

Date	Name/Alias	Sex	Age	Further Description	Length
17.3.16	Emili	m	43	Minister of Municipal Group Ciutat Vella – Bcomú, Sociologist, regularly at Assembly the Ciutat Vella	00:10:39 00:33:14
6.5.16	Roc	m	48	Minister of Municipal Group Ciutat Vella – Bcomú, Architect, occasionally at Assembly of Ciutat Vella	00:44:09
24.5.16	Alba	w	35	Alderman of Participation and Territory	00:25:51
30.5.16	Mateu	m	57	Member of Assembly of Ciutat Vella, Professor of Sociology and Political Science	00:52:27
9.6.16	Iker	m	47	Member of Assembly of Ciutat Vella, holds function there, street artist	00:49:16
21.6.16	Beatriu	w	55	Comisionada de Cultura	00:23:47 00:02:46
21.6.16	Jacint	m	61	Comisionado de Economía Social y Cooperativa Solidaria, participated at PAM PAD discussion about responsible consumption	00:38:23
25.6.16	Flor	w	60	Member of Assembly of Ciutat Vella, Teacher	00:29:07 00:12:17
5.7.16	Luisa	w	41	Asesora de la Concejalía de Ciclo de Vida, Feminismos y LGTBI, Doctor of Sociology and Political Science	00:41:43
5.7.16	Núria	w	36	3a Tenencia de Alcaldía, Área de Derecho Sociales	00:28:08
19.7.16	Feliu	m	37	Secretario Técnico de Organización	00:42:41
20.7.16	Arnau	m	57	Moderator of Assembly of Ciutat Vella, clerk	00:43:51
22.7.16	Carme	w	59	Comisionada de Inmigración, Interculturalidad y Diversidad	00:55:14
27.7.16	Silvia	w	32	Consejera de Ciutat Vella, also in Grup Democràcia Local, Participación y Transparencia among others	00:48:06
28.7.16	Estel	w	38	Member of Assembly of Ciutat Vella, works at NGO	00:53:55

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Abstracts

The political organization Barcelona en Comú emerged in Barcelona as part of the municipalist movement after the occupations by 15M in 2011/12. Entering the public institution of the city hall, activists of social movements and neighbourhood associations as well as active citizens attempt to re-organize the relation of power between citizens and the government. On the basis of participant observation in 2016 and 15 semi-structured qualitative interviews, the political project of Barcelona en Comú is presented as a democratization movement. Their political vision is based on a critique of political representation and the attempt to implement horizontal decision-making and administrative structures in the city hall. The ethnography shows that the assembly, which is the smallest organizational unit connected to the neighbourhoods, is perceived as the most important political and institutional innovation. It is argued that the politicization of ordinary citizens resulted in an activation of new, marginalised political identities in the city as well as new spaces of accountability. Further, a deficit of institutional imagination (Bretherton 2015) is problematized and the capacities of imagination and aspiration (Appadurai 2013) incited and fostered. Slowly, political action is being re-introduced into the everyday of city life based on an ethics of possibility (Appadurai 2013) and an anti-utopian pragmatic politics of the present (Greenberg 2014). Thereby, a relational form of citizenship (Rose 2000) and the care for the other (Perczynski 2000) is evoked and a politics of responsibility attempted. This ethnography is an account of left-wing populism, and the diametrical global political developments in contemporary times.

Die politische Organisation Barcelona en Comú entstand in Barcelona als Teil der munizipalistischen Bewegung nach den Besetzungen 2011/12 durch 15M. Aktivist*innen aus sozialen Bewegungen, Nachbarschaftsverbänden sowie aktive Bürger*innen wurden in öffentliche Ämter des Rathauses gewählt und versuchen das Verhältnis der Macht zwischen Bürger*innen und Regierung zu reorganisieren. Auf der Grundlage teilnehmender Beobachtung 2016 und 15 ethnographischen Interviews wird das politische Projekt von Barcelona en Comú als Demokratisierungsbewegung vorgestellt. Ihre politische Vision beruht auf einer Kritik der liberalen (repräsentativen) Demokratie und dem Versuch, horizontale Entscheidungs- und Verwaltungsstrukturen im Rathaus umzusetzen. Die Ethnographie zeigt, dass die Versammlung, als kleinste mit den Stadtteilen verbundene organisatorische Einheit, als wichtigste politische und institutionelle Innovation wahrgenommen wird. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Politisierung gewöhnlicher Bürger*innen zur Aktivierung neuer, marginalisierter politischer Identitäten geführt und neue Räume des Verantwortlichmachens eröffnet hat. Darüber hinaus wird ein Defizit der institutionellen Vorstellungskraft (Bretherton 2015) problematisiert und Fähigkeiten der Imagination und des Strebens (Appadurai 2013) angeregt und gefördert. Politisches Handeln soll basierend auf einer Ethik der Möglichkeit (Appadurai 2013) und einer anti-utopischen pragmatischen Politik der Gegenwart (Greenberg 2014) langsam alltäglicher Teil des Lebens in der Stadt werden. Dabei wird eine Form von relationaler Bürger*innenschaft (Rose 2000), als auch Fürsorge für die Anderen (Perczynski 2000) evoziert und eine Politik der Verantwortung versucht. Diese Ethnographie ist eine Darstellung des linken Populismus und der diametralen globalen politischen Entwicklungen in der heutigen Zeit.