Childcare commons: Of feminist subversions of community and commune in Barcelona

Manuela Zechner

abstract

This paper explores childcare as a matter of social reproduction and the commons, in tension with some ethical and political questions regarding the status of children as political actors. How can we think through the political practice and significance of childcare commoning? What might a radical politics of childcare look like? Looking at three modalities of childcare commoning in the neighbourhood of Poble Sec in Barcelona – mothers' networks, self-organized childcare groups, and municipal policies of childhood – this text emphasizes the role of neighbourhood networks and municipal institutions in childcare commoning. Narrating examples of transversal and sympoietic organizing across the private, public and commons spheres, the paper situates the organizing of childcare in the contemporary feminist and municipalist context of Barcelona, in which I myself partake. It points to agents and dynamics that are under-explored in extant organizational and commons studies: mothers, midwives, post-partum classes, creches, playgrounds, municipal offices, neighbourhood chat groups, and not least children. This raises the question: Who is the subject of childcare, and how might we envisage subjectivity and political agency differently, learning from social ecosystems of care? This paper offers a novel look at how emergent feminist politics articulate autonomy and interdependence, as well as the commons and public systems in alternate ways.

Introduction: Childcare commons as a vector of political change

> Writing to the mothers' *Whatsapp* group is better than calling 112.
>
> (Urban saying amongst mothers in Poble Sec)

In this paper, I shall be discussing childcare as a matter of social reproduction and the commons, at the same time as displacing the meaning of childcare towards expanded notions of political subjectivity and agency. Looking at childcare through the lens of reproductive commons and commoning as set out by, e.g., Federici, Caffentzis and de Angelis, I will propose that commons can be altered and subverted via feminist politics that claim different notions of political subjecthood. I take this as an occasion to ask, 'who cares?', not just in a sociological or anthropological sense, but also through a feminist alterontological lens (Puig de la Bellacasa 2015, 2017; Papadopoulos, 2018). In my approach, this means to question ascribed notions of who is the subject and object of politics across a range of levels: institutions, social movements, self-organized nurseries, mothers' networks and children. It implies a focus on a transversality of connections, efforts and intentions that offer a complex picture of agency in care, looking across different phases of care and extending them towards children (Tronto, 1993, 2009). This approach seeks to articulate commons theories with care ethics and the politics of social reproduction towards feminist perspectives on institutions and knowledges. As such, I seek to contribute a novel approach to thinking childcare (asking not just 'how' but also 'who') as well as municipalism (asking not just 'what' but also 'how'). The 'critical' merit of this consists in asking what makes collective projects stay alive or die, what and how bodies constitute and sustain them, and what forces affect and threaten them. My theoretical framework strongly builds on emergent feminist social movement analyses from the Spanish context, in which the question of the *sustainability of life* has been central (Pérez Orozco, 2014).

The paper's empirical analysis is based on a 2017-2020 research project on childcare commons in the neighbourhood of Poble Sec, Barcelona that I conducted via an extended co-research and autoethnographic process as a

local mother.[1] My project comprised four years of feminist situated research in Barcelona, looking at intertwining matters of (child)care, micropolitics and municipalism (Zechner, 2020, 2021). It builds on co-research, ethnographic as well as autoethnographic methods, featuring interviews, participant observation, collaboration and focus group workshops – conducted across self-organized nurseries, mothers' networks and neighbourhood spaces in Poble Sec. A key moment in it was the 'Comunes y Crianza' colloquium (2018), which I co-organized with other local parents, activists and researchers and from which I draw many quotations.[2] This colloquium, and my project overall, took place in a context of new municipal politics of the commons in Barcelona (when Barcelona en Comú was elected to local government), implying great collective organizing and intelligence as well as new struggles over the definitions and processes that shape policy. Many of my key collaborators in this project work at the intersection of neighbourhood activism, public pedagogies, care feminism and municipalism, and were interfacing (like me) with Barcelona en Comú in various ways. This paper tells a story of childcare commons across the dimensions of maternity, neighbourhood activism and municipalism. Before discussing the complex dynamics encompassing childcare commons in more detail, I now introduce the key literature and conceptual ideas that guide my analysis.

Thinking childcare commons: Key literature and its socio-political context

My analysis mainly draws on feminist literature regarding care and childcare, and on feminist-Marxist analyses of commons in contexts of social

---

[1]   The academic context for this was the Heteropolitics research project on commons (heteropolitics.net), which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement 724692).

[2]   I have translated all citations from this colloquium, as well as from my interviews, from Spanish or Catalan into English here. All persons cited here are aware of my writing and a majority have given feedback on my research outcomes. I do not anonymize the names of my different co-research partners for obvious reasons: to not render them invisible and to open to the possibility of research into their work.

reproduction, as well as looking towards ontological-ecological refigurings of care from the environmental humanities (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Papadopoulos, 2018). In what follows, I go through three levels of childcare commoning: (1) mothers' networks and local solidarity economies, (2) self-organized nurseries (*grupos de crianza compartida*), and (3) the feminist municipalist politics of childhood of Barcelona en Comú. Together these levels constitute a sympoieitic ecosystem of childrearing and care, operating as slow, profound and far-reaching processes of social and political transformation. As I offer a situated account of this context of transformation, I draw on key feminist literature on the feminist ethics and politics of care (Gil, 2012; Pérez Orozco, 2014), feminist-Marxist politics of social reproduction (Federici 2012; 2013), and neighbourhood and municipalist solidarity (Ezquerra and Mansilla, 2017; Zechner, 2016).

Together, these socio-political currents articulate and prefigure a paradigm of conviviality and commons democracy that thinks care in political as well as ecological ways. Overall, my paper gives account of a social *ecosystem* of childcare, as implicated in local networks, struggles, debates, politics. Feminist, autonomist, neighbourhood and municipalist politics evolve interdependently in my account here. My approach draws on analyses of commons as systems, relations and processes rather than things (Barbagallo et al., 2019; De Angelis, 2017, 2019). It refuses to separate resources from relations, internal from external dynamics, and micro- from macro-political dynamics, thereby insisting on the importance of seeing variegated dimensions as a dynamic whole. One basic tenet in this kind of research is an interest in relations, conjunctures and tactics, rather than a search for broadly generalizable organizational principles or grand strategies. No commons without context, complexity, contradictions – and indeed no commons without conditions, change, care. Once we understand commons as social systems, we realize that the tension between commons' endogenous and exogenous forces is a tension that necessitates productive articulation rather than categorical differentiation and contraposition (De Angelis, 2019). This requires transversal perspectives and a sense for complicities as well as tensions.

As such, my analysis owes much to autonomist-feminist theories that grapple with commons as constellations of struggle (Federici and Caffentzis, 2014)

that are embedded within broader dynamics of capitalism, neocolonialism, patriarchy, ableism and so forth (see Barbagallo et al., 2019). Like other commons, contemporary feminist childcare commons too must be seen in the context of neoliberalism. As one of the key authors on childcare politics, Carolina del Olmo (2013), notes, generations of women who grew up in neoliberal economies and are now parenting are well aware of the triple burden they face – housework, waged work, and childcare all at once. They are also aware of their slim chances of gaining stable employment in today's economies of precarity, particularly as women and mothers, in an economic context like that of Spain. To embrace motherhood and childrearing via networks of mutual support is a political act that also reflects a refusal of precarious labor and triple-burden exploitation, and a collective desire to invent and defend other ways and infrastructures of caring and living. Del Olmo writes about how new forms of motherhood (*nuevas maternidades*) question narratives that equate waged labor to empowerment and label 'staying at home' to care as regressive:

> Some go home to be care-givers, others choose professions of less prestige and less salary that leave them more free time…For sure one has to ask why some do this and others that, but it's not enough to pose that question whilst taking for granted that the ones over here win and the ones over there lose, that the ones over here are being submissive whilst the other ones choose. (Del Olmo, 2014, my translation from Spanish)

Questioning discourses of choice in childcare and neoliberal contexts is an important matter for feminism (Barbagallo, 2016). Mothers are all too easily patronized and underestimated. In the context of Spanish feminism, a new wave of politicization of motherhood and parenting has been driven by the generation of the powerful 15M anti-austerity social movement that took squares and reinvigorated neighbourhoods across Spain, in tandem with militant analyses of austerity and precarity, feminist economics and theories of the commons and of care (Del Olmo, 2013; León, 2017; Merino, 2017; Vivas, 2019). The approach to reproductive and waged labor that del Olmo (2013) describes above shares much affinity with some theories and economies of the commons, privileging the creation of autonomous – and interdependent – circuits of value generation over women's integration into existing job or financial markets. As we shall see, autonomism is given a feminist overhaul in the spheres of practice and theorization, as advocating for organizational

models that transcend the state and the market, yet are solidly based in affirmations of mutual dependency and vulnerability (Gil, 2012; Pérez Orozco, 2014).

Childcare commoning thus emerges in the context of a new wave of feminism based in affirmations of interdependency, care, diversity and post-work imaginaries that point to mutual aid and defense networks (on *Ni una Menos*, see Mason-Deese, 2018), community and commons infrastructures (in the work of Raquel Gutierrez or Silvia Federici for instance, see Vega Solis et al., 2018), new social rights (basic income, care income), and feminist economics (Pérez Orozco, 2014). These have brought forth many new politicizations of care, childcare and feminist motherhood (León, 2017; Llopis, 2015; Merino, 2017; Vivas, 2019). They shift political emphasis from work to life, from integrating women into existing systems to redefining those systems altogether, and from addressing the state at large to transforming municipal and public institutions in particular. As the examples of self-organized nurseries will show, this allows for some aporias around care and public systems to be overcome, opening up to new contradictions and challenges. My account of the complex dynamics encompassing childcare commons now starts with mothers' networks, to show how these enable and produce self-organized childcare groups, as well as alliances with public institutions and municipal policies for childcare commoning.

Mothers' rearguard and digital networks

There is one dimension that connects and underpins all the childcare-related organizing in Poble Sec: the more or less informal networks of mothers (and, to a very limited extent, of fathers). These networks emerge across different encounters and shared spaces: pre- and post-partum classes in public healthcare centers; public, private and common-based nurseries; playgrounds, squares and streets in the neighbourhood; local events and workshops in public or commons-based social centers; as well as chat platforms like *Whatsapp*. As such, mothers' networks operate as dispositifs of commoning that create lively links between public institutions and spaces (health centers, playgrounds, nurseries), commons spaces (*grupos de crianza*,

social centers, cooperatives), and the private spaces so pivotal to childcare (the home, family, chat groups).

Though mostly informal and non-committal, mothers' networks often end up being stronger spaces of reference than both public and family systems. Facing limitations or absences of biological family and other support structures, many women seek each other for advice and help regarding childrearing and childcare. Events for babies or parents, pre/post-partum classes and friendships give rise to the formation of groups. Platforms like *Whatsapp* or *Telegram* make this mutual support very instant, immediate and dialogical. Unlike advice from a single source, like a doctor or family member, mothers' chat groups provide a myriad viewpoints and recommendations on any single issue. Such groups are increasingly important sociotechnical assemblages (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) that take the loneliness out of parenting and motherhood in particular, much like *the grupos de crianza* do:

> The current rise of the *grupos de crianza compartida*, created and self-managed by women, is a response to the loneliness that many urban mothers suffer from, but also to the model of society and city that liberal capitalism imposes. Those groups...are conceived in order to give support to women around the first months of a baby. Yet the connection [*vínculo*] between the participating mothers is so intense that it comes to transcend this period, and establishes itself as a support for childrearing, with the spirit of what we ancestrally could have identified as 'tribe' [*tribú*]. (Puerto, 2019, my translation from Spanish)

The Spanish version of 'it takes a village to raise a child' is '*para educar a unx niñx hace falta una tribú*'. Contemporary childcare commoning redefines both 'village' and 'tribe'. Against the grain of its exoticizing and familialist ring, the notion of '*tribú*' is used by mothers to affirm broad solidarity and care, as radical mutualist networks that in fact transcend the family.[3] These networks are local and neighbourhood-based, constituting village-like dynamics in large urban contexts prone to alienation: an extended family of sorts, existing in relation to a specific common territory and revolving around the care for its young as well as elders. In the Comunes y Crianza (2018), we tried to tackle what enables us to make childcare a matter of commoning: asking 'does it take

---

[3]   A more recent example of this includes the pandemic neighbourhood solidarity network 'Somos Tribú Vk' in Vallecas, Madrid.

a Poble Sec to raise a child?', we discussed and mapped the ways in which networks, generations, commons and territories interact in Poble Sec.

Across the neighbourhood, family trajectories are crisscrossed by breakups, rent raises, moves, job loss and search, illnesses, moments of depression, displacement, and so forth; the ties they build fluctuate, vary, weaken. Accompanying the emergence and (dis)continuities of familial ties, childcare groups and mothers' networks come to be rich in knowledge and understanding of different rhythms, cycles and generational processes. Generational consciousness is strong in Poble Sec's childcare commons, leading to a development of organizational intelligence about the cycles of ageing, institutional passage, health, relationships and groups. This is a dimension much overlooked in commons research: the ways in which bodily, seasonal, economic, political, and many other kinds of rhythms intersect with processes of generation, organization and resurgence (Michon, 2007). The mothers' networks for instance renew every half year or so, with generations overlapping, as midwife Pepi Dominguez knows:

> Every half year more or less there's a new *Whatsapp* group; summer and Christmas holidays are natural moments of generational change, though there is always a continuity of people and some groups even keep meeting during the holidays without me.

Through online chats, mothers exchange advice, things, information, arrange meetings, joint walks, playdates, talks and workshops, organize or join baby blocs, disseminate campaigns and events, and discuss all sorts of matters from medical to political to personal. Not requiring moderator functions, these groups are inclusive of anyone wanting to join (within the technical limit of 256 participants in *Whatsapp*) and refuse any regimentations of political, personal and practical debate. To the subjects involved – mostly women[4] – this does not amount to chaotic or unserious communication but means the conscious embracing of a politics that does not cut out the background noise

---

[4]   In the 2016/17 generation's *Whatsapp* group of 86 members, which I have been part of as a mother, there is one cis male member who has, in the course of three years, sent about three messages; all other correspondence is between mothers. In 2021, some fathers of this generation finally set up their own group (their children now aged 5 and close friends).

of life (far from Arendtian notions of political rigor!). Chat groups act like a digital background or murmur that nourishes and sustains everyday encounters and lives.

These groups don't just make the personal political, but also bring the political down to the embodied level, reflecting on ways of being affected, situated and response-able in relation to different problems or policies. Public systems, municipal politics, administrative procedures, modalities of exclusions: all those are analyzed and debated. As such, seen through Tronto's care phases, these chat groups channel concern or 'caring about' but, moreover, also organize action as *taking care of*, facilitate *care-giving* as sharing care work and practice, enable the sharing of vulnerability and uncertainty to affirm *care-receiving*, and foster *caring-with* as feminist or neighbourhood solidarity. *Caring-about* corresponds to concern, as the moment of recognizing a need; *taking-care-of* corresponds to action, to address the need; *care-giving* corresponds to practice and labor, as continuous and embodied care; and *care-receiving* corresponds to being vulnerable and shaping interdependency (Tronto, 1993). *Caring-with*, which Tronto (2009) added to her influential theory later on in the context of her work on caring democracy, corresponds to solidarity. Holding those five phases together, mother's 'networking' functions on premises well opposed to those of neoliberal networking for jobs or status. It is reproductive commoning par excellence, as diffuse, multilayered and multitasking cooperation and collective care. Such reproductive commoning thrives on addressing multiple and changing needs, rather than centering on a single resource or task.

Mothers' networks and chat groups are key motors of the contemporary movement of rearguard or *retaguardia* politics in Spain (Malo et al., 2016), which articulate a new feminist politics of mothering (Del Olmo, 2013, 2014; León, 2017; Llopis, 2015; Merino, 2017; Vivas, 2019). A powerful response to female precarization, the loneliness of nuclear family and solo parenting, as well as to the neoliberal fragmentation of care, space and time (Del Olmo, 2013), this movement – perhaps 'social nonmovement' (Bayat, 2010) – is silent and barely visible to the public eye. Like most movements of reproductive commoning and care, the recent movement of childcare commoning is however well aware of itself and the predicaments it struggles to overcome. From economic, material, social and subjective phenomena to the

shortcomings of second wave feminism's orientation towards wages and labor market integration, the new feminisms emerging after the 15M want to build different relations and scenarios of reproduction. Activists began to politicize the notion of the *retaguardia*, the rearguard:

> How do we make the revolution starting from the rearguard? The mothers alone. Crisscrossed by the crisis, by the generalized looting of all that's public, but also by a social awakening that's more pressing each time. (Malo et al., 2016)

The struggle for public infrastructures and institutions is as much part of these new feminisms as the invention of new modes of commoning care. With the new municipalist governments in Spain, feminist actors also bring these anti-neoliberal struggles into public institutions – as we shall see below. For now we move on to look at the more formally organized childcare commons that emerge out of mother's networks, with a special focus on the *grupos de crianza compartida*, self-organized nurseries.

Self-organized childcare groups in Poble Sec

Defining care and childcare

What is childcare? Right before and after birth, childcare is about learning to care for small humans, and childcare groups are about mutual support and advice, as babies are strongly attached to their primary carers and birth-givers. As babies grow bigger, childcare also comes to refer to the care that other people or institutions can provide a child with, as parents do reproductive or waged work for instance. The *grupos de crianza* seek to facilitate a smooth transition between these two moments of care and build solid and durable communities around them. Their aim is to keep practical, ethical, pedagogical and organizational matters together, in as much as possible and desirable. They try to hold the care cycle, as Tronto describes it, together: to avoid alienating separations between *caring-about, taking-care-of, care-giving, care-receiving*, and indeed also *caring-with* (Tronto, 1993, 2009).

With Tronto we learn that one reason why care cycles are fractured is that different aspects or phases of care are neither distributed nor valued equally in our societies. In raising children, the emotional and organizational aspects

of care – as *caring-about* – are mostly left to mothers as the infamous mental load (planning meals, birthday parties and gifts, doctors' visits, playdates, observing well-being, minding and sustaining relations, etc.). This mental, emotional and relational labor is very intensive, and requires continuous movements of *taking care of*, as observation of mother's activities shows. Moreover, the very material, physical and skin-to-skin/hands-on aspect of care – as *care-giving* – is also highly invisible and undervalued while done mostly by women, migrants and indeed female migrants.

Where patriarchal and capitalist divisions of care remain naturalized, most reproductive work remains invisible and undervalued, as feminist economists have pointed out for decades (see e.g. Pérez Orozco, 2014; Knittler and Haidinger, 2016). Caring gestures and roles associated with privilege and power – often with men, wealth and whiteness – receive ample attention and praise, no matter how sporadic or deficient they are: think of the visibility of doctors over nurses; of the gesture of the person who 'takes care of the wine' versus the unspectacular labor of the person cooking or indeed cleaning up; the generosity attributed to the person who buys a fancy birthday gift versus the respect for the person organizing the party; or the admiration for dads taking kids for a walk versus the public attitude towards mothers walking with prams. Care is neither equally distributed nor equally valued.

Tronto's description of care cycles matters greatly to mapping out the subversive as well as sustainable potential of collective models of (child)care provision, as it allows us to detect power inequalities and divisions of labor, visibility and valorization. Her emphasis on *care-receiving* and *caring-with* – moments of vulnerability and solidarity often ignored in debates about care – urge us to also consider *the other(s)* in care, thereby adding a crucial ethical dimension. Alongside analyses of global care chains (Lutz, 2011; Gil and Pérez Orozco, 2011), feminist economics (Pérez Orozco, 2014; Vega Solis, 2014; Knittler and Haidinger, 2016) and women's commons (Federici, 2013), Tronto's phases of care provide a powerful means for analysis.

So who looks after children in Poble Sec?

In 2017, Poble Sec had 40,358 inhabitants, out of which approximately 1200 were children aged 0-3. Roughly half of them were taken care of by their

parents or in informal care arrangements, some 20% went to local public nurseries (there were about 209 places in 3 local publicly run nurseries), about 18% went to private nurseries, while 8% (ca. 100 children) were part of *grupos de crianza* (Comunes y Crianza Colloquium, 2018). These self-organized childcare projects thus account for a considerable proportion of early-age childcare in Poble Sec.

Another way to answer the question about who looks after children is to say, again: mothers. In Spanish-Catalan society, in general, and in the *grupos de crianza* in particular, mothers are still the main protagonists of childcare. Maternity leave lasts only 4 months in its statutory form in Spain, leaving women with an abysmally short time frame to establish modalities of relation, childcare and mutual support to fall back on when back at work. Fathers or co-parents can barely make use of parental leave in Spain, leading to a focalization of childcare with mothers. So strategic and forward-looking as they are, many mothers invent minor 'dispositifs' of childcare-sharing, starting from the strong support networks built around birth and baby-care.

Mother's networks in turn give rise to a desire to create more integrated, intimate and open options of continuous early-age childcare, especially when public and private childcare systems fail to offer places or affordable rates. Having experienced feminist solidarity, many mothers cannot turn back: they struggle to set up more stable collective childcare solutions, such as *grupos de crianza compartida*. In a nutshell, *grupos de crianza compartida* are groups of parents allied with educators, who run self-organized nurseries, mostly in rented shopfront spaces. If they are initiated by parents, they form a shared vision and define shared needs, usually find a trained educator to accompany them (an *acompañante*), constitute an association, find a space, and begin a routine of daily childcare. If they start from educators, the process is similar but group formation is often slower and facilitated more strongly by educators. Groups might shift from being more parent-run to being more teacher-run and vice versa, and involve different degrees of sharing the work of childcare as well as organization. What defines them is the notion of childcare as a common matter that requires sharing work – as care work and/or organizational work – and building community.

The more organically, carefully and slowly these groups can constitute themselves – the less market-like – the more likely they are to thrive, by building good collective process, debating doubts and tensions, getting information, taking legal and administrative steps in time, getting the children used to the educators slowly, finding and equipping a space, and reaching out to the neighbourhood to fill places and gather support, dealing with people leaving and joining the project. *Grupos de crianza* lead parents, educators and children to work together and constitute a strong care network as well as neighbourhood *tribú*, focusing care both inward (*tribú*) and outward (neighbourhood). They recognize that modern urban parenting is an individualizing and precarious matter that requires new support structures.

Child-care commoning

The *grupos de crianza* combine and articulate matters of pedagogy, care and organization in ways that can transform all of these three dimensions, building sustainable alternatives to both private and public nurseries. Like the mother's networks, they combine concern (*caring-about*) with action (*taking care of*) and labor (*care-giving*) in reciprocal ways that center on children as subjects and agents (*care-receiving*), as well as solidarity-based relations to the neighbourhood and beyond (*caring-with*). They constitute ecologies of care in the neighbourhood, linking different phases of care as well as generational processes. They may be seen as social-familial-local ecosystems that try to weave spatialities and temporalities of care together responsively, supporting one another in the daily struggle to extend lives and families beyond the nuclear and individualist paradigm (Zechner and Rübner Hansen, 2019).

Life, work and struggle mix in the *grupos de crianza compartida*. They are part and parcel of post-work, care-based feminisms that center on politicizing care as work *as well as* 'placing life at the center' (Pérez Orozco, 2014). As Christel Keller Garganté (2017), a mother, activist and childcare researcher in Barcelona, emphasizes at the Comunes y Crianza Colloquium:

> The *grupos de crianza compartida* are indeed useful for socially valuing care, which in this sense is a claim that many different feminisms have made, about the visibilization of care work and so on. The *groups de crianza* indeed *do* work when it comes to making this a common matter and therefore to give it [care] a central space in social life – which is also to do with their given capacity of

weaving community networks.

What makes *grupos de crianza compartida* so relevant in sociopolitical terms is that they also engage Tronto's (2009) 5th phase of care, *caring-with*. They are spaces of neighbourhood as well as feminist and children's solidarity. Invisibly yet powerfully, they are linked into local networks and events, picking up problems, needs and wider social affectivities. Many groups have been participating in the feminist strikes of the 8th of march since 2017 and partake in the activities of local social and solidarity economy networks, as well as in neighbourhood assemblies and protests. Struggles *to* and *for* care (Zechner, 2021) link with different activisms in these groups, as they advocate for children's rights, spaces for free play and a politics of care in the city and its social movements. More than commons *of* childcare they are also commons *for* care: we may indeed want to take the interlinking of all phases of care as a definitional criteria for any transformative commons. For how radical or transformative can commons be, if they do not articulate reproduction and care work (*care-giving*), the sharing of vulnerability (*care-receiving*), and *caring-with* as solidarity, alongside concern (*caring-about*) and *taking-care-of* (action)?

The neighbourhood and childcare

Poble Sec's childcare groups initially grew out of the boost in neighbourhood and feminist self-organization that came with the 15M movement of 2011. In a context of economic crisis after 2008, high unemployment meant that people had more time to organize, reflect and experiment, at the same time as harsh austerity measures affected the accessibility and quality of public nurseries. Austerity and precarity produced an increasing demand, capacity and desire for self-run projects of childcare that could provide alternative support networks and forms of education. To avoid childcare falling back onto mothers specifically, isolating them and reinforcing patriarchal structures, communitarian alternatives were needed.

The 15M movement led to a flourishing of political experimentation and new cooperativisms that also extended to care. Out of feminist debates at Poble Sec's neighbourhood assembly within the 15M, around 2011, a workshop to discuss childcare-sharing groups was organized, leading to the formation of

the 'Poble Sec network of community-based childrearing' (*xarxa de crianza compartida Poble Sec*) that sought to federate different collective childcare initiatives. This brought forth two collectively run nurseries: one based on a more family-driven model (*Babàlia*), and the other on a more educator-driven model (*Petit Molinet*), inspiring a new generation of childcare groups. Poble Sec went from having 1-2 parent-run daycare projects after 2007, to having around 5 after 2011, around 7 in 2016-18, and 5-6 between 2018-21.

In 2017, taking up the spirit of the *xarxa de crianza* in the face of the new municipalist experimentations, the majority of existing childcare commoning projects formed the PEPI platform together, a new network to provide each other mutual support and gain political leverage vis-à-vis the local policies of Barcelona en Comú. Many local activists in Poble Sec (as elsewhere in Barcelona) got involved in the movement-driven electoral campaigns of Barcelona en Comú in 2015 and continued to be (critical) accomplices and observers of the municipalist governments. Of those that had children during this time – a fair few – many got involved in *grupos de crianza*. As Javier Rodrigo, a parent-neighbourhood activist, said of the PEPI (Platform for Education and Participation of Infants) at our jointly organized colloquium, *Comunes y Crianza*:

> The PEPI is a heterogeneous group…that matured in two moments I think: on the one hand, there had already been previous meetings between the educators [*acompañantes*] of the *grupos de crianza compartida*. In 2014-15 they met several times to speak about issues and we were also lucky, in this case because of Carolina [a local councilor of Barcelona en Comú] who started to talk to us all. One of the first things she told us – and that was also a bit in the air – was that instead of her talking to us one by one we should try have a 'voice', a platform with which we can start negotiating with the city council in order to see what opportunities were opening up in Poble Sec. That was towards the end of 2016. It's very important to note that at PEPI we go slow, very slow, extremely slow, and so it's hard for us to have a meeting every month and a half…We're more or less 6 or 7 organizations there. We did a first count of families and came to some 100-110 families in 2017.

The name PEPI does not only stand for 'Platform for Education and Participation of Infants', but is also is a pun in reference to the midwife Pepi Dominguez. Pepi is a midwife in the local public health center of Poble Sec (CAP Hortes) and runs pre/post-partum classes there. Her role as 'meta-mother' and enabler of childcare- and mothers' commons is of prime

importance, and widely recognized in the neighbourhood. Thanks to her initiative, the public health center provides pre/post-partum classes as an open and engaging space of encounter and collective interest formation. Pepi practices a feminist pedagogy of getting mothers to self-organize and mutually support one another. The origin of commons-based nurseries thus also lies in the public system, thanks to the feminist strategies of agents like Pepi, who encourage fluidity rather than opposition between commons- and public organization. Here we come to a crucial point.

Just like councilor Carolina López, who we will hear more from below, Pepi weaves relations and transversal connections between institutions, the private lives of families, and initiatives of commoning. As translators, traffickers of knowledges and resources, matchmakers or mediators, these women play an important role in a social ecosystem like the one described here. Creating fluidity between the public and the commons is an art, but not one that's practiced in isolation. It depends on the strength, claims and resilience of self-organized initiatives (such as the PEPI and the *grupos de crianza*), which allow public-based agents to open spaces and resources up to commoning, and vice versa. Far from defending a rigid autonomism, the childcare commons projects in question here defend linking public and commons-based systems as a political challenge that requires ongoing negotiation. Radical municipalism brought an opportunity to again undo the contraposition of *either-or* narratives between public and commons systems, and led into ways of valuing and encouraging crossovers, bastardizations and hybrids.[5]

Economies of care within, against and beyond economies of capital

The micro- and macropolitical dynamics of childcare also collude with broader neoliberal dynamics, impacting the neighbourhood level. In the period of my research, which falls between the economic crises of 2008 and 2020, rents went up and up – leading to a harsh dynamic of displacement in Poble Sec, as well as to a powerful struggle against evictions and real estate speculation (via the neighbourhood union *Sindicat de Barri*, the *PAH* anti-

---

[5]   Those hybridizations had been longer in the making, as movements had pushed for 'monster institutions' or 'institutions of the commons' (see Zechner, 2021).

eviction movement, and the renters union, *Sindicat de Llogaters*). Real estate speculation made it hard for many families to stay put, and for childcare groups to find appropriate spaces. Increasing rents have also led to an influx of middle class families with more disposable income into the neighbourhood, which sometimes join *grupos de crianza* and potentially trigger complex dynamics. Higher income families are able to pay higher fees, meaning they can pay educators more fairly and potentially help make groups financially more sustainable, but at the same time they make general fee rises seem more legitimate, potentially leading to the exclusion of more precarious families.

It can't all be blamed on 'the gentrifiers' though – in fact maybe hardly so. During the period that my research covers, unemployment went down in Catalunya, and long-standing locals too found more waged work, reducing time available for self-organization. This is one of the most significant factors in how much self-organization and transversal care the *grupos de crianza* are able to muster: the level of employment and income of families, as well as the kind of employment (public sector workers tend to engage with the politics of childcare commoning more than workers used to private sector hierarchies and ethos).

The problems of inclusion and privilege, as well as the struggle for anticapitalist and feminist urbanistic models, are not unfamiliar to the *grupos de crianza* and related networks of childcare commoning. On the contrary, these groups are engaged in critiques and struggles against the neoliberalization of education, work, care and public services and spaces. They know the complexity of the situation requires more than a return to purist principles of autonomy: it's a matter of enmeshing, transforming and reclaiming public institutions for the commons.

Childcare commons and public institutions: Synergies and tensions in municipalist Barcelona

As Javier Rodrigo argues, reducing the debate around self-organized childcare to a polarity between private vs. public means to miss out on a lot of things. Firstly, because *grupos de crianza* are spaces of democratic learning and experimentation, and their 'direct governance is very efficient, with

commissions, democracy: it's a school for mothers and fathers', as Rodrigo affirms (Comunes y Crianza Colloquium, 2018). Secondly, the practices and knowledge produced in these groups spill and cross over into the public system, influencing their democratic politics with grassroots methods of self-management. Most children go from the *grupos de crianza* into the public school system at the age of 3 (or in rare cases 5), bringing habits, expectations, alliances and knowledges that also transform the public schools.

The question of public institutions became very concrete and tangible after Barcelona en Comú won municipal elections in 2015. A lively time of experimentation with modulations between public and commons systems ensued, requiring a rethinking of habituated positions. The vibrant social and political climate in Poble Sec enabled debate and averted polarization, not least when it came to the question of childcare. The question of how *grupos de crianza* should relate to the municipality, and vice versa, is however far from resolved. Within the *grupos de crianza*, there are different tendencies as regards demands to the city council and the question of whether it should grant free use of spaces or give funding. Marc Alcega (2016) from the network of free education in Catalunya (XELL) was interviewed by the *Tribú en Arganzuela* [6] project in 2016 about his network's demands towards the administrations, such as granting the use of spaces, give some kind of subsidy, etc. He notes:

> There's a debate about that. In our surroundings there are movements that absolutely want to do without the state and its mechanisms, and others that say 'no, we're part of society, the state also represents us'. In this case, what can we ask of them [the state]? For now we'll get them to not persecute us, that they leave us in peace and help us with things that don't cost them money. This is where licenses come into play: to find one that serves us for regularizing the spaces of our schools.

For some however, there are problematic and possibly insurmountable contradictions when it comes to the relation between commons and state in childcare. Raquel Gallego, head of a Barcelona-based hub of social-movement related policy research and co-coordinator of various projects on care provision, institutional and non-institutional models of early-age childcare,

---

[6]   On self-organized childcare in Madrid see: https://tribuarganzuela.tumblr.com/.

says of 'innovative' non-institutional models like the *grupos de crianza compartida*:

> The problem is that if they don't want to be regulated, how will they demand public spaces…? That's contradictory: you can't demand to make use of public resources if you don't accept to be regulated; it's contradictory because if you're not regulated then you're outside…On the other hand, if the government – the local one for instance – regulates it [self-organized childcare], then it's taking on responsibility, and we also don't know if it wants to take that on. So here's there's a certain difficult match on both sides.

In the case of Poble Sec's groups and the PEPI, the notion that childcare groups would not want in any way to be regulated is questionable. The closeness of many activists and parents to the commons debates and policies means that there is a critical openness regarding possibilities for municipal support and regulation. A sense of potentiality and invention prevails, based on public-commons partnerships in other areas. As Laia Forné Aguirre (2019), working on participation in Barcelona's city hall, put it:

> One of the challenges of municipalism is to build a new form of public institution that's based on trust and commitment between the institution and citizens, for the development of a framework of *public-communitarian* collaboration. A collaboration that maintains and respects the autonomy of communities while at the same time guaranteeing the public function of resources via criteria of access, sustainability, social returns, territorial rootedness and democratic governance of common goods. (my translation from Catalan)

The 'Urban Commons' policies (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona 2017a, 2017b) that regulate spaces such as the Can Battló community center show that public-commons agreements need not pass via total control and permanent audits. Spaces are being handed over rent-free to local communities (as associations) and new modalities of accompaniment and ongoing evaluation are being elaborated: this model could also work for childcare groups. Yet from another viewpoint, there are also concerns about the use of public resources for commoning experiments. For example, Raquel Gallego ponders:

> It's very curious because with experiences like those of social innovation we realize that they don't help with the problematics of people who really suffered from the crisis. Rather they answer to the aspirations of people who have a high educational level, that have a medium but sufficient socioeconomic level…Not

just that, I think it [alternative economies] isn't even known [to this most affected population]. And I doubt that if they knew it, they would choose it...I'm afraid I might say that even the term itself, of social and solidarity economy, is misleading, because it's not thought for the disadvantaged sectors of the population.

For Gallego, who has followed a host of research projects on solidarity- and commons-based economies at the IGOP research center, the (non)accessibility of self-run childcare projects reflects a broader problem with social and solidarity economies. This contradiction can indeed also be seen in the social, cultural and ethnic composition of Poble Sec's childcare projects. They are largely made up of white people with a relatively high level of education and lower-middle class incomes. This is self-critically confirmed by Poble Sec based cooperativist and activist Xavier Latorre Tapis, speaking about his many years of working in the social and solidarity economy networks in Poble Sec:

We also have a self-critique...in our spaces the majority are 'whities' [blanquitos]...we always say that our networks are having trouble opening to more of the cultural diversity in the neighbourhood. We're conscious that we're not reaching all the diversity that exists in the neighbourhood, we're mostly white people.

Here we encounter a blind spot of much commons theory and anthropology, which often fails to address questions of race, class and gender. If commons are to be transformative social practices that lead not just to more democracy but also to more equality, then what basic requirements must they meet? Is it enough for commons initiatives to practically (not just discursively) address one of the great axes of inequality – bringing justice in terms of class, gender, race, age or ability for instance? These questions are at the forefront of municipalist debates on the use of public resources.

Barcelona en Comú's municipalist politics for childhood

How, if at all, should childcare groups feature in municipal policy? Carolina, the local Barcelona en Comú councillor of Poble Sec, recounts the troublesome path this question has taken. The struggle around policies of the commons as regarding childcare happens between three major areas of municipal politics, says councillor López at the Comunes y Crianza Colloquium:

The ongoing debate is basically about a confrontation between [the] Education and Economy [municipal departments]. But then comes a moment where Feminisms [as a municipal department] also come into the debate.

López recounts how childcare groups end up being caught in a field of tension between different policy areas, narrating herself as defender of these groups who fought hard to have them included in the electoral programme in 2014 and now finds herself frustrated:

When Education comes into play and tells us that they won't support, under no circumstances, the *grupos de crianza compartida*…we decide to talk to Economy because that's the cooperatives, it's the community economy, it's the economy of care, it's feminism and economic feminism. So we thought to tackle it from the viewpoint of furthering cooperatives, of promoting associative culture around this issue, and we made a lot of headway because in Economy we are putting all our possible efforts into creating cooperatives and community economies…But feminisms also stop us and say that we can't do anything whatsoever until we have clarity about what can be done, that again stalls the process.

For the education department, the *grupos de crianza compartida* are a threat to the public system, looking too much like private initiatives. For the feminist department, they are too marked by traditional gendered divisions of labor and lack of cultural and ethnic diversity. So they end up in the 'economy' category, where commons policies are developed in relation to the social and solidarity economies and urban commons. The policy pilots on 'urban commons and citizen heritage' are key referents here (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2017a, 2017b). Rodrigo can't see any reasons why these models should not be expanded towards childcare:

The city of Barcelona, to put it simply, promotes long-term agreements with organizations to which it grants the use of an infrastructure…The question is: Why can this model not be applied to childcare when there are already these other models? The city of Barcelona has some 50 neighbourhood community centers and playspaces, out of which 80% are managed by citizens: it's not such a rare thing. The problem is that when we talk about education we're very quick to generate a binary opposition between the private and the public.

It is the activists and parents themselves who push for change and new policies concerning early childhood, and it's often them – still close enough to Barcelona en Comú after many of them had participated very actively in drawing up the electoral programme of 2015 – who expect a municipal

government to produce new commons frameworks. The families who pioneered radical collective childcare infrastructures after 2011 are now organizing around primary schools, making Bcomús second mandate a key opportunity to promote continuity across commons-based and public education. Transversal and transgenerational transmission of childcare commons knowledges is a key issue: both across institutional typologies, linking public and commons, as well as within and across commons infrastructures, since new groups often find themselves reinventing the wheel, when they could learn so much from predecessors. A network like PEPI sets out to address both levels.

The right to play in the city: Interweaving public and community space

The new municipalists' preferred strategy for democratizing the city with and for children has so far been more focussed on the habitational and relational spheres and on urban planning (Zechner and Rübner Hansen, 2015).[7] The 'playable city' (*Ciutat Jugable*) (Ayuntamiento de Barcelona, 2018) is a concept taken from the Italian pedagogue Francesco Tonucci and centers on rendering urban public space child-friendly and 'playable' as a whole (Institut de la Infancia, 2016). This does not mean more gated playgrounds, but focuses on valorizing the democratizing force of children in public space. Lucía Zandigiacomi, a mother, activist and cooperative urban planner of Poble Sec has contributed to the policy via workshops. At the Comunes y Crianza Colloquium, she points out how the very nature of space can change:

> There are studies that say that if there's kids playing in the streets then neighbourhoods are more thriving, the life and health of the community that lives in the neighbourhood is better, the relations between neighbours are better. This is a bid to create unity in public space. I think upon a first reflection we could exchange this idea of 'making a public space/making a space public' for 'communitarian space' as a place of encounter.

Reclaiming urban space for everyday life and sociality – by removing commercial enclosures and toxic and dangerous obstacles like cars – is key for enabling resilient communities and commons. The neighbourhood, as a vital dimension for the commoning of care and childcare amongst many other

---

7   Mayor Ada Colau (2019) interpellates children as 'allies and agents of change', giving them platforms and tasking them with co-designing spaces.

things, needs ample spaces for play, chatter, sociality, rest and slow movement. Poble Sec's care networks thrive on squares, streets, parks and playgrounds, as spaces of encounter between people of different backgrounds. The mothers, *grupos de crianza* as well as municipality have a myriad ways of activating such encounters: the former run free markets for kid's clothes in a square, the latter periodically bring free play tents to squares. Here too the possibilities for learning and synergies are ample and alive.

Concluding discussion

Looking at childcare through the lens of commons and care feminisms, I have sought to relay some of the embodied and situated understandings that the vivid political moment between Spain's 15M movement and the 'new municipalisms' has brought forth (see also Zechner, 2021). This cycle of political experimentation, and its politics of the commons, have been variously analysed and exemplified through the lens of policies and political alliances yet largely failed to be understood in their reproductive, embodied and everyday dimensions. Its feminist strategies have been rendered in English as a feminization of politics, rarely giving account of their micropolitical wealth – their very source of power and innovation in my view. Rather than looking for splits, dramas or successes/failures of the commons, I have sought to emphasize interdependence in my account of the dynamics and actors that make up the commons ecosystem at stake here, showing webs of mutual becoming and support that run across families, neighbourhood and city. As we have seen, childcare is more than an anecdotal aspect to this moment of political experimentation, it is a key horizon of feminist transformation and for sustainable commons (Garganté, 2017; Ezquerra and Mansilla, 2017).

I have tried to offer a radically (rootedly) transversal analysis here, for grasping how power is built and (re)negotiated collectively, from below and through care. For this we need perspectives and analyses that look across the domains of relational, organizational, habitational and representational power at the same time, in order to map and envision transversal strategies for change (Zechner and Rübner Hansen, 2015). Looking across informal networks, self-organized spaces and municipal policy-making vis-à-vis

childcare commoning enabled me to point to connections and shifts that build power transversally and sympoietically (which is not to say without tensions, differences or conflicts). The worlds of childcare commons described here exemplify ways in which different domains of practice and power can come to mutually strengthen and amplify one another. This affirmation of interdependence, as articulated with autonomy, is part and parcel of a broader feminist paradigm change that revolves around ethics, politics, economics and ecologies of care (Bärtsch et al., 2017; Gil, 2012; Pérez Orozco, 2014; Zechner, 2021), in the sense of a transformation of subjectivities (Guattari and Rolnik, 2006) as well as a re/definition of subjecthood (Pérez Orozco, 2014; Vega Solis, 2014; Zechner, 2016).

Bringing together feminist-autonomist and alterontological ways of understanding care, I want to propose a deeper questioning of subjects and objects in care. This implies understanding how mothers are powerful political subjects that interface with institutional dimensions in complex ways, but also how child-care[8] may feature children as *subjects* rather than just objects of care and politics. Just like politics, care is not just for those endowed with freedom of choice or independence. Grasping children as political subjects in this sense doesn't necessarily mean to ascribe them a free will or the capacity to reason, as in the enlightenment paradigm, but crucially also to ascribe them the capacity to care. This capacity is what the *grupos de crianza* and mother's networks seek to enhance across all of their levels of organization. The point of self-organized childcare is that it doesn't simply leave the question of children's subjectivities to pedagogy, but also engages organizational care in order to transform divisions of subjects and objects.

Childcare commoning thus shifts from being a matter merely of having children looked after, to one where children are commoners and co-care for the world we inhabit in common. *Child-care* can thus also transform how we think and do organization. It leads us to question the adultcentrism of much politics and research, and to ask why 'children are not seen as competent social actors', even 'commonly seen as an obstruction to work' and seen as

---

[8]   I introduce a hyphen here to emphasize the connection as well as space in between these two terms, when I question whether the 'child' here is a subject or object.

subaltern in the sense that they are seen but not heard, their speech acts not recognized (Kavanagh, 2013: 1488-1490). The *grupos de crianza* are more than just 'child friendly', they do more than just posit children as customers instead of subalterns, they focus not just on the child but on everyone else around, on creating social (and indeed at best more-than-human) ecologies that take children's influences and contributions into account (and not just their supposedly wilful ones). This challenges us to rethink political subjectivity and agency as guided by care ethics, towards more-than-adult politics and organization as well as more-than-human ecologies (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017).

This is a deeply ecological matter. Speaking with Tronto's (2009) care theory, we must thus learn to see how children too *care-about*: indeed they are able to articulate this as soon as they begin to speak, yet they are not heard in their expressions of care. Coincidentally, children's expressions of care often concern plant and animal life and welfare, ascribing subjectivity to living things that are not just human: this sensitivity of children, this 'animism' that adults try so hard to exorcise from them, is a crucial element for ecological change. Further, aside from shifting attention from *taking-care-of* and *care-giving* as supposedly adult-only acts,[9] we need to develop much more deep and radical understandings of *care-receiving* as a form of interdependent agency. *Care-receiving* is often misconstrued as passive dependency, at least in 'dependent' subjects like children, people with disabilities, ill people who cannot construe their care-receiving as acts of consumption or choice. And yet we are all care-receivers. Those of us more reliant on care, whether old or young, know our needs best and are best placed to design processes and infrastructures of care. We often ignore how care-receivers reciprocate care, in sometimes singular ways. Child-care commoning crucially respects how kids want their needs met and encourages collaboration.

In Barcelona's childcare groups as well as feminist municipalisms, children are drawn into processes of everyday collaboration and co-design (of nursery

---

[9] Needless to say, children can also *take care of* tasks and do *care-giving* work where enabled, encouraged or obliged to.

or urban spaces), in dialogue with families, educators and planners. [10] Facilitating ways for children not just to co-decide but to co-care is a powerful way of nourishing liveable futures. This means enabling children to care in more than one modality, allowing them to articulate *caring-about*/concern with *taking-care-of*/taking action, with *care-giving*/sustaining, with *care-receiving*/being vulnerable, with *caring-with*/solidarity. Understanding children as care-full rather than care-free, and learning to foster and rethink care rather than merely think of protecting children, is a key dimension of the feminist and ecological approach emerging across the contexts I have mapped out above. A political-social as much as pedagogical methodology, this shift concerns organizational as well as relational dimensions.

In a similar epistemic and ontological shift, self-organization in our examples of childcare commoning here has turned out to always be sympoietic. The 'self' that organizes is always a larger, diffuse collective subject, rather than an autonomous unit. In the practices described here, be they at the level of informal networks, associations or policy making, there is no attempt at cutting out the noises, affects, complexities or 'others' of everyday life, in order to arrive at a more pure or efficient political subject. This realization is part and parcel of feminist epistemologies based in interdependency and vulnerability, embracing political subjectivities that look far beyond the liberal ideal of the white, independent male (Pérez Orozco, 2014; Vega Solis, 2014), and indeed beyond the human and individual (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Haraway, 2016). In this context, autonomy is no longer a fantasy of separateness or sovereignty, but a means to deal with various interdependencies and processes of co-emergence as one tries to self-govern. Self-organization or commoning are about carefully interweaving moments of autonomy and interdependence, and isn't assumed to happen beyond the realms of the public or indeed private. The approaches to commons

---

[10] Examples in urban space include children co-designing their playgrounds in 2018 as well as the participation of children in designing the Barcelona Zoo in 2017. Those are part of the larger vision of the *Ciutat Jugable* policy, based in redesigning urban space to make the city 'playable' and safe for children. Lucia Zandigiacomi has worked on this policy via the Raons Publiques urban planning cooperative (see https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/dretssocials/es/innovacion-social/ciudad-jugable).

(self)governance and public-commons partnerships we have seen here all go in this direction. When they then take care seriously, in its different phases, commons can avoid mystifying their own reproduction and develop sustainable micropolitics. Commoning care must never be separate from commoning collective power (Zechner, 2021).

references

Alcega, M. (2016) 'Entrevista a la Xell'. [http://tribuarganzuela.tumblr.com/post/154156358952/entrevista-a-la-xell-red-de-educaci%C3%B3n-libre-de]

Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (2017a) 'Comuns urbans i patrimoni ciutadà'. [http://lahidra.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Patrimoni-Ciutada-Marc-Conceptual-v.3.01.pdf]

Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (2017b) 'Jornadas de comunes urbanos: hacía el uso y la gestión comunitaria de lo público'. [https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/participaciociutadana/ca/comuns-urbans-cap-lus-i-la-gestio-comunitaria-dallo-public-0]

Ayuntamiento de Barcelona (2018) 'Dossier Ciutat Jugable'. [https://ajuntament.barcelona.cat/premsa/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/180218-DOSSIER-Ciutat-Jugable.pdf].

Bärtsch, T., Drognitz, D., Eschenmoser, S. Grieder, M., Hanselmann, A., Kamber, A., Rauch, A., Raunig, G., Schreibmüller, P., Schrick, N., Umurungi M. and Vanecek, J. (eds.) (2017) *Ökologien der Sorge*. Vienna: Transversal Texts.

Barbagallo, C. (2016) 'Feminist demands and the contradictions of choice: Work and childcare in neoliberal Britain'. [https://www.academia.edu/28012306/Feminist_Demands_and_the_Contradictions_of_Choice_Work_and_Childcare_in_Neoliberal_Britain]

Barbagallo, C., Beuret. N, and Harvie, D. (eds.) (2019) *Commoning with George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici*. New York: PM Press.

Bayat, A. (2010) *Life as politics*. Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press.

Colau, A. (2019) 'Conferencia 'Barcelona futura: del gris al verd'. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-9SnI9qUzo]

Comunes y Crianza Colloquium (2018) *Report and recordings of Colloquium held on 4-5 October 2018 in Poble Sec, Barcelona.* [http://heteropolitics.net/index.php/2018/11/09/crianza-y-comunes-childcare-commons-audios-report/]

De Angelis, M. (2017) *Omnia sunt communia*. London: Zed Books.

De Angelis, M. (2019) 'The strategic horizon on the commons', in C. Barbagallo, N. Beuret and D. Harvie (eds.) *Commoning with Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis*. London: Pluto Press. 209-222.

Del Olmo, C. (2013) *Dónde está mi Tribú? Maternidad y crianza en una sociedad individualista.* Madrid: Clave Intelectual.

Del Olmo, C. (2014) 'Construir un discurso maternal (decente)'. [https://rebelion.org/construir-un-discurso-maternal-decente/]

Ezquerra, S. and Mansilla, E. (2017) 'Economia de les cures I politica municipal: cap a una democratització de la cura a la ciutat de Barcelona'. Barcelona: Ajuntament de Barcelona.

Federici, S. and Caffentzis, G. (2014). 'Commons against and beyond capitalism', *Community Development Journal,* 49(S1): 92-105.

Federici, S. (2012) *Revolution at point zero.* London/New York: PM Press.

Federici, S. (2013) 'Women, reproduction, and the construction of commons'. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBBbVpbmRP0]

Forné Aguirre, L. (2019) 'Com construir una ciutat comuna: crear un, dos, tres… mil "Canbattlós"'. *El Critic*, 2019.

Gil, S. (2012) *Nuevos feminismos*. Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños.

Gil, S. and Pérez Orozco, A. (2011) *Desigualdades a flor de piel: Cadenas globales de cuidados.* Madrid: Exterior Ministry and UN Womens Division.

Guattari, F. and Rolnik, S. (2006) *Micropolitiques*. Paris: Les Empecheurs de penser en Rond.

Haraway, D. (2016) *Staying with the trouble: Making kin in the chthulucene.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kavanagh, D. (2013) 'Children: Their place in organization studies', *Organization Studies*, 34(10): 1487-1503.

Keller Garganté, C. (2017) 'Grupos de Crianza Compartida: Una alternativa comunitaria en la organización del cuidado en la primera infancia', *Quaderns-E*, 22(2): 167-182.

Knittler, K. and Haidinger, B. (2016) *Feministische Ökonomie. Intro – Eine Einführung.* Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag.

León, C. (2017) *Trincheras permanentes: Intersecciones entre política y cuidados.* Logroño: Editorial Pepitas.

Llopis, M. (2015) *Maternidades subversivas.* Tafalla: Editorial Txalaparta.

Lutz, H. (2011). *The new maids: Transnational women and the care economy.* London: Zed Books.

Malo, M., Fernández, E. and León, C. (2016) *Retaguardias y Vanguardias*. Project Blog. [https://otrosvinculos.wordpress.com/2016/08/18/retaguardias-y-vanguardias/]

Mason-Deese, L. (2018) 'From #MeToo to #WeStrike: A politics in feminine', in Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (eds.) *Where freedom starts: Sex power violence #Metoo*. London: Verso: 271-298.

Merino, P. (2017) *Maternidad, Igualdad, Fraternidad. Las madres como sujeto politico en las sociedades poslaborales.* Madrid: Clave Intelectual.

Michon, P. (2007) *Les rhythmes du politique. Démocratie et capitalisme mondialisé.* Paris: Les Empecheurs de Penser en Rond.

Institut de la Infancia (2016) 'Parlen els protagonistes: El dret dels infants a la ciutat, millorem el nostre espai públic'. [http://institutinfancia.cat/mediateca/parlen-protagonistes-dret-dels-infants-ciutat-millorem-nostre-espai-public/]

Papadopoulos, D. (2018) *Experimental practice: Technoscience, alterontologies, and more-than-social movements.* Duke University Press.

Puerto, S. (2019) 'Grupos de madres: Recuperar la tribú'. [https://ctxt.es/es/20190612/Politica/26613/Sara-Puerto-maternidad-mujeres-madres-soledad-lactancia.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22.XQFeuII2F-4.twitter]

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2015) 'Making time for soil: Technoscientific futurity and the pace of care', *Social Studies of Science*, 45(5): 691-716.

Puig de la Bellacasa, M. (2017) *Matters of care: Speculative ethics in more-than-human worlds.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Pérez Orozco, A. (2014) *Subversión feminista de la economía.* Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños.

Tronto, J. (1993) *Moral boundaries: A political argument for an ethics of care.* New York: Routledge.

Tronto, J. (2009) 'Interview with Joan Tronto, 4th August 2009'. [https://ethicsofcare.org/joan-tronto/]

Vega Solis, C. (2014) *Culturas del cuidado en transición: Espacios, sujetos e imaginarios en una sociedad de migración.* Barcelona: Universidad Oberta de Catalunya.

Vega Solis, Martínez Buján and Paredes Chauca (2018) *Cuidado, comunidad y común.* Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños.

Vivas, E. (2019) *Mamá desobediente. Una mirada feminista a la maternidad.* Madrid: Capitain Swing.

Zechner, M. and Rübner Hansen, B. (2015) 'Building power in a crisis of social reproduction', *Roar Magazine*, Issue 0. [https://roarmag.org/magazine/building-power-crisis-social-reproduction/]

Zechner, M. (2016) 'Let's play? Citizenship, becoming and subjectivity in municipalism': *Transversal Webjournal,* Monster Municipalisms Issue.

Zechner, M. and Rübner Hansen, B. (2019) 'Extending the family,' in C. Barbagallo, N. Beuret, and D. Harvie (eds.) *Commoning with George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici*. New York: PM Press.

Zechner, M. (2020) *Reports from Spain: Childcare commons and the micropolitics of municipalismo*. [http://heteropolitics.net]

Zechner, M. (2021) *Commoning care & collective power*: *Childcare commons and the micropolitics of municipalism in Barcelona*. Vienna: Transversal Texts.

the author

Name Manuela Zechner is a social movement researcher and cultural facilitator, working with feminist pedagogies, mapping, free radio, theatre and co-research methodologies. She is currently doing postdoctoral research on struggles across

ecology and care, co-produces the Earthcare Fieldcast and recently published *Commoning care & collective power: Childcare commons and the micropolitics of municipalism* with Transversal Texts.

Email: Manuela.zechner@uni-jena.de