



Together somewhere, anywhere alone:
**Zambra Malaga, Care as an Embodied Feminist
Resistance**

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Disclaimer:

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In times of despair and anguish, those days when I felt that I wanted to abandon this process, sometimes I thought in the moment I would write this page; and I felt relieved. Today, when I am finally at the end of this road, I am in front of a blank page without knowing very well what to say.

My head is yet full of faces, voices and moments. And I have one word present: awakening.

That is what this process produced in me, a process that long time ago ceased to be only an academic exercise and was converted into the excuse to face myself and my assumptions. This road taught me about other resistances and ways of living. And the following pages are a result of the change that comes along with encountering people that decided to say no to a system that was drowning them. People that decided to wake up.

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*What if we rave for a little while?
What if we stick our eyes beyond the infamy to
imagine another possible world?*

The Right to be Delirious - Eduardo Galeano

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List of Acronyms

RBI	<i>Renta Basica de las Iguales</i> (Basic Income for the Equals)
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
ILP	<i>Iniciativa Legislativa Popular por la Renta Basica</i> (Popular Legislative Initiative for the Basic Income)
SRI	Sexuality Research Initiative

Abstract

This paper explores the experience of the autonomous activist collective *Zambra Malaga*, which develops its work in Andalucía, south of Spain. Through the analysis of two of the main projects developed by the group, this paper explores how the category of *care* is constructed both as related to the economic system and the effects of hetero-patriarchy in it, and is also configured as a specific way of living in community, based on the privilege of collectivity and support. Such construction of support networks comprises also a re-subjectification of bodies as collective territories of resistance. Care is constructed as a specific form of struggle, tackling directly the effects of capitalism/hetero-patriarchy over women and men lives. This paper explores how Feminism and, in general, collective action is being made in a particular place of the world and is nourishing the practices of contemporary place-based social movements. Finally, based on Standpoint and Situated Knowledges epistemologies, this paper is an exploration on how to research on Feminist activism and the challenges it entails, understanding this type of research as an embodied process in which the creation of bridges between academia and activism is an underlying objective.

Relevance to Development Studies

Modernization has entailed a monolithic vision of transformation projects. Change can be called as such as long as it is big, visible and influencing a lot of people. From this standpoint, the importance of what is happening in localities is lost, and small practices are ignored or undervalued. Therefore, this paper locates as a form to contribute to research from those forgotten discussions, seeing from other perspectives how practices that may seem as non-academic actually can contribute to the knowledge of how collective action is exercised. Indeed, it can give clues when analyzing local communities dynamics, by taking seriously the importance of collectivity and support networks within them.

The study of Development also includes the study of alternatives to Development. In this, there is important to look at Feminist/anti-capitalist struggles, going deep in how they resist to the problems neoliberalism has carried in their lives. As Harcourt & Escobar (2002) highlight, there is necessary more research on how little movements construct diverse imaginaries as crucial seeks for social change. Learn from the practice of grassroots initiatives can contribute to the discussion of how to tackle crisis with gender as a primordial category, from analyzing how that is made in practice, by which methods and with whom intervening.

Finally, West Europe is not what it was decades before, hence there is a need for Development Studies to look to the problems within the region and

beyond, look at the ways social movements are looking to the South for answers and renewed modes of action.

Keywords

Feminism, collective action, care, Spain, social movements, pre-figurative politics, body politics, activism, women, gender, anti-capitalism

Chapter 1

Introduction. Concepts into practices

For us Feminism is a consciousness that you live, that you feel, that you touch. Is to take it to practice in the acts of everyday life'
(Patri F. 2014, personal interview)

When I returned to the Netherlands, after a warm summery month in the Spanish State¹, my head was a disordered web of reflections and it was urgent for me to put my thoughts and feelings down, somewhere. After writing in my blog I discovered something: the questions I carried with me in my bags were mostly unresolved. I was panicking, but after thinking slowly and discussing with some people, I saw that although my research questions did not fit specifically in what I found, I came back with a lot –a lot!- of stories that were responding to other questions, more close to the struggles and daily lives of the peoples I met.

Before I wanted to find rigid categories. Maybe I founded some concepts, but what I truly encountered, felt and experienced were ways to resist within an environment of socio-economic crisis and repression. Now I am interested to reflect on how contra-system resistances are made, where specific forms of collective action entail diverse face-to-face interactions and propose a possibility to make resistance from the little; not relying in enormous, legendary revolutions –although walking towards them-. Conceptualizations changed to experiential ways to understand a contextualized Feminist resistance. In this case, how radical ways of thinking on communitarian support entail a different form to interrelate and get another consciousness of the own and collective bodies.

I observed a way to see Feminism, framed in a struggle against the anti-capitalist/hetero-patriarchal system beginning in everyday life practices. Without romanticizing a particular group, I want to use the practices of the autonomous collective *Zambra Malaga* as an example of new grassroots Feminist resistance, framed in other ways to struggle against capitalism and hetero-patriarchy. Following Harcourt & Escobar (2002), seeing how this group validates traditionally non-political issues as primary for resisting and seeking for social change.

Therefore, in this paper I will explore how the participants of *Zambra*

¹ I use *Spanish State* instead of Spain with the will to go along with a particular political statement made by *Zambra* and Baladre. A statement that understands Spain as the conjuncture of several independent nations with very different cultures, peoples, realities and struggles. This, obviously, has everything to do with the Separatist Movements in the Basque Country, Catalunya and Canarias; indeed, a lot of these groups are part of Baladre.

use care as a way to understand and practice collective action. How it entails a lifestyle that re-subjectifies bodies in personal and collective levels, resulting in a particular political struggle. Through the analysis of two of the projects by Zambra I will try to show how care is used as a way to overcome capitalism and hetero-patriarchy and construct support networks through the exercise of *apoyo mutuo*².

I explore some rationales behind a project that are converted into practices in the other. From such analysis, I will try to consider some of the difficulties that privileging collectivity over individuality may entail, as well as how to locate Feminism within a wider leftist movement gives a particular role to men but also can give place to some patriarchal dynamics.

In addition, I wish to make a reflection on how to research on Feminist activism and how that becomes an embodied process. Within that, I want to reflect on the dilemma of standing in the borders of an outsider-insider researcher position, where a determined positionality determines how experiences are lived, emotions are felt and thoughts are translated into paper. This paper aims to be an exercise originated in the need to strengthen bridges between academia and activist life.

1.1. Structure

Experiencing intense sharing with a social struggle carried some effects on me as researcher, as a latina Feminist and as a young woman. The attention Zambra pays to embodiment made me question my intellectual perspectives, my position in the world and even some personal inquiries. I aim to write from recognizing knowledge created in-place and through the dialogues between the researcher and communities. That is why in the second chapter I use the ideas of Donna Haraway (1988), Sandra Harding (2005) and Chandra Mohanty (2003) to situate my epistemological position. I will try to tell how the encounter with Zambra made me question limits between observing and being involved in activism. Looking at it as a process lying at the core of research practice: the embodied research.

In the third chapter I will contextualize Zambra as a group and within the coordination to which they belong: Baladre. I will give a brief review of the history of Feminist struggles in the Spanish State and an explanation about the actual socio-economic crisis scenario this country is facing, in order to locate Zambra in a determined socio-historical context. In this I found necessary to establish the relation between Zambra and 15M Movement, as it is the most important rising in the country of the last decades and entails a particular effect on Zambra.

Chapter four will consist in an explanation of the project *Renta Basica de*

las Iguales (Basic Income for the Equals – RBIs) and its implication for making care visible. I will give a background on how Feminist economists have problematized care as invisibilized within the capitalist/hetero-patriarchal system (Razavi 2007, Agarwal 1997, Del Río & Pérez 2004, Gibson-Graham 2006a, Hartcourt 2009). I will show how RBIs is related to this, engaging in a re-configuration of care by locating it as part of a holistic economic system, with collectivity as primary to social organization. As RBI stills in a project stage, my main focus is to look at the rationale behind and connect it to the way the people from Zambra translates ideas of care to their everyday lives, in which they try to create the ideal scenario for this tool to be applied.

Therefore, in chapter five I will see how the initiative of Akelarre Zambrero (no literal English translation) is constructed as a conscious exercise of using care as an embodied experience. Akelarre is the specifically Feminist initiative from Zambra. To support that experience I will use the concept of Ethics of Care (Held 2006) and the ideas of corporeal Feminism (in Bloodswoth 1995) and Body Politics (Harcourt 2009) to go deeper in how belonging to Akelarre has entailed a re-subjectification of participants' bodies, which become a new place for resistance.

Continuing with the analysis of Zambra's practices, in chapter six I will use the theory of Pre-Figurative Movements (Sande 2013, Holloway 2002, Ross et. al. 2012) to deepen in how care is used a particular form of resistance in everyday life, determined by a specific socio-economic scenario. I will explain the meaning of *apoyo mutuo* as understood by Zambra: a relationship based on interdependence of people within a community, framed in horizontal relations.

Having clear positions does not necessarily entails the same coherence in practices, therefore there is a need to question the forms in which activists practice their conceptualizations and the problems it may entail (Eleftheriadis 2013): in the last part of the chapter I problematize how Zambra's conceptualizations of care can create paternalist and controlling dynamics. Along chapters five and six I will place some of the stories I got during fieldwork, trying to locate the voices of the participants of the group at the front of the analysis.

In the conclusions chapter I will show how care in Zambra is used as a multi-layered category, including both a political struggle towards the state and a communitarian way of living that re-subjectifies the bodies of the participants of the group. I will also make a reflection about the role of Zambra vis-à-vis the Feminist movement in the Spanish State, which will allow me to locate the discussions developed in this paper in a wider reflection of how care and collectivity can be located within the field of Development/Social Studies.

1.2. Research questions and methods

- **Main question:**

How care is conceptualized and lived by the people of *Zambra Málaga* and how it becomes a specific way to understand and live Feminist collective action, resistance and body politics?

- **Sub questions:**

- a. What is care for the people from Zambra?
- b. How the participants of Zambra define Feminism?
- c. How RBIs is understood as a way to make visible care, care work and break with the sexual division of work?
- d. How by the practice of '*apoyo mutuo*' Zambra is configuring a form of struggle against capitalism and hetero-patriarchy? Which are the gaps between concept and lived practices?
- e. How 'Akellarre Zambrero' entails a body politics experience for the participants of this group?

This research has a qualitative approach. I used ethnographic research (participant observation) and episodic interviews. The exploration of Zambra's work was aimed to highlight understandings of different categories: Feminism, collective action, sexuality, body politics and resistance. I aimed to keep information as transparent as possible, but being aware of my positionality and the ways it could shape interpretation of information and experiences. I didn't want to set a stage in which respondents could feel me in a higher hierarchical position. Due to this I rejected using techniques like Focus Groups or surveys. In fact, some of the most important conversations I had were totally informal.

Episodic interviews

As King & Horrocks (2010: 26) assert, 'the research question for a qualitative interview study should not... focus on establishing causal relationships ... What it should focus on is meaning and experience...' Episodic interviews try to resist hierarchical differentiations between researcher and respondents. Requires considering the individual and collective forms of subjective knowledge, taking emotions into account. However, episodic interviews are not as open as life stories; these might have some guiding questions or concepts (Suárez-Ortega 2013: 189). I decided not to construct my analysis from life stories based on the limited time I had in the field.

Six formal interviews³ were conducted with people participating -or who participated before- in Zambra. The group nowadays has 8 to 10 active participants and I aimed to interview as many of them I could, however, my main

³ Of more or less one hour.

interest was to know the experiences from the people belonging to Akelarre Zambrero, as it is the Feminist initiative from the collective. Not all the people from Zambra are part of Akelarre, so I prioritized this fact when choosing my interviewees. I was interested in the experience of men in this context, so I interviewed one. I wanted also to know the reasons behind the creation of Akelarre, which took me to the person who had the idea in principle; she is no longer part of Zambra and her reasons to leave the collective ended up being important for my analysis.

Ethnographic Research (participant observation)

This technique entails that the researcher ‘dives along into the field’, meaning he or she observes *and* participates in the context of the researched, which has an effect on observations (Flick 2009: 226). It was used to reveal practices of the people within Zambra and the dynamics involving strategies, actors and interrelations among them.

From that observation, I wrote an ethnographic field notes journal based on the tools given by Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995). I made daily entries reflecting on creations of meanings and everyday roles and interactions among the people, together with my own assumptions. I tried to capture in detail situations and dialogues that came along during this time. Even though I will not write an ethnography –due to insufficient information to rely on that technique- the analysis is constructed from narrating the experiences I gathered (Atkinson in Emerson et. al. 1995: 170), supporting those with theoretical discussions. This methodological decision is based in my epistemological positioning, i.e. knowledge created from the experiences of research respondents.

A fellow that has been doing some research on 15M in Madrid gave me some contacts of social activists in the Spanish State. Through them I ended up knowing about Zambra. I read their web page and got very interested in their work. After some Skype conversations with one of the participants of the group, I agreed to travel to Malaga and join them to the annual encounter of Baladre (the network to which Zambra belongs), travelling along the north of the country.

1.3. Advantages and limitations

During a month I lived and travelled with Zambra, following their work from within. My field research was divided in two parts: first, a staying in Malaga, where I joined meetings, interviewed people, participated in street actions and shared everyday life with the participants of the group. Second, I traveled with Zambra to the annual *Marcha-Caravana* (March-Caravan) of Baladre, where I met several collectives working in diverse topics. I participated in workshops,

assemblies and street manifestations and met some of their spaces of struggle: *okupas* (squatter) buildings, neighborhood associations, etc. After this meeting I participated with some women from Zambra in an Autonomous Feminisms Encounter.

During this time I could meet people involved in diverse struggles; I witnessed not only Feminist activism but I could observe how the social movement's scenario is moving now a days in the Spanish State. To be all the time with the group was an enriching experience, because I got engaged with their daily lives and they were open to share their intimacy with me. Nonetheless, being with them almost all the time sometimes constrained me to take notes or reflect about my observations. Indeed, some of them mentioned feeling bothered about me writing all the time, so at some moment I had to stop taking notes constantly. The biggest constrain, I might say, is translating interviews, texts and conversations from Spanish: some lost nuance in words may cause that some opinions lose its meaning. Several words, in fact, do not have a literal translation.

Chapter 2

Research on Activism: A Feminist Epistemology

I travelled to Malaga assuming I could be objective –trying to place the voices of Zambra as transparent as possible, without interfering in observations. As weeks passed I gradually started to feel more part of the group until I saw my position as researcher blurred. After coming back, the idea of having to write about this people gave me certain discomforting feeling and it took me some weeks to be able to start writing. Now, some months after returning to desk, I feel -more or less- reconciled with standing on that border between being part and distanced at the same time, but that also became the reason to make a reflection about academia and activism relations, thinking about the possibility to construct bridges between both worlds. It actually made me try to write this text from a conscious effort to find links, not disconnections.

I want to reflect in this chapter about my epistemological choices and how those frame the way now I understand research on Feminist activism. These choices resulted from the divergences I experienced in the field, but also from discussions, roundtables and support meetings with the Sexuality Research Initiative (SRI) from the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS). I will draw on how my epistemological position determined some of the choices I made before, during and after the time I spent with Zambra.

I write from a poststructuralist Feminist epistemology, where creation of knowledge is situated in a specific context; struggles are not universal but rather depend of specific experiences of injustice, giving place to differentiated collective action practices. From this vision, resistances to crisis and struggles ‘from below’ may give place to contra hegemonic (anti-capitalist/anti-hetero-patriarchal) practices.

2.1. Embodying research: Donna Haraway

Situations like a very uncomfortable encounter with the police -which made me face my position as immigrant- or feeling as arrogant when I felt discomforted or fatigued, made me reflect on my positionality and its influence, but also informal conversations supposed a personal revision towards myself, my body and my Feminist discourse. Feeling tired, sick, hungry, frightened: but also having lots of fun, hugging and laughing meant for me an embodied way to do Feminist research.

According to Donna Haraway (1988), seek for objectivity entails a rigid divide between subjects and objects of research. Conversely, Feminist research must consist on an embodied vision, i.e. focused on subjective knowledges arising from complex relations of bodies in specific contexts, avoiding subject-

object gaps. In this paper, I want to reflect on those knowledges, trying not to give universalized diagnoses about a movement, but from a example of a specific group resisting collectively against a particular socio-economic system.

Situating knowledges ‘privileges contestation, deconstruction, passionate construction... and hope for transformation’ (Haraway 1988: 585). I chose to analyze two projects from Zambra that, from my point of view, aim to deconstruct a system with a long-term transformative goal. I focus on how the bodies of this people are deconstructed and re-subjectified as an experiential way to understand resistance.

It is important to highlight that such bodies are not seen only as individual, but as constructed in collectivity, meaning how them relate in specific localities, implying dialogues and contradictions (Haraway 1988). I contemplate that along this paper: the ‘collective body’, for Zambra. I draw on how by constructing communitarian ways of living they privilege certain concepts and practices.

2.2. Creating knowledge ‘from below’: Sandra Harding

Harding’s (2005) vision is related with Haraway’s. She argues that there is a need to focus on the knowledges of marginalized communities as a way to giving voice to them. Domination by elite groups claiming objectivity can be challenged by researching on local communities: their particular experiences reveal specific problems that from universalizing positions would never be visible.

Moreover, Standpoint Theory highlights that creators of Feminist knowledge are not only excluded women, but asking questions about men’s lives and the relations between both women and men is a ground for creating such Feminist knowledge as situated; these lives and relations make visible the embodied knowledge (Smith in Harding 2005). I have an interest in a collective whose participants are not only women; therefore I aim to see how Feminist action is created from that specificity and the roles men develop.

Standpoint approach requires listening to stories, hearing how communities envision the future in a relationship that requires a researcher’s constant self-examination (Harding 2005: 229). That is why my methodological choices rely on both hearing and observing (see first chapter) both from their perceptions but also from the ways in which I lived encounters. That is why I try to speak openly about my own experiences and conversations with Zambra. This is what Harding (2005: 222) calls ‘starting off though from the lives of marginalized people’, meaning that such approach permits knowledge not created from hegemonic discourses.

2.3. Linking academia and activism: Chandra Mohanty

‘Even though we have learned a lot from theories, in action...it is not as straightforward as the theories say. It is a slow process in which we have to explore from successes and errors. In streets we need to go beyond analyses...’

(Patri F. 2014, personal interview)

I heard sometimes comments about how academia tends to be elitist, in fact some of the participants said they –by decision- did not like to locate themselves in a specific current of Feminism, as they find that distanced from reality. As well, my position as researcher made me felt unrelated to them in specific situations. That made me think about the division between academia and activism and sew in me the need to place that preoccupation in my paper.

Chandra Mohanty (2013) refers to the historical division between Feminist theories and movements and highlights the need for connections between both fields through a contra-system approach:

‘We need an anti-imperialist, anticapitalist, and contextualized Feminist Project to expose and make visible the various, overlapping forms of subjugation of women’s lives... their particular forms of solidarity... can be the basis for reimagining a liberatory politics’ (Mohanty 2013: 516).

Is on the bodies of women⁴ where capitalism is drawn. Only by looking to their experiences and resistances is how it can be dismantled. Consequently, beyond looking at the lives of the marginalized, for Feminist research there is necessary to look towards place-based (Harcourt & Escobar 2002) social movements. Those are particular spaces for knowledge construction (Mohanty 2013). Through the analysis of movements it is possible to reveal how hierarchical power relations influence –in the ‘micropolitics of everyday life’ and in wider processes of domination (ibid)-, but what is most challenging, see how

⁴ Mohanty refers here to the bodies of women in the Two-Thirds World. Instead of dividing the world between the traditional North/South, she establishes a One-Third / Two-Thirds division. The first one consists in a dominating minority controlling social and economic systems, whilst the second one is referring to social majorities over which hegemonic powers are exercised. Such division is not geographically related (Mohanty 2013). Zambra, from this view, is part of the Two-Thirds portion. Even though they are inside a white European community, they live in an impoverished place of the region, in excluded neighborhoods of their city. This entails a particular effect of hegemonic powers over their lives. In that sense they could be portrayed as a marginalized group.

they struggle to resist and transform those relations⁵. That is, I may say, the underlying desire I have through the writing of this paper.

2.4. Positionality

I was a Feminist by declaration, a young latina woman, coming from a country in the middle of a 60-years war. During fieldwork I had to run from the police due to the country in my passport, I was treated sometimes with condescendence because of my age. I felt judging gazes over me when I was in the protests. But hearing the stories of some people also made me think in my privileged position, that has nothing to do with my geographical origin. Some of these girls will not have the opportunity to attend a University; some of the older unemployed women acknowledge they will not be able to get a job again. I realized that although I am from the South and sometimes that locates me as a second-class citizen -researcher and Feminist-, I have the opportunity to get quality education and I can easily get a well-remunerated job. I am from a minority and a majority at the same time.

Such position made me feel sometimes unconnected with the people, frightened of being in some places, even questioning the seriousness of their struggles. But it also allowed me to share stories from my personal life experience, my country and some of my academic scholarship, which became a new knowledge for them. These, maybe, are the dialogues Mohanty (2013) is talking about.

I write this paper from a different position now than how I could write before travelling to the field. I write as a young woman, a Feminist, a latina, but I also write from my activist background and my privileged position. Now I am not entirely from the South, nor I am from the North. I am not a pure activist, but I am neither an academic. I stand in the borders, and from the emotional and intellectual contradictions those entail, is from where I write this text. Accepting that I may have crossed some limits that make me feel as an insider-outsider towards Zambra, but that such contradiction actually nourishes one of my long-term objectives, which is to create connections within the desks/streets binary.

⁵ Haraway's, Harding's and Mohanty's visions may be seen as relativist. However, the three of them highlight the need for an analysis over the alliances communities construct with others and the solidarities these dialogues entail. From those networks knowledge is constructed.

Chapter 3

'Nosotras las Personas' (*We, the people*). The research site

It is my first day in Malaga. I am entering to the neighborhood of Palma-Palmilla. It is full of old buildings with drying clothes hanging from the windows; streets are full of garbage, causing a very bad smell. Mary and Say, who went to pick me up in the airport, tell me this is one of the most marginalized neighborhoods and since the crisis began people here are suffering the worst effects from public cut-offs in social support. I am going to stay here, in a place Zambra rents. I suddenly –and not feeling very comfortable with it– begin to feel very insecure. This is not the Europe of people's dreams, the Andalucía of tourist postcards. Here exclusion is something real.

The Spanish State has been subsumed in the last decades in a political, economic and social crisis, which became worse since 2008. Unemployment, precarious housing and health systems, government corruption and excessive repression have been the situations under latest administrations⁶. Several reforms have been established, conveying worse labor conditions, increase in years needed for retirement and cuts in public budgets (Observatorio Metropolitano 2011)⁷. This situation is accompanied with a weakening of public institutions: several cases of corruption have been discovered (op. cit.: 174).

Generalized mistrust in public institutions takes people to think on different alternatives of organization and mobilization, nourished by the active political scenario in other European countries, like Greece or Italy. Since 2009 autonomous mobilization strengthened gradually⁸ (Observatorio Metropolitano 2011). Uprisings were related, in their majority with cuts in health and education (Mateos & Penades 2013: 63).

We visit a communitarian vegetable garden before entering the apartment. It functions since some years ago, after food aid programs started to be cut out. We also see 'Er Banco Gueno' a communitarian dining room that used to

⁶ Excessive mortgage loans accompanied by an enormous debt crisis, led the country to bankruptcy. Policies of austerity and trade liberalization implemented by the European Union also have contributed to this scenario. Nowadays the ruling political party is the *Partido Popular* (Popular Party), better known as PP, with a very rightist ideology (Mateos & Penades 2013: 174).

⁷ In year 2012, approximately 55% of the population of 25 years and younger couldn't get a job and nearly 30% of them had been looking for a job for more than two years (Mateos & Penades 2013); 54% of the people age 18 to 34 were living with their parents (López Biasco in Taibo 2003: 156)

⁸ In 2012 the number of protest marches got over 42.000, approximately 60 at a daily rate, while in the previous decade the average was 10 (Observatorio Metropolitano 2011).

be a bank office, but Zambra occupied it some years ago. Nowadays gives food to tens of unemployed people in Palma-Palmilla.



Photo: 'Er Banco Gueno', self-managed space. Source: Fieldwork, 2014

2.1. Zambra Malaga

Zambra: Iniciativas Sociales desde la acción Social y Comunitaria (initiatives for communitarian and social action) is a collective functioning in the city of Malaga, located in the Autonomous Community of Andalucía, in the South of the Spanish State. Is framed in a struggle against the capitalist/hetero-patriarchal system from participative and horizontal spaces for education, debate and direct social actions (Zambra, n.d). Zambra is part of the Coordination network Baladre.

People from the Social Work faculty of the University of Malaga used to meet constantly to discuss about realities in excluded neighborhoods and plans for social transformation. A need for more concrete work took some of them to found Zambra as a group. The most intense work has been developed in Palma-Palmilla. However, a center they established in the neighborhood was expelled. The reason is that they were stigmatized by their appearance and radical ideologies: 'we were marked by our clothes, our Punk style... people started to spread the word that we were dangerous, communists or 'rebels'' (Say 2014, personal interview). Consequently, they continued working mostly from outside.

Zambra⁹ has not a rigid identity, they rather mention having an eclectic discourse, which adapts to the urgent needs of the excluded peoples in their territory:

‘We drink from Feminisms, Ecological Movements, from Indigenous, Anti-militarist and Marxist movements... people coming from the University, who were never militant before, here have a space where they can be empowered ideologically and politically...’ (Say 2014, personal interview)

2.2. 15M and Zambra

On May 15th of 2011, with multitudinous marches over the big cities of Spain – including Malaga- the 15M Movement started. This was an independent strike coming from small-scale groups that over Internet called for a jointed rise. Approximately 100.000 people occupied the central Plazas, camping there for weeks. These people came without expecting to become one of the worldwide examples of autonomous mobilization in last decades (Observatorio Metropolitano 2011). Nowadays, the 15M Movement unites thousands of people in the country and outside.

It is a warm afternoon in Madrid, Manolo and I are talking about 15M. I confess to him now I am not really sure how it influenced Zambra’s work. He answers:

‘With 15M nothing really started, but everything exploded. Those were the years where we felt really tired... For the young people, that was important; it was important here in Madrid and it was important in Malaga, for Zambra. Various *compas* (pals) joined the group with 15M. Akelarre (the feminist initiative from Zambra) stated its objectives and in general, they all felt less lonely, they got more together...’

I remembered how various persons from Zambra said they knew about or got closer to the group after camping with the 15M in Plaza de la Constitucion, in the center of Malaga.

2.3. Beyond 15M: Feminisms in Spanish history

History of Feminism in Spain is not very different from other countries of Europe. However, influence of Civil War and Franco regime together with extreme conservatism caused a setback in its evolution (Grupo España 2011). The progress can be divided in three waves, even though some authors argue for a fourth one (Solá, 2013, Rivas & Gámez 2013).

First wave goes from ending of XIX century to beginning of XX. Late industrialization and catholic dominance caused a slow process of women rights

⁹ See appendix 1 for an extension on Zambra’s projects.

recognition. However, some organized to claim around social demands -more than political representation-. Only in the 20s feminine vote became a topic and it got approved in 1931 (Grupo España 2011).

Civil War and Franco dictatorship¹⁰ marked a delay from what was reached before. Women saw their autonomies denied, portrayed only as carriers of catholic moral values. Husbands' permissions were required to work and to every other public procedure. Every type of public claim was forbidden. Only at the end of 60s Feminism revived with the creation of the *Movimiento para la Liberación de la Mujer* (Movement for Liberation of Women), marking the beginning of second wave (Grupo España 2011).

During transition towards democracy the Feminist movement starts to unite with others (communist, socialist, anti-capitalist, syndicalist). Diverse collectives born, the biggest the *Movimiento Democrático de las Mujeres* (Democratic Movement of Women), related with the Communist Party. Consequently, patriarchy as the origin of women's oppression in the sexual division of work, domestic work and public-private divides became the topics. In the 70s the movement consolidates with an important influence in poor neighborhoods (Grupo España 2011). Lesbian Feminism also increases its power (Solá 2013). A lot of the struggles from Zambra -as a collective embedded in leftist social movements- are still relying on these topics, with patriarchy at the center of their discourse.

The third wave (80s-90s) has two parallel processes. On one hand, institutionalization of women's topics, which locates them in State agendas; on the other, autonomous collectives try to keep as separated from institutions as they can, by establishing radical ideologies and actions. This results in a fragmentation of the movement. However, a general struggle was against abortion penalization (Grupo España 2011).

In 2009 a group questioned the essentialist vision of sexes behind the category 'woman' and proposed to see oppression as based on heteronormativity. Advocating for new Queer Feminisms, they founded a current called *Transfeminismo*. This strengthens alliances with LGBTQ movements and includes other topics in agendas, like care, corporality, feminization of poverty and sex work (Sola 2013). It is during this time when the initiative of Akelarre Zambrero (the Feminist initiative from Zambra) was created.

During 15M, as Carlos Taibo (2013) argues, Feminisms got committed to an anti-capitalist ideology, based on looking for alternative economies and body politics as a way to respond to the effects of the crisis on their lives and

¹⁰ Spanish civil war lasted from 1936 until 1939. It started with a coup d'état against the democratic government (Second Republic), and ended with the victory of Francisco Franco, who established an ultra-right fascist dictatorship in the country. The regime lasted until his death, in 1975 (Preston, 2011).

bodies through contra-system activities. To highlight the influence of this event in Zambra, Sol, one of the participants at that moment writes:

‘That 15 of May we gave birth to a creature emerging from the same desire: change...’¹¹ (Gentes de Zambra 2011).

In parallel, after 15M some groups started to question transversalization of Feminism within left movements. Some of them separated to create purist coalitions. Networks like *Comision de Feminismos* (Feminisms Commission) and *Marea Violeta* (Violet Tide) were created at this moment, consolidating the movement, with Internet as important tool for dissemination (Rivas & Gamez 2013).

It is possible to say that nowadays the scenario is very eclectic. Institutional, academic, anarchist, queer Feminisms are present throughout the whole Spanish territory¹², with important struggles that go from the most liberal ones (quotas, representation) towards the most subversives (Feminist guerrillas) and the most symbolic (queer, Feminist art-ivism¹³). Zambra, as a very fluid group, can be located in various of these lines, depending very much in the topics they see as urgent in specific times, nevertheless the influence of second wave and queer ideals is notable.

2.4. Baladre



Photo: People from different collectives sharing experiences: Santander, Cantabria. Source: Fieldwork, 2014

Zambra is part of Baladre, a coordination network of collectives of the Iberian Peninsula and the Canarias as well as some collectives and persons from Latin America. These collectives unite based on a common will to reflect on and de-

¹¹ Original in Spanish: “Ese 15 de mayo dimos a luz a esa criatura que surge de un mismo deseo; el cambio...”

¹² It is important to see the influence of separatist movements (in Catalunya, Basque Country, Galicia, etc.) in how Feminisms are differentiated (Grupo España 2011).

¹³ Streets actions involving art as a tool to protest.

nounce inequalities, scarcity, impoverishment and exclusion in whichever forms, based on an anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal, ecologist ideology. Collectives –or individuals– participating in Baladre work through specific social struggles and mobilizations at local, national and global levels. All of them are autonomous, i.e. not part of NGOs, political parties or churches (Baladre, 2012).

Baladre is a *coordination*, not a coordinator, meaning that it performs a horizontal, unstructured and non-hierarchical work where the autonomy of each collective is respected, but also where the *apoyo mutuo* exists among them in form of a network. Even though every collective learns from the other, the struggles and ways to materialize them can be very different, but that does not exclude them for being participants in the network. Every collective has total autonomy (Baladre, 2012).

Collectives and peoples from Baladre meet three or four times every year in different parts of the Spanish State. In these meetings all the collectives share –in assemblies, mainly– their present state, the difficulties they are facing and in general, there is a joint analysis of the panorama of social mobilization at a national level. In these meetings new working proposals or projects are created and usually there are street actions in the meantime. Every summer there is a bigger meeting called ‘*Marcha-Caravana*’ (March-Caravan), to which I attended.

2.5. The focus of this research

Renta Basica de las Iguales (RBI)

RBI is one of the main struggles of Zambra. Rises as a contra-proposal against government aid programs, which –according to them– do not seek for structural changes of the capitalist/hetero-patriarchal system. The short-term objective from RBIs is to guarantee the fulfillment of basic needs of every person and, in the long term, reaching the transformation of the socio-economic system (Fidalgo et. al. 2013: 39). RBIs is a tool, not an end in itself; consequently it must be accompanied by other tools, based on incorporating the possibility of other ways of life in community. This still is a project, in a phase of early implementation (I will expend on this in chapter 4).

Akelarre Zambrero

Akelarre is the Feminist initiative from Zambra, formed by women and men. It was created to respond the lack of visibility of Feminism and collective care within the group, as well as constant patriarchal dynamics. Is supported by

queer theories and *Transfeminismo*¹⁴ and has an anti-capitalist, horizontal ideological position. Is a space for formation-reflection, street action and *apoyo mutuo*. Akelarre aims to deconstruct the hetero-patriarchal system through placing the bodies as tools for struggle (See chapter 5).

¹⁴ Movement rising from the adaptation of queer theories to the Spanish context

Chapter 4

RBIs as a Feminist tool: care as political

Say and Mary are waiting for me outside the airport. It is terribly hot and I am feeling unbalanced after 4 hours of traveling, they seem to notice it so they take me for a walk. At one moment Mary hugs me, as if she knows me from before. I express to her I feel comfortable, to what she answers: *'no worries, I am just taking care of you'*. This was the first time I heard the word *care*, which I would hear hundreds of times again. Indeed, the way in which Zambra uses this word caused a transformation in my way to understand them and my research.

In this chapter I explain how care is framed within a struggle against a socio-economic system, where certain assumptions of care contribute to precariousness in women (and men) lives. First, I will use Feminist Economics conceptualizations of care (Agarwal 1997, Razavi 2007, Gibson-Graham 2006a, Harcourt 2009, Del Río & Perez 2004) in order to explain how the patriarchal system has invisibilized care. This will serve to explain the rationale behind *Renta Basica de las Iguales*, one of the main projects of Zambra. I will argue that such understanding of care is related to a collective way of living where networked support is a practice to walk towards a transformed society.

4.1. Feminist understandings of care work

Following Bina Argawal (1997), unequal gender relations ascribe women and men to certain positions in private and public spaces, from division of labor to symbolic representations. The sphere of care has been displaced to the household and consequently invisibilized. As a result of commodification of care work, Feminists have become to analyze links between market-based economy of care and economies not based on markets, i.e. unpaid care work (Razavi 2007, Harcourt 2009). They found that care has been invisibilized in both: Del Río & Perez (2004) have called it 'androcentric vision of economy'¹⁵, meaning that although markets belong to economy, those are not the whole economic system and indeed are not the main source to cover individual and collective needs. Moreover, J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006a) call it a 'capilocentric' vision of economy, which considers other forms of economic relations as less relevant.

Although material needs do exist, its privileging has caused that dimensions of 'affections, social relations, freedom, individual autonomy, body pleasure and sexuality'¹⁶ have been hidden (Del Río & Perez 2004: 5). As the authors state, absences of these can be also seen as scarcity and have an influ-

¹⁵ Original in Spanish: 'Visión androcéntrica de la economía'

¹⁶ Original in Spanish: '...afectos, las relaciones sociales, la libertad, la autonomía personal, la identificación cultural, el disfrute del cuerpo y la sexualidad...'

ence in the fulfillment of basic needs. 'Therefore, care is an unavoidable need that everyone has: we are interdependent of others, be in the need for company, affection or to construct collective support networks (op. cit.: 11).

Del Río & Perez (2004) highlight that assuming we are independent beings is based on the patriarchal idea of an adult, white, reasoning man who does not have other needs than a proper income. Moreover, if this man would need care, another individual will provide it: the woman inside household, tasked a-priori with that responsibility; be it unpaid or as a paid service (Argawal 1997, Harcourt 2009, Razavi 2007). 'Therefore, care requires a work ensuring it: care work. It can be done within or outside the household and can be paid or unpaid (Del Río & Perez 2004, Harcourt 2009).

In socio-economic crisis situations such assumptions are materialized. Public institutions displace care responsibility to those ones that, supposedly, are tasked with fulfilling this requirement. Consequently, first contingent reforms are cuts in services like health, sanitation and education (Del Río & Pérez 2004, Elson in Razavi 2007). In addition, women experiment with their bodies the tensions between markets and care logics. This is worst when employment conditions are precarious, ergo, there is a direct relation between work and care scarcity (Del Río & Pérez 2004, Harcourt 2009).

Following Razavi (2007: iii), to overcome such gender bias is necessary to include care –the need for and works assuring it- as a broader dimension of citizenship, placing the right to care at the same level as employment rights, taking into account other actors capable of providing care, i.e. men (Harcourt 2009). In other words, 'society should recognize and value the importance of different forms of care, but without reinforcing care work as something that only women can or should do' (Razavi 2007: 2). Following J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006a, 2006b) the binary vision that legitimizes market economies whilst disqualifying non-market based has to be destroyed. In this, the Feminist project is primary, in which local strategies have a main role¹⁷. That is where *Renta Basica de las Iguales* locates, as a place-based struggle constructed to work towards another –Feminist- vision of care.

¹⁷ J.K Gibson-Graham (2006a, 2006b) discusses the breakdown of capitalism through the de-establishment of its construction as a monolithic identity, seeing it instead as fragmented and heterogeneous; constructing non-capitalist alternative economies from there. The ideologies of Zambra may not enter in this vision, as they are openly fighting for radical transformation of the system (anti-capitalist). However, I will not deal with it in this paper. Nevertheless, I use these authors' visions of community and subjectivity as a guide for my analysis.

4.2. What is ‘Renta Basica de Las Iguales’ (RBIs)?



Photo: March in Barakaldo, Basque Country. Source: Fieldwork, 2014.

‘Una Persona, una vida digna’¹⁸

Renta Basica de las Iguales – RBIs (Basic Income for the Equals) has evolved as a common effort from the collectives belonging to Baladre. It is a project claiming for the right every person has to receive periodically an amount of money to cover his or her basic needs. It must happen independently of his or her gender, ethnic group, age or existing income. The proposal was born in the early 90s when some groups started to discuss around how to stop exclusion and scarcity and the role of sexual division of labor in those. The project, catalyzed by the powerful presence of Feminist, moved from struggle around labor conditions towards a vindication for a ‘dignifying life’, in which gender became a main category to tackle capitalism together with patriarchy (Fidalgo et. al. 2013).

According to Zambra, RBI is a right. Accordingly, it has the following characteristics:

- It is individual
- Universal
- Unconditional: Employment or income level are not premise to receive it
- Sufficient: The amount must be the same for every person (determined by the Poverty Level within the European Union¹⁹).

¹⁸ ‘Every person, a dignifying life’. One of the repeated mottos from Zambra.

Such conditions are not different from other state-based, national proposals for Basic Income²⁰. However, much of them are framed within neo-liberal definitions, i.e. not meant to transform structural inequalities. Conversely, for Zambra RBIs is a long-term transformative tool. The ‘surname’ *Las Iguales* (the Equals) is referring to that: in Spanish it is referring to *the persons* –in feminine, which also has the purpose to talk about women-. This means that we are equal and therefore all having the same rights.

In addition, it also refers to a Communal Fund in which resources are to be used to fulfill collective needs (sanitation, housing, etc.); defined by the same communities. The idea is that at the beginning 80% of the amount goes for every individual, while 20% goes to the Fund (Fidalgo et. al. 2013: 41), but gradually the amount for the Fund goes increasing, while individual decreases. The rationale behind is that because the resources in the Fund are fulfilling common needs, individual resources become obsolete.

‘What we understand is that there is a need to end up with the monetary life and start to work as community... as the Zapatistas say: for everyone, everything...’ (Say 2014, personal interview)

Renta Basica de las Iguales stills in a project/claiming stage. Zambra, together with other collectives from the country designed a form called *ILP – Iniciativa Legislativa Popular por la Renta Basica* (Popular Legislative Initiative for the Basic Income). By this they aim to collect 10.000 signatures in order to make a formal claim to the Parliament to convert RBI a law. So far they have collected 3000. Signatures are collected in the Social Services Center of Malaga and in big events of the city. It seems contradictory for an anti-capitalist group to have a project based on state-directed claims, however the reason they give is that, it is necessary to first obtain formal guarantees for income and later, when assured, work towards systemic transformations.

4.3. But what about care (and Feminisms)?

‘Las Iguales’ is related precisely with the idea that the things that keep life going, that sustain life... are all related to care and life sustainability and, due to the sexual division of work, are things which have been historically made by women... The most essential topic is the care, that is outside of the employment market and when is within it, tends to be precarious and unjustly paid’ (Say 2014, Personal interview).

¹⁹ Determined as the half of the Income per Capita. For the Spanish State, the Poverty Level is around 900 euros per month (Fidalgo et. al. 2013).

²⁰ Proposals like Minimum wage, Unemployment Subsidies and Unconditional Cash Transfers.

For Zambra, capitalism and hetero-patriarchy act in synergy, sustaining dynamics creating inequality and constraining women bodies:

‘Capitalism is based on the feminization of poverty, the role given to women as attached to the house, as the one who takes care so that the capital keeps going on, as somehow sustaining the system’ (Patri F. 2014, personal interview).

Such system has ignored care work within the household historically made by women and at the same time has invisibilized emotions and body diversities, as these go against standardized human configurations needed for fulfill the employment cycle (Fidalgo, et. al., 2013). For Zambra, RBIs fights against such perspectives. Recognizing the right for basic needs fulfillment, it validates care work, understanding that it is possible to live without employment but not without work²¹. Therefore, getting a job relies on individual choice that, in an ideal society will end up being obsolete or, at least, redistributed in a just way.

‘RBIs... goes along perfectly with Feminist economics ... it aims to break the binary of employment and work: employment as paid, dignified, visible and work speaking in terms of care within the household... not visible, not paid. ...’ (Rosa 2014, personal interview)

As a short-term mechanism to redistribute wealth and as transformative in the long term, this tool not only aims to give women -and every person- the right to decide, but places also care as central within society. First, it validates care when seeing the rent as payment for care work, but also gives more freedom to decide whether obtaining a job or not, therefore every person can organize his or her time, eliminating individual burdens of care (Fidalgo et. al. 2013).

In addition, by proposing a Communal Fund and recognizing care and affections as central to the sustainability of life, this initiative claims for a networked, communitarian and horizontal way to provide care not imposed to specific persons, but equilibrating the need and availability of care collectively, where being attentive to the other can be the base for a transformed society. As they affirm, RBI is a tool, not the end to finish with the capitalist/hetero-patriarchal system.

‘Due to all these elements, RBIs proposal can contribute to strengthen the strategy of social action of Feminism. We believe that it contributes to propelling political culture based on cooperation, *apoyo*

²¹ RBI aims to establish the division between work and employment, understanding that we all work in several things, independently of having a salary; such work is care work.

mutuo and recognition of the central role that human needs must have, but also of affections and care²², in every transformation project²³ (Fidalgo et. al. 2013: 39).

4.4. Care beyond care work

I understood care within Zambra as part of everyday life. I may say that the RBIs work towards claiming for changes in the public sphere is combined with a work directed inwards, where valuation of self-care as primary goes together with the need of taking care of the others, legitimizing their emotions and interdependences.

Care as practiced collectively in daily life is for Zambra a prerequisite for a transformed world where RBIs can be applied, and is also the experiential way to apply the rationale behind that tool: life as communitarian. There is necessity for understanding care beyond economic terms, as allowing other ways of living, where exercising it can be a form of resistance. For Zambra, the path for capitalism/hetero-patriarchy dismantling demands a gradual process in all spheres of society. Networks of care are constructed through a re-subjectification of bodies resulting from the experience of *apoyo mutuo*. It is the embodied experience of care that allows its legitimation as main aspect for social reconstruction of life. I will elaborate on this in the next chapters, based on my encounter with another project by Zambra: Akelarre Zambrero.

²² In Spanish care can be written in plural. Zambra sometimes uses care the word in that way. It can be related with the multiplicity of ways to give it and receive it. In this quote is used in plural.

²³ Original in Spanish: ‘Sostenemos que, debido a estos elementos comunes que fuimos reseñando, la propuesta de la RBI’s puede servir al fortalecimiento de la estrategia de acción del Feminismo. Además, creemos que contribuye al impulso de una cultura política basada en la cooperación, el apoyo mutuo y el reconocimiento del rol central que deben asumir las necesidades humanas, así como los afectos y cuidados, en cualquier proyecto de transformación’.

Chapter 5

Making care visible while living through it

‘To me, care initiated a particular connection within the group, it made us preoccupied about each other; it felt like being together, making things together... this is reflected towards the outside and makes the struggle easier... to be from there... to say what I think, for you to say what you need and between us all to construct what we want...’ (Patri N. 2014, personal interview).

As noted, in Feminist economics, care is related with the discussion about invisibilization and precariousness of women’s care work both inside and outside the household. From there rises a need for tools that recognize care, in order to break the sexual division of work and give women broader possibilities for a more dignifying life. RBIs is located within those tools.

Moreover, as explained before, recognizing care also entails accepting the existence of other needs, beyond material ones. For the people of Zambra this is essentially a Feminist project, as it tackles de hierarchical order, solitude and prevalence of reason characterizing hetero-patriarchy and capitalism. This is related with the concept of ethics of care discussed by several Feminist theorists (Held 2006). The project of Akelarre Zambrero can be seen as understanding care in these terms, with the body as the place in which care is exercised and therefore, where deconstruction of patriarchy begins. To explain this in this chapter I will rely on body politics and its importance in contemporary struggles in order to relate the practices of Zambra with a specific Feminist way to understand care and use it as embodied resistance.

5.1. What is care?: An Ethical Approach

Virginia Held (2006) analyses care as a practice/value relying on specific ethics that, from a Feminist standpoint, comprise relating with the self and others as a mutual process. Relations between persons are seen as based on a supposed interest to construct a mutual wellbeing. Consequently, care gains a crucial position in the social world, not only from an economic vision (care work), but also as a way to understand how human beings are interconnected: ‘ethics of care... expresses ethically significant ways in which we matter to each other, transforming interpersonal relatedness into something beyond ontological necessity or brute survival’ (Bowden in Held 2006: 34).

Hence, emotions are valued as requisites to maintain societies functioning, contrasting with rationalist views where sympathy, compassion or sensitivity

are denied for being opposite to –masculine- reason. In this view of care ethics, emotions *complement* rationalities (ibid: 11).

Following Curtin (1991), the change towards non-abusive care relations, must be part of a political agenda linking and erasing distinctions between public and private spheres via giving a role to those historically left behind or affected by the caring circle, i.e. women. This serves to understand why discussions around care –not only in terms of care work- have been crucial to Feminisms. These conceptualizations give a clue to understand the use of care within Zambra, specifically in the project of Akelarre Zambrero.

5.2. Caring bodies: Akelarre Zambrero

‘When we reclaim body politics, we reclaim other potent and transgressor dimensions related to multiple forms of struggle; we will defeat Modernity, which aims to impose an *T* separated from the body, to impose a reason separated from subjectivity and emotion, an individual body separated from the social sphere²⁴ (EFLAC, 2013; 5)

There is a big colored carpet in the sand, the full moon shines over the sea and lights our faces together with the candles that form a circle surrounding us, we are all sharing the food. Everybody –men and women- start to share how these weeks they have felt the patriarchal order over their bodies. I do the same. Some laugh, some cry and at the end I find I have some of the same concerns and fears they have. After this I feel supported.

‘My only interest ... was to take care of ourselves starting from our bodies, something that I was seeing as being left out... It was necessary to have a space, a pure Feminist space, where to take care of ourselves...’ (Sol 2014, personal interview)

Akelarre is a group of women and men created in 2008 resulting from the concerns by one of the participants regarding the blurriness of Feminism within Zambra, as well as the invisibility of care as primary part of the struggle. From an anti-capitalist and queer political/ideological positioning, Akelarre aims to deconstruct the effects of hetero-patriarchal system over bodies while effecting Feminist struggle. It was created as a space for formation, reflection,

²⁴ Original in Spanish: ‘Al recuperar la política del cuerpo, recuperamos otras dimensiones potentes y transgresoras, que aluden a las múltiples y variadas formas de lucha; vencemos a la modernidad que quiere imponer un yo separado del cuerpo, imponer una razón separada de la subjetividad y la emoción, un cuerpo individual separado del ámbito social’.

street action and support²⁵. Every fifteen days the participants get together and celebrate a gathering they call Akelarre, with a specific agenda²⁶.

‘Is a work of a whole afternoon of care, of dynamics to tell things to each other ... of being interested in each other; and it is a work about the bodies, a lot about the bodies’ (Patri F. 2014, personal interview).

One of the participants explains that in Akelarre²⁷ (coven), witches become the excuse for a Feminist resistance, based on queer vindications that aim to subvert negative categorizations and convert them in tools for struggle. They use the image of the witch, their knowledges and oppressions over their bodies to exemplify the impacts of patriarchy. Moreover, the wisdom of witches highlights the ancestral character of care. The marginalization these women suffered is used as a strategy to construct lives in parallel.

Although participants of Zambra express not wanting to get involved in particular Feminist currents, they accept ideas of queer²⁸ as having an influence on Akelarre’s ideals. In Spain, queer ideas have been adapted as *Transfeminismo*. A movement resulting from alliances between Feminist, Lesbian, Trans movements articulated with other activist groups (such as occupy, anarchists, etc) that did not find answers in traditional discourses of Feminism²⁹. It brought forward an understanding of Feminism as a conjunction of theories and practices talking about diverse oppressions of gender and sexuality searching for a joint resistance. *Transfeminismo* stress that specific sexual orders have been crucial in the establishment of hegemonic capitalist systems (Solá 2013).

These ideas guide in a certain way Akelarre’s ideals: an anti-capitalist/anti-hetero-patriarchal struggle, a work from bodies and a breakdown of binary divisions –involving therefore women and men.

‘With Akelarre they have begun to break with the idea of a static construction of bodies and reflected on how those are in service of fixed genders or sexes. This helped to expand the idea that we want to have in Zambra and supports RBIs: that we are not one thing or other, that we are people, just people’ (Rosa 2014, personal interview).

²⁵ Taken from a PowerPoint presentation shared internally.

²⁶ See appendix 2 for an explanation of Akelarre’s agenda.

²⁷ Normally in Spanish Akelarre is written with a q. Zambra changes the spelling deliberately.

²⁸ Queer movement questions the positioning of heteronormativity as a social, political and economic hegemony producing gender inequalities; their defenders argue that Feminism has contributed to a monolithic and binary division of sexes, leaving aside intersectional differentiations and undermining the importance of lesbians and trans people (Sola, 2013). For queer theorists, ‘sexual identity is not automatically derived from certain organs or practices or genders but is instead a space of transitivity’ (Sedgwick in Gibson-Graham, 2006a; 140), therefore it aims to break with identity politics.

²⁹ *Transfeminismo* is an adaptation to Spanish of the term *queer* to permit a more contextualized definition.

This serves as guideline for the topics discussed in every Akelarre meeting as well as for their actions³⁰. The most repeated action is called *Arde Patriarcado, arde!* (Burn Patriarchy, burn!) usually conducted in Plaza de la Constitucion, in Malaga city center. In it the members perform a symbolic witchery ritual in which symbols related to patriarchal oppression are burned, while they are dressed as witches, not specifically in women or men's clothes, as they try to look like people without a fixed gender identity.

5.3. Body politics as resistance



Photo: Patriarchy is tying our bodies, Plaza de la Constitucion. Source: Zambra Facebook page, 2013

All the young women are swimming or lying on the grass, naked. All of them have different bodies: big, skinny, hairy, smooth. There is a girl with a prosthetic leg, but this does not draw attention. Everybody acts natural...

Seeing how these women are related to their bodies, how they use them as a resistance act, made me think about my own body and how I envision it. It also made me think about Feminism as something personal, allowing the construction of new forms of inhabiting the world and resist from one's own body.

Foucault referred to the idea of bodies as the political sites over which power is exercised (in Harcourt 2009). Following constructivist view, Elizabeth Grosz (in Bloodsworth, 1995) argues that female bodies are delimited by social constructions that, framed by patriarchy, carry viewing women's bodies and sexualities through the perspective of a lack. In words of Wendy Harcourt

³⁰ They are active in street manifestations in specific dates of the year, such as 8th of March (International Women's day) or 25th of November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women).

(2009), it is in the bodies where hegemonic discourses and practices are seen. The bodies are the ones that experience oppression.

Constructivism, yet, also allows understanding bodies as lacking a specific fixed nature: bodies can be constructed and re-constructed by the influence of structures (Grosz, in Bloodsworth, 1995). Therefore, other forms of social construction can reframe one's own and others' bodies from alternative perspectives. Horner and Keane (in Liggins 2002) argue that for such reconstruction is necessary to deconstruct and reevaluate corporality, in other to change the relations with bodies. In other words, exercising body politics, i.e. linking radical forms of struggle with the body as a politicized site (Harcourt 2009).

Box 1: Re-appropriating sexuality

Patri studied education, but after doing a course on art-therapy is giving workshops to teachers on how to use art in their work with children. On one of her birthdays a friend left her *'Mi Cuerpo no es un Campo de Batalla'* (My Body is not a battlefield), a Feminist book in Spanish. Some months later she enters to Akelarre:

'I remember I read it in one morning, and I encountered that all that hate against my body was not mine, it was from the damned patriarchal system that imposed it on me, so I had the chance to take it out'.

For Patri such reconciliation with her body entailed a new relation with her sexuality. Being aware that we have learnt sexuality as a taboo, but also from giving pleasure to others or from learning about sex as unsafe and dirty. Seeing that let her think differently, from pleasure and from questioning herself about how to construct a different sexuality, from loving and caring her body and the body of others:

'Before I hadn't ask to myself how I wanted to have sex, with whom, how I liked it. But then I discovered this phrase of *my body is mine*, and everything changed. I saw that it was possible to find a safe sexuality where your pleasure and mine can meet and can make us both happy... And that awareness only comes when you collectively speak about sexuality and deal it from taking care of the others and yourself. In that you change, your body changes'.

Akelarre may serve as example of how bodies are at the front of place-based struggles, in which those become the visible site of gendered resistance. Here, the alliance with other bodies is crucial. In Akelarre, the people from Zambra use care as the main ethical perspective to develop such struggle. Care allows them to transform perceptions of their own bodies, and also to construct new relations with others' bodies; to create networked dynamics based on giving care and allow spaces to receive it. Hence, a work directed inwards becomes also a way to exercise resistance to the outside:

‘It is like becoming conscious about from where patriarchy comes, deconstruct it, change it and choose who do you want to be. For that process, those spaces of trust among us are very important... Before, I believed entirely in all those messages ‘you are a slut because of doing this or that’... Now it’s like discovering through... taking care of my body and the body of others” (Amaia 2014, personal interview).

According to Wendy Harcourt and Arturo Escobar (2002), bodies are imbricated with the expressions of life in collectivity. In relation to that, the body becomes the public space in which social and cultural spheres mediate. For Francisca Gargallo (2013: 245), deconstructing patriarchal bodily standards is a step towards individual and collective transformation. This can be placed as the rationale behind placing the body before other political resistances that characterizes Akelarre and is related with the trend of the contemporary Feminist movement in the Spanish State. Experiences of both women and men from Zambra make them realize the effects of patriarchy over their lives, seeing in which forms their bodies were oppressed and put at the service of the system. Such deconstruction –exercised through care- allowed the members of Zambra to be more conscious about their individual and collective bodies and also about uniting in their struggle. One of the participants says that the experience has made her losing the fear to going into the streets, mostly when the political scenario is every time more repressive:

‘It made me feel empowered... bodily I feel the difference ... The dynamic of finding our *compas* (pals), talking, looking at our bodies, generated in us a transformation. Thinking about our bodies as territories for struggle, our *own* territories over which we, and only we, have the right to decide, made me feel different, bigger, stronger...’ (Patri F. 2014, personal interview; Emphasis by LS).

For Zambra, men have to be involved in this enterprise, and that is one of the reasons behind Akelarre as an initiative that includes them. In order to understand Feminist ethics of care it would be necessary for men to take an active part, involving themselves in understanding that they are also interdependent of others (Held 2006).

Box 2: Being a Feminist man

Say cries easily, and does not seem to feel ashamed about it. I stayed with him in the apartment of Palma-Palmilla, almost all my time in Malaga. There we talked, a lot. All the time he made me feel impressed with his radical views, but with his tenderness also. He has been in the struggle almost all his life: he does not remind how it started, but feels that he could not live without going everyday to assemblies and protests. Say entered to Zambra more than 10 years ago. All of this time he has been very active in the struggle, specially in the neighborhood of Palma-Palmilla, actually he decided to move there because he wanted to live exclusion in the flesh, hence he decided to maintain a humble life. This makes him one of the most visible persons of the group. Say confesses he is aware that this, together with being a man, can imply having more hierarchical power, but he 'works hard to create mechanisms for more equality', actually he created a group with other men called *Asamblea Antipatriarcal Masculina* (Masculine Anti-patriarchal Assembly).

About the experience with Akelarre he mentions that taking the discourse around patriarchy to the level of corporality implied for him a whole new form of horizontality, where differences between women and man were erased: 'I had always constructed my discourses from my head, rationalizing everything, but what happened with the form of deconstruction we use in Akelarre made me lose that fear to extend my experience to the body, and eliminated differences between women and men'.

For a man that was never before part of a Feminist group it was 'like a bomb', it changed his life completely, he mentions. This happened from the awareness and exercise of care: 'I learnt where we as men oppressed and how, and also to change it from trying to take care and allow myself to be cared. Between all; as a group'.

He writes to me sometimes. Still does not want to get a job.

When asking one of the female participants about what did she think about men getting involved in Akelarre, she responded:

"For me this is fundamental... I understand Feminism as a struggle of people who want to deconstruct patriarchy and those could be women, or men, or transsexuals, or whoever you want, I don't care... I want men as teammates; as with every other person, I don't care what they have between their legs" (Patri N. 2014, personal interview).

The links between body politics and care are evident in the following statement from the manifesto of the 13th Feminist Encounter from Latin America and the Caribbean:

‘We claim for dignifying life conditions to all the population, this implies not only production of goods but also relationships of care and affection... thinking in our individual and collective bodies as part of a community and constitutive part of territories³¹’ (EFLAC 2013).

This statement indicates the connection between the understandings of bodies in Akelarre as sites of struggle, the privileging of affections and the need of all of this for a transformed world in which a tool like RBI could be developed. Therefore, for Zambra there is a need to understand the body not only in its individual scope, but also as a place of togetherness, a collective body, a specific territory, the ideal scenario for a post-capitalist/ post-hetero patriarchal world.

In the words of Escobar & Harcourt (2002), there is a crucial need for validation of topics considered as external to the political and public spheres, historically portrayed as private; the care, in this case. For the people of Zambra, the idea of a transformed world can rise from deconstructing diverse forms of oppression –from bodies-, but also from diverse forms of connecting with each other, from the construction of collectivity where networked relations against capitalist solitude prevail. The members of the collective try to live in their everyday life the society they envision. This is the subject of the next chapter.

³¹ Original in Spanish: ‘Interpelamos al tipo de organización social imperante y sus valores, y exigimos condiciones de vida aceptables para toda la población: ello implica no sólo la producción de bienes sino relaciones de cuidado y afecto... Pensar nuestros cuerpos individuales y colectivos como parte de una comunidad y parte constitutiva de los territorios’

Chapter 6 Pre-figurative movements in place based struggles: resisting otherwise

'I feel the exercise of care when we struggle against capitalism and hetero-patriarchy influencing the consequences of both systems, but in direction to the causes... when the present we construct resembles to the future we wish' (Say 2014, personal communication).

Nowadays autonomous movements are constructing new meanings from localized struggles, embedded in oppressions originated in-place; trying to shift the sources of those oppressions (Escobar & Harcourt 2002: 11). In these types of struggles, activists first acknowledge and then address issues from particular strategic positions. Through the reflection around their own relations with capitalism/hetero-patriarchy and the conflicts it has carried for them, the peoples of Zambra had constructed a specific place in which they feel more supported, creating relations where resistance against the system is a process, not a goal.

The conscious exercise of such resistant practices can be framed as what social movement theorists have called 'pre-figurative politics'. This is when activists try to enact, on small scale, the system they envision (Holloway 2002, Ross et. al. 2012, Sande 2013). In this, success of movements goes beyond specific changes in the public sphere, but rather means and ends are imbricated, therefore struggle is seen as a process where their practices are mirroring the world they claim. As the materialization of this idea, I will explain what is *apoyo mutuo* for Zambra, where relations are constructed from care as primary for a change towards a communitarian organization of life.

I will argue then that, from a Feminist standpoint, for Zambra care also is lived as a way to construct relationships through the prevalence of collectivity. Webs of care are an embodied process, where through feeling supported and accompanied, people generate new subjectifications, fight against fear and re-evaluate their bodies in both individual and collective terms, strengthening what they call 'the collective body'. This is related with what Gibson-Graham (2006b) calls the subjective transformation.

Nevertheless, a radical way of framing resistance and life such as this might entail some gaps between the discourse and the practice. Therefore I will reflect on some of those limitations. I am not trying to judge the work of Zambra or conclude if their ideologies are correct or not. Rather, I wish to reflect on how people are creating new forms of struggle starting from their bodies and daily lives, and what difficulties they encounter through that path. As mentioned in the first chapter, the importance of this reflection lies in see-

ing how collective action is understood, not relying always on great revolutions but in little changes that aim to transform everyday power relations.

6.1. Start with the change now!

As its name says, pre-figurative politics refers ‘to a political action, practice, movement or development in which certain political ideas are experimentally actualized in the ‘here and now’, rather than hoped to be realized in a distant future... [It is] an integration of the future ends of a struggle with the very struggle itself’ (Sande 2013: 230).

These kinds of practices are a particular feature of anti-capitalist and anarchist movements, because they see a potential in finding the fissures of capitalism through those practices (Holloway 2002). However, although Zambra has a specific pre-figurative practice framed in the practice of care through *apoyo mutuo*, they are not necessarily radical in the sense that they are evading the presence of the state. In fact, Renta Basica de las Iguales is considered as a direct claim towards the state, so it is possible to say that Zambra is mixing different types of ideologies and ways of struggle very much based on the politics of their place and the needs that the crisis has carried in their lives.

However, there are some features of these types of politics that may guide an analysis of Zambra’s practices. The most important of them is, as mentioned, *apoyo mutuo*. This is portrayed almost as a lifestyle, in which ideals become pre-figurative politics in action, on a manageable scale (Ross et. al. 2012).

6.2. *Apoyo mutuo*

‘*Apoyo mutuo* is like... having that feeling of ‘be calm, you are not alone. That is very important’. (Amaia 2014, personal interview)

When the time came for me to leave Malaga, I was not feeling very stable and I had a breakdown. I was not very sure of what to do, so I wrote to one of the young woman telling her what was happening with me. Ten minutes later three of them were in the apartment, with food and tea. They helped me pack my bags, and took me to one of their houses, to stay with them the last few nights. They organized a whole afternoon for me, to help me feel better. I didn’t know why they were doing it, but they were. Then I realized that during the whole month while I was doing my fieldwork with them, I never ate alone; indeed I barely was alone. I had experienced what is *apoyo mutuo*.

Apoyo mutuo can be defined as a horizontal, networked way of support (emotional, physical, financial) between peers in which hierarchical relations are avoided and where taking care of the others in a communitarian way is a premise. Its exercise determines supremacy of collectivity attacking the solitude and the lack of solidarity that comes along with capitalism/hetero-patriarchy. Therefore, is constituted as a particular way to exercise resistance from everyday life. This has been the practice in Zambra since the beginning, and has reinforced care relations among its members. It began in assemblies, to have a space of hearing each other, but then expanded to the whole relationships dynamics between them. As one of the women said:

'I understand *apoyo mutuo* within anti-capitalism precisely as the rupture with individualism... It helps you to break with loneliness as a group and within the system; to unite with other people and struggle from there... People with *apoyo mutuo* are been taken out of loneliness, of sadness and out of poverty of affections... knowing that the people are there to help you, to support you, and that you are there to do the same for them' (Rosa 2014, personal interview).

6.3. New subjectifications

Following Gibson-Graham (2006b), Feminism is not about isolated women's identity, but about how women as subjects become in-places. This means that there is a need to evaluate how specific places generate – and re-construct-specific subjectifications of women. In this, second-wave Feminism had an important role in contributing to the possibility of creating 'new practices of the self' that linked political discourses to dynamics of everyday life. Saying 'the personal is political' opened the door for women to talk in public spheres of topics historically portrayed as intimate. When talking about dynamics of groups and organizations, Zambra could be located within those second-wave feminist groups and their strategies, but as a combination with contemporary ideas about gender.

Feminism opened the door for thinking about social struggle as something that can be made locally, which can carry advances not necessarily settled in big scale revolutions. Such awareness entail a new sense of the self, in which commitment to a reinforcement of solidarity and life in community is crucial for the struggle, resulting in a subject transformation beginning by intervening in the sphere of language (Gibson-Graham 2006b). I remembered that, when I had my first meeting by Skype with Say, he spoke about '*nosotras*': us, in feminine grammatical gender, during our whole conversation he referred to himself and the group in those terms. At the end I was confused about this. Some months later I witnessed how all men and women from Zambra and Baladre spoke always in feminine. The reason behind is that they refer to themselves as

people - in Spanish is Feminine - not as men or women. That was striking for me, but at the same time it was an example of how social struggle can imply the re-subjectification Gibson-Graham (2006a, 2006b) are talking about.

Here it is possible to review the concept of 'thinking small' and the possibility to make revolution from there, as a way to change micro-level power relations in place-based local struggles and through everyday dynamics. This implies a form of resistance as horizontal, in grassroots, from the bodies, from actively saying *no* (Esteva & Prakash 1998, Gibson-Graham 2006a, Harcourt & Escobar 2002). In this case, saying no to the selfish individualization of capitalism/modernity and to the multiple oppressions of hetero-patriarchy in which an-other form of understanding the category 'we, the people' as a prefiguration of collectivity and care relations is practiced (Esteva and Prakash 1998: 28).

Box 3. Wearing make up...

'On a way or the other the patriarchal monster makes you to feel that the monster is you. I learnt about how a weak woman uses to look like... so I unconsciously started to dress like a man: pants, boots, striped shirt... I always had been told that I was a butch, but in that way I felt safe, anybody would look at me or touch me... My friends were the same, and we felt better than the feminine girls... Sensuality was mocked, sexuality almost criminalized... High heels?, make up?, not in a lifetime!.

All of that made me hide those aspects of me, just because I wanted to seem strong, cool...

But one day I learnt – we learnt together- that all those attitudes I took made me feel oppressed, jailed, blocking me in relationships and making me feel very, very insecure, with fear to show my authentic self.

Knowing that others felt the same way has been very significant, because it had made me comprehend and see that my woman-self can be the way I want it to be, not how I have learnt. Now, almost in my thirties, I learn to discover and like my sensual being, to not feeling as a slut if I just want sex, to wear dresses, make up. This may seem superficial, but you cannot imagine how deep is to try on lipstick or wearing heels when the patriarchal monster has been chasing you through all your life'.

(Amaia 2014, personal interview)

Re-configuration of care as a communal process can be seen as a political engagement creating a process of subject transformation based on everyday practices. Feelings and actions around them can become more important than developing static agendas (Gibson-Graham 2006). For Zambra, this engagement with care can be portrayed as a moral commitment. Care is constituted as a

conscious attitude and is demonstrated in particular situations. For Zambra, this is a consciousness constructed as a particular concept, which delimitates in a great extent the way members of the collective interrelate.

5.4. Problematizing care and collectivity: when care becomes an excuse to control

We got lost entering into Santiago de Compostela because we were lagging behind the others. Manolo called our phones repeatedly. At one point I hear him yelling at Mary on the phone, saying that we are irresponsible and not taking the marches seriously. Moments after she expresses that she is feeling very angry and tired about his controlling attitudes, confessing that she often feels in a lower hierarchical position in respect to the men of the collective, who have been in it for a longer time. Situations like this one happened repeatedly, and I felt like some of the men were trying to give judgments over what I and the other young women were doing, or not. The last night in Malaga, when I interviewed Sol, she happened to have the same reflections and in fact, she confessed that this was part of her reasons to leave Zambra:

‘People are worried about how to make changes towards outside, but forget to think about what happens inside ... people ends up doing the same thing they are criticizing, reproducing patriarchal and patronizing dynamics... This determines a lot of the dynamics in the group, and suddenly the discourse around care ends up being hierarchical, where certain people, normally men, end up exercising control over the others with the excuse of taking care of them’ (Sol 2014, personal interview).

Donna Haraway (1988) and Sandra Harding (2005) highlight the need to make critical revisions of the standpoints of grassroots groups, and to be aware that trying to be coherent in the everyday can be problematic. Some weeks after coming back from the fieldwork, having some time to reflect on what I experienced with the people from Zambra, I started to think on how this –I may call- idealization of care could have a boomerang effect on the discourse around Feminisms. How it could re-locate women again as the traditional carriers of care, and beyond, naturalize the image of them as a-priori tender, altruistic beings.

In addition, I reflected also upon the boundaries between self-care and commitment to a social struggle, in relation to the idealization of collectivity in which individual choices are almost forbidden and where it is not so clear whose perspective is ruling the collective. Virginia Held (2006) refers to these questions when speaking about ethics of care. She argues that empathy or benevolence behind the need to take care of others can lead to domination and

that is why care must not be just an action justified in looking for each other only. It is not just matter of ‘caring about’; it implies also taking the standpoints of others, their positionalities and specific contexts in particular situations. Otherwise, exalted solidarity can reinforce asymmetric relations between men and women, reversing the path towards equality (Gargallo 2013).

Feminist defending ethics of care argue that it must be understood as a Feminist ethic in itself and in that sense both women and men must be involved in privileging –and exercising- caring relations. This is based on awareness that existing communities *are* patriarchal, therefore, going against that is a challenge in itself.

‘In its more developed forms, the ethics of care as a feminist ethic offers suggestions for the radical transformation of society. It demands not just equality for women in existing structures of society but equal consideration for the experience that reveals the values, importance, and moral significance, of caring’ (Held 2006: 12).

From Feminist Standpoint theory, subjects are heterogeneous and can be contradictory, but it is from the revision of such conflicts that Feminist knowledge is generated continuously (Harding 2005). During the Autonomous Feminist encounter in which I participated with Zambra, we came to the conclusion that it must be equilibrium between being in the street and working towards inside, because sometimes activism practices end up in not leaving time to take collective care of each other. It is necessary to generate equilibrium between emotions and materialization of struggle framed in a sense of honesty: learning to accept when one is tired of (caring for) others and needs to rest from them. The women from Zambra noted that there is a limit between the real networked care and the ‘care with violence’; that the one locating some people in a less hierarchical position in the movement, portraying them as childish. There is a need to reflect from where we take care of ourselves, in order to break a chain of caring that becomes toxic.

Another issue that can be problematized in the same way is the transversalization of Feminism, i.e. what happens when we are not talking about a separatist, women-only Feminist collective. A more holistic way of resistance could carry out a blurring of Feminist principles or give them a non-prioritized location in movement’s agendas. That fact was one of the concerns of Sol when creating Akelarre. She mentions that she understood the need for Feminism to be imbricated in the social struggle, basically because oppressions are not fragmented but come altogether from the different intersections allowing exclusion. However, she saw that there was a need for a delimited space, because sometimes more traditional topics displace Feminism and make it a theme that could or could not be treated or prioritized. In the marches, for in-

stance, when there were workshops on Feminist topics, people used to leave the room or not participate, but when talking about political repression, for instance, everybody used to have a very active role.

‘One thing is that all the people from the movement go to a manifestation on the 8th of March; and other thing is that everybody is able to dedicate in an assembly a moment to review our ways to relate as a political group, from a Feminist point of view’ (Patri N. 2014, personal interview).

As Sandra Harding (2005) argues, there is a need for a double-sided contribution from Feminisms to other movements and vice versa. It is not a matter to see the world exclusively from women’s issues, but to interrelate those with other social problems. In addition, it is important to include other actors in the creation of Feminist knowledge:

‘Men, too, must contribute distinctive forms of specifically feminist knowledge from their particular social situation... Female feminists are made, not born. Men, too must learn to take historic responsibility for the social position from which they speak’ (Harding 2005: 228)

Nonetheless, in Zambra they seem to be aware of these difficulties, and that it is important to see the struggle as a process in which awareness of unequal power relations is crucial and requires work towards changing them, at every moment, as some of the members of the collective explained. The influence of an initiative as Akelarre in this is pertinent. Care must be understood not only as a simplistic dynamic of doing things for others. As a tool for resistance and as a pre-figurative way of thinking and acting towards transformation, it must imply a conscious exercise of horizontality questioning leaderships or hierarchical organizations.

Through the last two chapters I have reflected about how care is used as a way to frame a struggle in a specific Feminist project, Akelarre Zambrero, in which its exercise becomes an embodied process. I also located care as a practice in which an exercise of networked support –*apoyo mutuo*– determines a way to privilege community over individuality, framed in a form of resistance in everyday life, in which people try to live the world they struggle for. This may be seen as a pre-figurative form of collective action that, in the case of Zambra, is contesting the oppressions, selfishness and unequal power relations that come along with capitalism/hetero-patriarchy.

Chapter 7 Conclusions.

‘The most revolutionary act relies on the equilibrium between the *‘I take care of myself’* and the *‘I am for others’*’. (Patri F. 2014, personal communication)



Photo: ‘Against Feminization of Poverty’; ‘Always in strike, never stopped’; ‘Against Patriarchy, struggling from care’.
Source: Zambra Facebook Page

In this last chapter I want not only to gather together the analysis developed along this paper, but I also want to take a step out, and locate the discussions I have made within a reflection around how contra-system collectives tackle the effects of capitalism in their lives and territories. I want to reflect in how Feminism is being made by young people and how the discourses are not as fixed as in other times. In addition, how understandings of care as networked and as an embodied process may be seen as innovative proposals for looking to social relations from which communities could work together towards place-based changes.

As a result of this analysis, it is possible to say that care for Zambra is a multi-layered category. Is both a concept sustaining the rationale behind *Renta Basica de las Iguales* and the tool to configure a particular way of living in which networked communitarian relations are primordial to fight against capitalist individualism. Therefore, care is on the one hand related with a different way to understand the political economy: valuing and making visible the work that ensures it, which is the rationale behind RBIs. On the other hand, it can be portrayed as the essential mechanism behind a Feminist pre-figurative practice, where the peoples from Zambra try to live the society they are imagining and struggling for. That is, care is both an economic/labor category entailing work

—and a need to recognize this work—, and is a non-material category comprising human relationships —and the need to live through those relationships.

From the practice of *apoyo mutuo*, collectivity is placed at the center of ideal social relationships, where horizontal support guarantees the well being of everyone inside the group. This requires the construction of a different subject, one that exists as being-in-common with others (Gibson-Graham 2006b) and which, from those networked relations, constructs in itself a determined form of resistance based on a conscious choice to live in a different way.

Such different ways of living begin from the body, which is re-configured from being constructed in collectivity: ‘the collective body’. I have tried to show how the project of Akelarre Zambrero does this by locating care at the center of a system in which all the members of the collective are interdependent, i.e. trying to give and receive care in the same —horizontal— ways. In this, the presence of men in practices of Feminism is crucial, trespassing fixed gender categories and allowing members to seek for a dignifying life of everybody.

Through the practice of Akelarre, the individual and collective bodies of participants are constructed themselves as tools of struggle resulting in individual and collective transformations, from individuals losing fear to engage in streets actions, to a whole different understanding of sexuality. This again, is a result of accompaniment, in which being-with-others reinforces the possibility to fight against the system.

Being consistent in practice is always very difficult, and Zambra does not escape this problem. Such ideals of care and collectivity may be hazardous and can entail some limitations in practice. One of them is an hiper-idealization of collectivity, in which individual agency may be sacrificed or used as shielding personal preferences of people —often men— with more power in the collective. In relation to that, care can be portrayed as a subtle form of controlling and domination, resulting in the reinforcement of patriarchal dynamics. At the same time, a holistic social struggle in groups in which Feminism is loosely embedded, but without a specifically determined space in the political agendas, may entail blurring of Feminist discussions, and an ultimate disappearing of some topics from the agendas, as ‘not as urgent’ as others.

As Casas-Cortes et al. (2008) mention, there is a need to portray social movements not as the builders of big solutions, but as spaces for experiences, creation of knowledges and self-critique in micro-political practices. Consequently, I could say that in Zambra, the social struggle is a process with successes and failures, an ongoing road in which, even though the ends are identified, means are crucial for configuring everyday resistance, sometimes more important than the ends. Care in this vision is both a way of struggle and a form of deconstruction of capitalism and hetero-patriarchy, determining a particular way of living. From a Feminist standpoint, such care is made visible,

dignified and entrenched in a particular struggle aimed to engender change step by step.

7.1. Zambra vis-à-vis Spanish Feminist and Social Movements

During fieldwork I had the opportunity to meet a lot of people, initiatives, struggles. The impression that experience left me is that today there are many people –the young, mostly- conducting many activities within the Spanish State, from diverse practices and spaces. Some are directed towards the State, others from anarchism, occupying buildings, yet others pushing for separatism. It is a special moment for them, and they know it. Feminism does not scape from such vivid scenario. I had the opportunity to travel across almost all the Spanish State with Zambra, and in every corner, in every *okupa* (squat), at every wall of the cities, I saw Feminist stamps, fairs, protests, rebel women shouting loud. Now I know that something has started to happen in this country. It may still sound low-pitch, but there is a sound of hundreds of voices. Only some weeks ago the abortion reform³² was abdicated, because of these groups struggles. Zambra is there, giving its contribution.

Understandings of care and placing corporality at the center of the struggle are very much related with what is happening in the rest of the country, based mostly in a struggle to tackle institutionalization of gender topics that, as Solá (2013) argues, can erase the ‘political subject of Feminism’³³. Taking these topics that at first sight are not very political and configure them as particular forms of struggle is a mechanism not only used by Zambra, but by a lot of autonomous groups within the country that are creating alliances and sharing knowledges among them. This is happening on a significant scale since 15M and with the catalyzing effect of Internet and social media (Rivaz & Gámez, 2013).

It would be possible to say that as being within a leftist social struggle, Zambra resembles the dynamics and topics characterizing second wave Feminism. The importance of sexual division of labor, initiatives in excluded neighborhoods, vindication of topics historically displaced to the private sphere – ‘the personal is political’- and, of course, the discourse around patriarchy. However, there are two remarkable differences that can be taken from the analysis: the first one is that patriarchy is no longer understood from the idea

³² Abortion is legal within the Spanish territory. Yet, a Member of Parliament: Alberto Ruíz Gallardón, purposed a law reform to make it illegal again, permitting pregnancy interruption only in very specific cases. It was better known as *Ley Gallardón*. However, on 23th of September/2014, the reform proposal was annulled and Gallardón renounced to his position. (20 *Minutos* 2014)

³³ Original in Spanish: ‘El Sujeto Político del Feminismo’

that men are absolute oppressors. Rather, it is seen as a system entrenched with capitalism that is oppressing bodies and lives from both women and men. Consequently, men have the 'permission' to be Feminist and work towards equality.

The second one, I may suggest, is the issue of politicizing the personal in relation to the collective. Even though individuality is important in the reconfiguration of struggle (body politics, new subjectifications), this group adds the value of collectivity to that reconfiguration. Therefore, they propose a double-sided simultaneous realization of 'the personal as political': while the individual subject is being reconfigured, the collective one is being constructed and enforced, strengthening union between participants and consolidating the politization of their everyday individual and collective lives. All of this using care as the essential tool.

Consequently, in Zambra it is possible to see a combination of well-known historical discussions in Feminist activism with contemporary topics and strategies from new currents of the movement: queer, *Transfeminismo*, anti-capitalist movements. They are adapting to a particular scenario of crisis demanding specific responses in particular moments and territories; they are being informed by several Feminist traditions at the same time. As they themselves affirm, they do not want to be enfranchised in a determined current of the movement, they work from what the social problems require, making them a very eclectic group with a fragmented composition, very typical from contemporary place-based struggles (Escobar & Harcourt, 2002).

The fact that Zambra belongs to a network of collectives like Baladre is important, because locates the group as part of a wider movement that, although allows autonomy to every group in their territories, also has pooled struggles based on specific ideals by working in different parts of the country, but in alliance at a national level at the same time, which configures a wider scenario of resistance. Being part of Baladre gives Zambra a role in relation to what is happening with social movements today in the Spanish State at a national level.

7.2. What then?

I reflected in this paper about an example of radical, Feminist and anti-capitalist struggle. I gave an example how collective action is being made in a specific place and how a socio-economic crisis has catalyzed the need for more potent movements with diverse strategies. The elaboration I have made can serve as a contribution to the history of social movement struggles in Europe, but is also an example of how these movements are looking to the South in order to construct their ideologies and practices. It is an example of how people in the grassroots are innovating and resisting, from taking everyday actions

as another possibility to inhabit the world. It is important to highlight the vivid presence of young people in these struggles.

From a different point of view, this study also aims to contribute from the discussions of the topics of care and collectivity. How both are used to construct differentiated social relations and re-configure bodies, which by constructing support networks feel more comfortable and empowered, strengthening ultimately the possibility to fight against hegemonic powers.

Taking networked care relations seriously can serve to analyze in a different way the life in communities, but also can be taken as a different possibility to construct discourses and design programs about, for instance, sexuality, sustainability or peace-building processes, from a differentiated standpoint. That can be matter of further research.

7.3. A last reflection

I can not end this paper without reflecting again on how the encounter with Zambra made me reflect about research and to what extent one can conduct research without feeling deeply involved in it. It was not an easy process, but the continuous effort to be fair with the words and concerns of my interlocutors was also a part of this path that I value and feel grateful for.

I hope I could transmit somehow how Zambra and its members are working, the difficulties they are facing and their hopes for the future. Now I can say that the –Feminist– social struggle is a process, with bumps and successes, but where the action of working towards a change is a reward in itself. I can say that I saw people who are alive and caring among them, people that are moving forward. As one of the women told me once: ‘We are walking slow, but we are walking far away’.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Zambra's Projects

- **Zambra Distribuidora:** a self-managed editorial, publisher and distributor of books and other materials. It started as a way to transmit to academia the ideas about the struggles developed within the neighborhoods. Now all the texts from Baladre are edited, published and distributed in Zambra Distribuidora.
- **EnContraste:** the project related directly to the work within the neighborhoods. It has three areas of work, namely University, streets and the neighborhoods. "What we try is somehow to get together these three geopolitical elements... articulating an accompaniment to social initiatives within the neighborhoods with actions of protest in the streets and making them visible in the universities" (Say 2014, personal interview).
- **Seminarios (seminaries):** The formative initiative. It consists of one-week courses at universities about Renta Basica de las Iguales and also Gender and Sexual Diversity.
- Akelarre Zambrero
- Renta Basica de las Iguales

Appendix 2: Akelarre's meetings agenda

- **Welcoming and Con-Tact:** First moment based on an encounter of the body; conscious recognition of the space and contact with the others present. Then, there is a space for active hearing and *apoyo mutuo*, where all the participants tell about the experiences they have had in relation to patriarchal oppression, and how they feel and reflect about it.
- **Formation-Reflection:** Every Akelarre has a different working topic such as, for example, history of feminism, prostitution, sexual health and reproductive rights. The facilitator(s) presents the topic and an open debate follows.
- **Reflection-in-action:** A space to express bodily thoughts and sensations of the topic in question by dancing, drawing or other artistic techniques. "The idea is to collectively create knowledge from a less rational place, a less patriarchal one" (Sol 2014, personal interview).
- **Evaluation, contact and closing:** Feedback on the experience and closing by con-tacting each other, and proposing the next topic.