

## Queer Politics of Space in the 15-M Movement

**WHEN THE 15-M** movement burst into the public squares of Spain,<sup>1</sup> despite its innovative character and all its differences from previous social movements, it did not do so without a history behind it or, to put it more accurately, with multiple histories that complicate the narration of its origins. Mainly, these histories include – but are not limited to – the Arab Spring, the antiglobalization movement, and the protests that were already emerging in Spain in response to European “austerity politics.” However, when we think about the presence of queer activism in these antecedents, the antiglobalization movement is the one that can best help us understand the role that sexual and gender diversity played in the movement from its very origins.

Not without impact, Pink Blocs have been very active in antiglobalization protests in many different countries. In the protests that took place in Prague in 2001, the Pink Bloc, characterized by “frivolity and gender trouble” (Bísticas-Cocoves 2013), and adopting a “queer gender aesthetic, which draws on drag imagery, queer high femme, riot grrrl and glam feminism as well as gender-bending for pink-clad men” (Starr 2005, 239), was the one that most successfully surpassed police security cordons. Other Pink Blocs appeared again in antiglobalization protests such as the G8 Summit at Geneva and, in some cases, they consolidated

themselves as stable activist groups, as was the case in Chicago where, under the name of "Pinque Bloque,"<sup>2</sup> a group was active between 2001 and 2005 or, in the European context, in Paris, where there still is an active Pink Bloc.<sup>3</sup>

This ongoing presence of the Pink Blocs in the usually massive protests of the antiglobalization movement has been very important, not only if we think about the sexual and gender diversification of the protesters, but also in relation to the production of new tactics and strategies to confront police violence and to obtain visibility for the political demands that articulate the protest (a combination of elements that I will refer to later as a *queerification* of the space of the protest). They are certainly not alone within the antiglobalization movement in their preference for strictly nonviolent strategies, which they share with, for example, the Green and Yellow blocs; and all of them have worked frequently in strategical coordination with the much more confrontational Black Blocs.<sup>4</sup> However, no bloc has made a more intense use of theatricality in their direct actions than the Pink Blocs. Their roots are deeply linked with the queer activism of the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, whose actions are well-known, precisely, for their intense theatricalization of anger<sup>5</sup> (Butler 1993, 23; Gould 2002; Bisticas-Cocoves 2013).

It is no surprise, thus, that in the antiglobalization protests that took place in Barcelona in 2001 and 2002, the presence of LGBTQ activists was notable, even though they were not formally organized in a Pink Bloc as such. Nevertheless, the gender and sexual diversity of the protesters in Barcelona was notable enough to be used as an example of the turning point in the history of social movements that antiglobalization protests represent. Analyzing the antiglobalization protests in Barcelona and Lisbon, 2007, the authors of "Global Citizenship and the 'New, New' Social movements: Iberian Connections", contrasted the antiglobalization movement with both the "old" social movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "often perceived as masculine, adult and class-based struggles" (Feixa, Pereira and Juris 2009, 423), and the "new" social movements of the 1960s, whose "social base moved away from class, emphasizing other identity-based criteria:

generation, gender, sexual orientation, affect and ethnicity, particularly marginalized communities (Blacks, Chicanos, Native-Americans, etc.)” (Feixa, Pereira and Juris 2009, 426). The latter would be, generally, more akin to a compartmentalized conception of politics that produced, nonetheless, “often multiclass and multigendered youth struggles”; in contrast to both of them, the appearance of what the authors of the article refer to as “new, new social movements” would be “connected to the emergence of new modes of activism in an era of global networks and youth cybercultures: intergenerational, trans-sexual and cross-class struggles” (Feixa, Pereira and Juris 2009, 423), and it would rely on a very diverse social base which “crosses generations, genders, ethnicities and territories” (427). More specifically, in relation to Barcelona, the queer diversity of the protesters was more than obvious. Particularly, the authors point out the presence of drag queens and LGBTQ activists carrying placards against both capitalism *and* patriarchy, and chanting slogans such as “Against the Europe of capital, anal pleasure” (Feixa, Pereira and Juris 2009, 430), a phrase that actually rhymes in Spanish.<sup>6</sup>

That being said, it should be noted that visible queer activism has not been the rule in wider citizen or social protests in Spain. It is not easy to find similar examples of this kind of diversity amongst other citizen protests in the years that preceded the emergence of the 15-M movement in Madrid (whether we think of LGBT associations or non-institutionalized queer activism<sup>7</sup> as such). Of course, in cities like Madrid, queer collectives such as the Grupo de Trabajo Queer (GTQ) or, later, Acera del Frente (Trujillo 2009, 229), were active, but their activity was usually concentrated on opening spaces of debate and giving voice to queer political demands during specific events, like the celebration of LGBT pride, rather than in maintaining a visible presence in other spaces of protest. The 15-M movement constitutes an important change in this sense and, thus, it can be understood as a fundamental part of the ongoing process of *queerification* of the massive citizen protests that we have just associated with the antiglobalization movement.

## What Is a Camp?

In order to understand the place that sexual and gender activists occupied in the context of the 15-M movement, it is important to address, as a preliminary question, the politics of space that characterized it. In the seminal case of Madrid, before similar camps proliferated in no less than 219 other locations in Spain (Nofre 2013), the first thing that one would notice while walking amongst the tents was the growing complexity of the camp itself. Day after day, a continuous process of renovation and specialization of the space in the square was taking place and, as a result, the diversification of areas (sleeping areas, cooking areas, nursery, libraries, art workshops, etc.) became so obvious that one could no longer think that what one was seeing could be properly described simply as a camp.

This complexity was very well captured in an interesting article on the 15-M movement by the urban geographer Jordi Nofre. His work regarding Madrid and Barcelona's squares, studies the maps of both camps and, very interestingly, compares them with the emergence of cities in Europe or, more specifically, with ancient Greek camp cities (Nofre 2013). In his view, the structural unity of the camp can only be properly understood in urban terms. Thus, we could think of it as a complex, critical anomaly of the space of the city, whose constitution represents the production of a particular kind of *counter-space*, to use the definition that Henri Lefebvre applied to this term. In the words of Lefebvre, which include a direct reference to the role that bodies play in the construction of these kinds of spaces, a counter-space would respond "to the demands of a body 'transported' outside itself in space, a body which by putting up resistance inaugurates the project of a different space, either the space of a counter-culture, or a *counter-space in the sense of an initially Utopian alternative to actually existing 'real' space*" (Lefebvre 1991, 349). This conception of counter-spaces is rooted in the concept of *heterotopia*, introduced by Foucault in 1967 in the conference "Of Other Spaces," where he tried to account for the production of certain spaces that could be understood as "a kind of effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault 1984, 46). Indeed, Foucault contrasted utopias, con-

ceptualized as ideal and imaginary social spaces, to *heterotopias*, thought of as places that introduce, in "real" space, those forms of radical social alterity that we usually associate to the political and literary theme of utopia. These heterotopias establish, for Foucault, a very particular kind of critical relation with the space in which they emerge. Every heterotopia would share "the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspend, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect" (Foucault 1984, 46). The examples that Foucault offers are certainly diverse, to the point that we can find some examples in which the utopian component is easily identifiable, such as certain 17<sup>th</sup> century colonies, "in which human perfection was effectively achieved" (Foucault 1984, 49); as well as others with a radically dystopian orientation, like prisons, the paradigm of the disciplinary society.

The confusing variety of heterotopian spaces identified by Foucault is, for some, a clear limitation for the emancipatory possibilities of the concept. For example, in *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey has argued that even though "the concept of heterotopia has the virtue of insisting upon a better understanding of the heterogeneity of space", it "gives no clue as to what a more spatiotemporal utopianism might look like" (Harvey 2000, 184–5). Although his frustration with the political ambivalences of the concept is, to a certain extent, understandable I definitely do not share his appreciation that, for Foucault, "whatever happens in such spaces of 'Otherness' is of interest and even in some sense 'acceptable,' or 'appropriate'" (Harvey 2000, 185).<sup>8</sup> Clearly, heterotopia is not, for Foucault, a normative concept. It may be even difficult to define, using Foucault's text, what would transform any given space into a heterotopia, largely because of the tentative nature of Foucault's lecture. We can easily agree, however, that all of them share the purpose of establishing their own social order, of providing a spatial structure to sustain that social order, and, finally, of maintaining a relation of opposition – whether it is a politically desirable one or not – between its different elements and the social structures or institutions of the broader context that they interact with. "Heterotopia" is, in this sense, a relational concept, that is, a

way of highlighting the critical relations that are sometimes established between certain spaces and the social space within which they emerge.

Combining this relational characterization of heterotopias with Lefebvre's suggestion that counter-spaces – and, hence, heterotopias – constitute a "parodic simulation"<sup>9</sup> of the space they interact with (Lefebvre 1991, 382), the protest camp could be conceived not only as heterotopian counter-space, but also as one that critically parodies the city as a whole. In other words, the camp would be nothing but a *counter-city*: one that, with its emphasis in horizontal and participatory democratic processes that take place within public space, unveils the limitations of the democratic life of the city.

Conceiving the camp as a counter-city has the advantage of making it much easier to understand that, despite its undoubtedly utopian orientation, it is also, like the city itself, a complex social space. In this sense, we can take very seriously Judith Butler's suggestion – in her analysis of the politics of space at Tahrir Square's camp, during the "Arab Spring" – that the spatial politics of the camp produce a "social form of the resistance" (Butler 2011). In the case of Tahrir Square, for example, this social form was one that avoided gender inequality, when distributing the tasks of maintenance of the camp itself in such a way that everybody could participate in the open assemblies or in any other political activity. In a similar way, the camp at the square Puerta del Sol, like many other protest camps, produced its own "social form of the resistance." This production is an inherently conflictive process not only in relation with the somehow predictable kinds of conflicts that one can expect to arise in any democratic process where so many different individuals, with their own political perspectives, gather to talk in open assemblies in order to decide why they are there and with what expectations, but also, specifically, in relation with the kind of conflicts that gender and sexual activists had to face while trying to find *their own place* at the protest.

In what follows, and shaped by this theoretical frame, I will offer what can be read as a narrative reconstruction – in the sense of "tacking from the raw datum [*sic*] [...] to the developing whole of which it is part" (Polletta 1998, 421) – of what I see as the main events that can help

to achieve an embodied understanding of the urban semiotics (Castells 1977; Lefebvre 1991) of queer politics of space within the 15-M movement. For that purpose, I will make use of the 15-M's archives and other web and media related sources, as well as of some traits of retrospective "observant participation" – following the suggestion of the geographer of queer spaces Gavin Brown, who contrasts it with "the more conventional *and detached* ethnographic method of 'participant observation'" (Brown 2007, 2686, my emphasis)<sup>10</sup> – given that I participated, for more than two years and without any kind of "ethnography" related interest whatsoever, in the 15-M's work group Asamblea Transmaricabollo de Sol.

### **Feminist and Queer Activism at the Camp**

From the very beginning of the occupation of the Puerta del Sol square, the presence of feminist and queer activists was obvious, given that they gathered there with rainbow flags in tow and singing feminist and LG-BTQ anticapitalist slogans, even before they raised a large feminist tent at the square. Shortly after they were settled at the camp, a huge feminist banner was hung from the front of a building, where everyone could read: "The revolution will be feminist, or it won't be at all". It was then it also became obvious that for some, that was not an acceptable conception of the "revolution" at all: the banner was removed by some men who not only were allowed to do so, but were even cheered by many of the observers (Feminismos Sol 2011, 6). At that moment, it also became apparent that the work feminists and queer activists were starting to do in the square would have to go in two directions, both from the movement towards the rest of the city and, not so surprisingly, from the feminist and queer activists towards the counter-city itself.

Like all of the many other work groups that proliferated during those days, Feminismos Sol functioned as an independent open assembly, which, from its autonomous position, produced its own discourse and political positions. That meant that some of them would be accepted as common goals by the rest of the movement, via consensus at the Sol General Assembly, while others would be ideas and actions particular

to that assembly. However, what interests us the most now is the fact that the feminist tent was, somehow, like a camp *inside* the camp, given that feminists gathered there to sleep at night, instead of using the more undifferentiated sleeping areas. That was, no doubt, a success in terms of visibility for the feminist assembly: from the point of view of spatial politics, they had created their own feminist heterotopia *within* the 15-M counter-city.

While Feminismos Sol consolidated its presence in the general context of the movement, the feminist tent became a meeting place for all kinds of activists interested in sexual and gender politics, that is, for everyone who had the conviction that feminists and LGBTQ people have their own concerns and work to do in relation to the common goals of the movement.<sup>11</sup> At that moment, many of us felt the necessity of creating a queer assembly within the movement. When a call was made<sup>12</sup> for its creation – at the feminist tent, after one of the assemblies of Feminismos Sol – many *indignadas*<sup>13</sup> responded to it and participated in its formation. It was not rare, during those days of political effervescence that more than 50 people gathered in the new queer assembly. Of course, some of them were participating in other 15-M assemblies too. In particular, the most common kind of “double-militancy” at that moment was participating both in Feminismos Sol and in the queer assembly, which was initially called the Transmaribolloqueer Assembly (a somehow redundant name, given that *transmaribollo* is a Spanish neologism usually used in substitution for the English word “queer,” very much like the French *transpédégouine*, which also makes use of the appropriation of injury with similar inclusive connotations) and, later on, the Transmaricabollo Assembly, that can be translated roughly as Transfagdyke Assembly. The double participation in Feminismos Sol and in the Transmaricabollo Assembly was, in fact, the origin of one of the first conflicts that the assembly had to face.

Some of these “double” activists thought the new group should be considered as a subgroup of Feminismos Sol. While it was common then – and still is – that the assemblies, within the 15-M movement, also formed, occasionally, smaller subgroups to work on specific issues,

that was not how the majority of people who participated in the Transmaricabollo Assembly saw themselves. However, during the first assemblies, there was, for some, a certain ambiguity concerning the nature of the Transmaricabollo Assembly. This ambiguity was soon resolved, when the assembly decided by consensus to clarify its position in the context of the movement, by affirming its independence as a work group. The debates on this subject were sometimes repetitive and, even after the achieved consensus, which recognized the independence of the assembly and at the same time its political affinity with Feminismos Sol, some still argued that the decisions of the Transmaricabollo Assembly should be subjected to a double consensus: first, at the Transmaricabollo Assembly and, then, at Feminismos Sol. Although the proposal was dismissed by the assembly, I think it reflects what I saw then as the root of the conflict. For some of the activists, who participated in both groups, the Transmaricabollo Assembly should somehow be under the tutelage of Feminismos Sol. In fact, that would explain why the debates on the subject were sometimes slightly tense. A tension that shows how, for queer activism, occupying *its own political space* within the movement was not a given from the start: the heterotopian politics of space at the counter-city were quickly developing like a Russian Matryoshka doll structure.

Of course, the political proximity between both groups was evident. However, most of the activists of the Transmaricabollo Assembly felt that their independence was important, not only in terms of the visibility queer activism would therefore obtain within the movement, but also in a very pragmatic sense. While the diversity of political positions within the Transmaricabollo Assembly was unavoidably problematic, the general perception was that its queer orientation provided a common political sensibility that would allow us to work together quite efficiently. This common ground was – though I am aware that this may be a very personal point of view<sup>14</sup> – our own identification as queer activists, which also implied our commitment to a feminist political agenda. In other words, we saw ourselves as queer feminists or, more precisely, we perceived “queer feminism” as a redundant expression. Of course,

Feminismos Sol was, for its part, also a complex group that, despite the participation of queer activists in it, had to deal with its own internal diversity (Feminismos Sol 2011, 5). "Queer feminism" was, within Feminismos Sol, a particular perspective among many other feminist sensibilities. For that reason, positions that were taken for granted as starting points at the queer assembly were, at Feminismos Sol, the source of important debates. Thus, the idea of achieving political consensus at the Transmaricabollo Assembly that would have had to be ratified at Feminismos Sol later on, would have led to an excessively complex process. It would certainly have been an interesting and possibly very productive one, but unviable at a moment of political urgency. As an example of this problem, we can consider the issue of sex workers rights. While at the Transmaricabollo Assembly there was a general commitment to the struggle for sex workers rights, it was included with no debate whatsoever in the first manifesto of the assembly, Feminismos Sol had an important debate on the subject, involving the decisive participation of sex work activists, coming from Hetaira,<sup>15</sup> the most important group fighting for sex workers' rights in Spain. The result of this debate was in fact the inclusion of the demands for sex workers' rights, but this was not, for many of the feminists who participated in the debate, their original position.

Both assemblies had in any case more important things – and tensions – to worry about, than their relationship with each other. For example, despite the *apparently* diverse, inclusive and welcoming atmosphere that reigned at the camp, the activists from Feminismos Sol decided, after a few weeks, to stop sleeping at the camp, as a result of sexual harassment that some women of the group had suffered during the nights at the camp. They publicly claimed that, despite the fact that they were not talking about anything susceptible to be formally reportable, the situation was uncomfortable enough to cause them to make such a difficult decision (DifRed 2011). A decision that was quite polemic at the moment, because it was exactly the kind of news that the media were expecting to feed their constant attacks on the image of the movement. And they certainly used it, to the point that Feminismos Sol

had to publicly fight the manipulation of their decision and of the facts denounced. Nonetheless, they achieved at least two important objectives with their decision. First, they raised awareness that, as attacks from the media were unavoidable, these attacks should never be allowed to stop the participants in the movement from doing what they felt was right at any moment. And secondly, they brought to light the fact that the "social form of the resistance" was indeed a scenario of conflict, where gender differences played a major role in determining the level of habitability that different groups were enjoying at the camp. Thus, it became clear that the inclusivity of the camp, in relation with gender, was not something to be assumed, but something to fight for.

At the same time, the Transmaricabollo Assembly was dealing with some heterosexist attitudes that were being detected by queer people at the camp. The assembly's response was to fill the camp with billboards that declared it a space free of homophobia and transphobia. Furthermore, given that the slogans that were common in the movement frequently used anal sex as a metaphor for political and economic violence, as much as they resorted to the word "whore" in an insulting manner, the assembly started using every opportunity it had to interrupt the chanting of these slogans with empowering ones, both in relation to sex work and to the pleasures of anal sex.

Aside from this, the Transmaricabollo Assembly had, also, a conflictive moment in relation with the media. After one of the first protests that, departing from the Sol square, ended in the vicinities of the parliament, a right-wing newspaper used the manifesto of the Transmaricabollo Assembly to send the message – with large headlines on its front page – that the 15-M movement had gone to the parliament to demand that minors and immigrants get access to sex change treatments, the normalization of sex work and to "question the institution of marriage" (*Gaceta de los Negocios* 2011). Even though the assembly had already published its foundational manifesto, and had already presented it at the Sol General Assembly, many people received the attack as an imaginative manipulation of the movement's discourse, as if those claims had been totally made up by the newspaper. When some

activists publicly shared their concern that the movement was being attacked with false accusations, the assembly decided to publicly explain that although the newspaper had used those demands with the obvious intention of discrediting the 15-M movement amongst its readers, in order to trivialize and to ridicule its demands it was also using the concept of "disordered" sexuality as a weapon against the movement as a whole, not only in relation with that particular instance but also through the increasingly common caricaturization – in that newspaper, as well as in other media – of the protest camp as a space of promiscuity and ubiquitous nudes. In this sense, the partial publication of the assembly's manifesto gave a visibility to its demands that none of us could ever have dreamed of, at the same time that it fostered a collective reflection on how the attacks on the sexual diversity in the movement should not succeed in its attempt to debilitate it or divide it, in other words, that that kind of moralist and heteronormative discourse should have no place at all in the 15-M movement. In general terms, the General Assembly's reaction to this reflection was quite satisfactory. Of course, the Transmaricabollo Assembly was still being constantly attacked in the 15-M movement's most important virtual spaces for discrediting the movement with its "particular," "absurd," or "minoritary" demands but, in the "real" space of the camp, it was achieving a growing respect. A lot had changed – in only a few weeks – since the first time that the Transmaricabollo Assembly spoke at the General Assembly, when even the mention of its name provoked nervous and derogatory laughs. In this sense, despite the polemic, even the right-wing media attacks helped in building a "social form of the resistance" in which queer people, and their queer demands, had their own voices and occupied their own place at the heterotopian counter-city.

### **From Queer to Antiausterity Politics**

One of the most interesting aspects of the work that the Transmaricabollo Assembly has developed from the 15-M movement is the constant mixing, in its discourse and in its direct actions, of its queer demands and the many that have articulated the identity of the movement

itself. When the assembly wrote its "foundational" manifesto (Asamblea Transmaricabollo, 2011a), it included points such as "the elimination of transsexuality from illness manuals (DSM-V and CIE-11)", the criticism of "the instrumentalization of certain LGBT associations and federations on the part of political parties", "the recognition of labor and social rights for all the sex workers who desire it, favoring the regularization of migrant persons who dedicate themselves to sex work", "the right to migrate and claim asylum status due to sexual orientation or gender", the demand for the social recognition "of the many forms of relationship that transcend the traditional models of monogamy and the nuclear family", the urgency of "a plural, integral sexual education" in the educational system and the fight against bullying, the "end to the public funding of religious and political entities that develop sexist, homophobic, lesbophobic, biphobic, and transphobic politics", "the guarantee of reproductive rights for lesbian women, single persons, and trans persons", and the defense of "an integral approach to the treatment of HIV" with special consideration of "the specificities of women's bodies, non-normative bodies, and trans bodies", to name a few. All of these demands, among others, were framed in the general fight against the violence perpetrated from the democratic institutions that were, as was becoming increasingly clear, subordinated to the interests of the Troika and its impositions via European "austerity politics": the first point of the manifesto specifically asserted that the combat against "all forms of sexist, homophobic, lesbophobic, biphobic, and transphobic violence" not only had to take place in "all spheres: institutional, work, educational, and penitential", but that the "actual socioeconomic context" increases the effects of this violence, whether it is "hidden or visible, in all strata of Spanish society". In a similar way, the last point made explicit the connection between the vulnerability of our bodies and the advances of neoliberal politics, when it asserted that "as precarious bodies and identities, we denounce the brutality of capitalism", which "intensifies discrimination" against the entire spectrum of queer identities. This point linked this violence, specifically, with the discrimination within the labor market but, of course, the same observation could be made in

relation with any other dimension of queer people's lives.

Thus, it is clear that the consciousness of the urgency of the mobilization of queer people in the context of the general struggle against the abuses perpetrated in the name of the so-called "economic crisis," which were already destroying labor rights, privatizing public social services, and criminalizing social protests with a frenetic speed, marked the activity of the assembly from the start. This "transversal" orientation of its political discourse has little or none precedent in the history of queer activism in Spain. While it is true that certain queer groups had maintained multiple forms of punctual coalitions with other social struggles, such as antimilitarism or squatting movements (Trujillo 2009, 226), it can be noted that the continuous activity of a group of these characteristics within a general struggle for social and economic justice such as the 15-M movement has no precedent in the history of Spanish queer activism, nor in the history of LGBT institutionalized activism, besides the previously mentioned presence of LGBTQ activists at the antiglobalization protests.

As a result of the above, and of its consciousness of the seriousness of the political and economic context, the Transmaricabollo Assembly has maintained a sustained presence in the multiple protests that have taken place in Madrid in the last years, whether they were directly organized by the 15-M movement or not, starting with one of the first massive demonstrations that took place only a few days after the 15-M's decision to dismantle the camp at the Sol square.

The banner that the assembly carried during that first demonstration, "Queers against the Pact for the Euro", is quite representative of the assembly's conviction that queer activism should occupy its own place in the resistance to the socioeconomic violence associated to current hegemonic politics in the context of the European Union. Not only because we are suffering it in a specifically pronounced way, given the precariousness of our "starting point" – especially if we think of queer immigrants with an irregular administrative status; of trans people, who already had an extraordinarily high unemployment rate before the economic "crisis"; of sex workers, excluded from labor rights, etc. – as well

as the conviction that queer activism should be an active source of critical resistance to the "global" threats that affect society as a whole. Thus, we can say that the queer assembly have developed something like a "double agenda" which addresses global problems from a queer perspective, that would otherwise be completely absent from the movement, in a similar way to other queer experiences within the Occupy movement, directly influenced by the Spanish Revolution (Oinomakis and Roos 2013), such as Queers Against the Cuts<sup>16</sup> in London, Occupypride<sup>17</sup> in New York or, more recently, the LGBT bloc<sup>18</sup> at Taksim Gezi Park's resistance.

Positioning ourselves – bodily, spatially, and discursively – as queer activists in the context of the movement has, by itself, a strategic performative impact, whether we think of the people we march with – who have gotten used to see us as allies in the same struggle and, occasionally, to receive our criticisms regarding their heteronormative manners; of the general "public" who sees the protests either on the street or through the media – who wonders why are we there as queer people rather than as "common" citizens, and has to find its own answer to that question; or of queer people – who may feel encouraged to join the struggle at the next protest. However, protesting *as queers* has also had other implications that have nothing to do, *a priori*, with the benefits of visibility. It has been, for instance, the source of a specific spectrum of strategies that the assembly has developed since its creation or, in other words, of the queerified embodied way in which the occupation of space of city – and the space of the protest – has taken place.

### **Protesting as Queers**

As an example of this, we can consider the actions of the assembly during the visit of the pope to Madrid in the first summer after the camp, during the World Youth Day (WYD). The celebration of the WYD, which saw more than 2 million visitors congregate in Madrid, took place in a critical moment for the 15-M movement. The criminalization of the movement in the media had been followed by a radical change in the governmental response to it, which started with brutal

police charges at the Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona, closely followed by the first charges in Madrid. The case of Madrid was particularly interesting, not because of the intensity of the repression, but because of the obvious theatrical strategy that preceded the exercise of violence. Specifically, weeks after the camp was voluntarily dismantled, the police occupied Puerta del Sol, eliminating the last vestige of the camp – an information point installed at the square – and staying there for no less than three days, blocking everyone’s access to the square with the excuse of preventing any attempt to rebuild the camp. This strategy, which could be read as the production of a dystopian and impermeable counter-heterotopia at the square, sent a clear message to the city. In a similar way that the 15-M movement had expanded from Puerta del Sol, substituting the camp for an intense politicization of the public spaces of the whole city – mainly, through the proliferation of popular assemblies in its every neighborhood – they announced the expansion of the violent repression of the movement wherever it tried to organize itself. In fact, the first important police charge against the movement at Madrid took place during this singular occupation of the square which was spontaneously baptized as the “police camp” (Roos 2011) and widely interpreted as a repressive preparation for the events of WYD.

At the same time, the 15-M movement had not achieved any consensus on actions in opposition to the pope visit, given that, for some people, the movement should not acquire any anticlerical character, despite the general criticism of the economic support that the government gave to the WYD. Of course, when a platform of laic groups announced that they were preparing a protest against the public financial support of the WYD, in accordance with, what they perceived to be, a clear contradiction with the non-denominational character of Spain, many assemblies of the 15-M movement decided to participate in it. The Transmaricabollo Assembly was one of them, as well as Feminismos Sol. Both groups denounced that the economic and institutional support of the event implied an intolerable complicity with a sexist, patriarchal, homophobic, and transphobic institution. At a certain point, the march turned into a symbolic reappropriation of the space of the square. This was a particu-

larly tense situation, given that the supporters of the WYD had organized a counter-protest at the very same square, Puerta del Sol, through which the laic march was supposed to pass. Despite the attempts of the police to avoid it, the march finally occupied all the space of the square. At that moment one of the members of the assembly – in an independent, spontaneous action – climbed to the emblematic statue of "The bear and the strawberry tree" – repetitively adorned with a rainbow flag by the assembly since its formation – and performed, nude, sexual intercourse with the bear, holding a rainbow flag with one hand and an inflated condom with the other, while the protesters spontaneously surrounded and cheered him. It was an anecdotal action, of course, but also very representative of the ubiquitous presence of queer activists at the protest.

The assembly as such organized another performance, "Welcome Mr. Pope,"<sup>19</sup> parodying a famous musical scene of the iconic Spanish movie *Welcome Mr. Marshall!*,<sup>20</sup> transformed with transgender folkloric outfits and some fetish BDSM details, that was performed at the gates of a church (Iglesia del Carmen) in the vicinities of Puerta del Sol and then, later on, at the square itself, which was overcrowded with the attendees of the WYD. The international attendees probably did not understand the lyrics of the song, satirically adapted for the occasion, nor the performance itself, but the queer kiss-in ending it was, fortunately, self-explanatory.

A few days later, the Transmaricabollo Assembly prepared yet another kiss-in – this time to receive the pope. Unlike the last performance, this action was widely announced through social networks. This led to an important participation of LGBTQ activists – no less than 50 people – but, at the same time, it drew the attention of the police. As a result, when the group was already in the proximities of the place chosen, very close to the trajectory of the popemobile, the police retained and proceeded to identify everyone in the group. Fortunately, the action had also attracted the attention of the media, and the kiss-in, which had to be performed during the arbitrary police retention, could be seen the next day on every TV-news broadcast. Furthermore, a few activists

were able to go unnoticed and subsequently reach the original objective of staging a kiss-in close to the popemobile, along with some journalists. Not so surprisingly, once the identifications were finished, the group was driven by force to Chueca, the "gay village" of Madrid, as if the police were trying to restore the ordinary heteronormative order of the city that had apparently just been violated.

Shortly after the WYD was finally over, LGBTQ activists from different backgrounds had the opportunity to discuss, at the Transmaricabollo Assembly, the different forms of violence and repression – including police brutality – that they had experienced during the WYD. This pooling of experiences led to the publication of a public report on the unjustifiable repression suffered and on the obstacles to freedom of expression, emphasizing the commitment of the assembly to continue breaking the heteronormative order of the city, especially when that order so flagrantly defended the interests of heteropatriarchal institutions such as the catholic church.

I have related the last sequence of events in some detail because, in my view, it is quite representative of the kind of activism that the assembly develops. Firstly, because of its aim to produce a discourse that, at the same time as it participates in a "general" demand – that public institutions should not give economic support to this kind of events – it also denounces the particular ways that the object of this demand affects the lives of queer people. This has been the case in most of the actions organized by the assembly. Other examples of this could be the calls of the assembly for the last general strikes, which emphasized the way the cuts are affecting queer people's rights; or the position which the assembly took against the recent exclusion of irregular immigrants from the right to access the public health system on the same conditions as everyone else, through the campaign "It is not about cuts, but executions" that highlighted the way this exclusion means a direct life threat on HIV positive immigrants. In a similar way, while protesting against proposed cuts in funding to education, the reinforcement of catholic religion in public schools, and the complete suppression of educational content on sexual diversity, the assembly defended the public school system, and

warned that the probable impact of these changes would be a greater exposure of queer students to bullying.

Secondly, because the participation of the assembly in the laic march is a good example of its involvement with street protests in coalition with multiple and heterogeneous collectives. This has also been the case in relation with the health and educational platforms that have taken to the streets of Madrid on multiple occasions – with a notable presence of the 15-M movement – but also in other mobilizations such as the International Women’s Day; the Day of the Republic – with the assembly being almost the only group of the 15-M to participate in that demonstration; the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers – taking to the streets with the sex worker collective *Hetaira*; the demonstrations against *Pussy Riot*’s incarceration and against the criminalization of LGBTQ people in Russia; the collaborations with the “Stop Trans Pathologization” campaign; or the platform *Toma el orgullo* (*Occu pride*) that the *Transmaricabollo* Assembly launched to organize a collective critical response from the 15-M movement to the official LGBT pride organization; or the ongoing collaboration with the antifascist movement of Madrid,<sup>21</sup> to cite only a few.

Thirdly, these events are representative of the use of performance in the assembly’s public demonstrations, such as kiss-ins, like the one already mentioned, and die-ins, like the many that the assembly organized during the campaign “It is not about cuts, but executions.” It is interesting to notice that these performances vary from the most confrontational ones, which involve an important theatricalization of anger – like the die-ins in front of health centers, or at the Pride March, when the activists of the assembly repeatedly blocked the march with their bodies – to the “tactical frivolity”<sup>22</sup> of performances such as the mentioned “Welcome Mr. Pope,” or the variation of it that the assembly organized on the occasion of the official visit of Angela Merkel to Madrid, “Welcome Mrs. Merkel.” This last performance was especially successful in terms of its impact on the media, and was consequently punished by the police with the imposition of five fines to *Transmaricabollo* activists.

Fourthly, the assembly, as part of a vast social movement open to

everyone, is a space where anyone can go and participate in any of the weekly assemblies, in order to debate, to share experiences, or to propose lines of action. As true as it is for any of the "ordinary" assemblies, that usually take place at the same square or at any of the squatted social centers where the assembly gets shelter during the cold months of the year, there are multiple occasions when an extra effort is made to publicize certain dates. Such a date was for the assembly that was celebrated after the WYD, where activists that had organized their own actions – at least three kiss-ins took place during the visit of the pope, and all of them had bad experiences with the police – could gather together in order to prepare common lines of action to respond to the repressive measures they had just been exposed to. In a similar vein, the assembly has promoted open debates on different issues that frequently became an opportunity to share points of view with activists from a very broad range of backgrounds, with or without the help of special "guests" to introduce the debate. This is the case of the debates on queer feminism at the 15-M movement, introduced by queer activist and sociologist Gracia Trujillo, who is also a member of the assembly; on the history of the repression of LGBTQ people during Franco's dictatorship, with the screening of a documentary on the subject, *Testigos de un tiempo maldito* (2012), by Javi Larrauri, who also attended the meeting; or the presentation of ACT-UP Oral History Project by the co-founder of the Lesbian Avengers, Sarah Schulman. The debates on queer activism in Spain and Argentina were also of interest, with the presence of the Argentinian activists Gustavo Pecoraro, writer and gay activist, and Héctor Anabitarate, founder of the first homosexual group in Argentina, Nuestro Mundo, in the 1960s. As part of the queer agenda during last LGBT pride, the assembly arranged discussions on queer politics with sociologist and activist Javier Sáez, founder of *Hartza*, an emblematic online queer magazine; on the politics of HIV with social educator and queer activist David Agudo; and on the recent attacks on public education, conducted by the previously mentioned Gracia Trujillo and Merce Sánchez, expert in education and member of the assembly. These topics were of course framed, as could not have been otherwise, in the context

of the crisis. Perhaps – but only, perhaps – more independent of the economic context, was the most recent one, the open debate "Occupy Love," introduced by the polyamorous activist and writer Brigitte Vasallo.

Finally, although closely linked with the "tactical frivolity" of some of the performances, it is important to highlight the recurrent use of humor, usually with a *camp* twist, in many of the assembly's texts, as it is the case with the satiric lyrics of the "Welcome Mr. Pope" performance; with manifests such as "Queers on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown," which summarizes the main attacks on fundamental rights since the beginning of the economic "crisis"; with the queer, republican manifesto "Kings and Queens? Ask Us," which harshly analyzes the role of the Spanish royal family as a dysfunctional paradigm of the nuclear family model; or with the criticism of the catholic family model during the celebration of Christmas, in the text "The Virgin was Intersex," which starts with the surreal claim that "some inquiries by the International Commission of Experts in History of Hetero-Family Rites and Superstitions have clarified the mystery, once and for all. The myth of the virgin mother, in our catholic folklore and in many other religions, talks about the very same event: the self-fertilization of a [intersex] woman who never met a man", and ends with the following call to keep on struggling in the streets:

Queer people of the world, we have lost this year, once again, our innocence. During this heterochristmas, we won't go shopping: we will take the streets to have a walk with our indignation, to claim jobs for everyone and warn those who govern us that we are still here, that we won't accept their lies, nor their budget cuts, nor their parties. If we give any presents, we will get trucks for girls, give dolls to boys and fair trade dildos to our friends. Come all of you to express the good news with us in the outraged cavalcade on December 28th: the three wise men are the mothers and the nuclear family is a big radioactive lie. (Asamblea Transmaricabollo 2011b)

## Queering the Social Form of the Resistance

This latter paragraph also exemplifies the simultaneous attention that the assembly systematically pays to recognizably "queer demands" – here, the fight against normative gender roles – and to the more general concerns about the impact of neoliberal politics on society as a whole. This is not a minor issue, given that it allows us to escape the false dichotomy that many tend to establish between the so called "identity politics" and the anticapitalist struggle and thus respond to critics such as Slavoj Žižek, who have accused these "postmodern forms of politicization", the proliferation of politics surrounding "particular questions (gay rights, ecology, ethnic minorities...)" of contributing to hide "what really matters": "the inexorable logic of the capital"<sup>23</sup> (Žižek 1998, 94). In my view, it would be absurd to accuse the coalition between the "particular fights" that feminist and queer activists are working for, in the context of the 15-M movement, of obliterating such a thing. On the contrary, its strength resides precisely in the continuous unveiling that these "particular fights" are, in the end as in the beginning, not particular at all, by exposing the fact that there is, at least, one target that is common to all of them: the "inexorable logic of the capital" as it crystallizes in the current political and economic context of neoliberal "austerity politics."

Possibly, the theoretical mapping of these kinds of coalitions would be much more productive if we took Wittig's account of the critical potential of certain (literary) practices that tend to universalize a minority point of view (Wittig 1983) seriously – not by simply "applying" her textual practice to the order of social struggles but, rather, by approaching spatial politics and, particularly, the space of the city as a text that can be rewritten.<sup>24</sup> Or, in Judith Butler's terms, if we just renounce the description of certain struggles, like "feminism, enfranchisement of sexual minorities, multiculturalism", as "politics of particularity" when they should be understood as politics that imply "competing notions of universality which, despite any apparent logical incompatibility, may nevertheless belong to an *overlapping set of social and political aims*" (Butler 2000, 167), rather than remaining theoretically trapped in some kind of nostalgic call to the homogeneity of the revolutionary subject that

Žižek appears to defend in his description of "post-politics." In fact, even though this kind of "overlapping" that Butler talks about implies, when applied to the politics of the street, the necessity to deal with the never-ending conflicts that result from an apparent "logical incompatibility," it may well be, in the end, a fantastically apt description of the crucial process of construction of the "social form of the resistance" in contemporary urban movements – and, very especially, in heterotopian counter-cities.

With this in mind, we can easily recognize that queer activism, especially as it has evolved *within* the antiglobalization movement, the 15-M movement or the Occupy movement, has been very aware of the false duality that exists between "particular demands" and the general/global/anticapitalist struggle. However, this consciousness is still rare in queer activism in Spain.

Luckily, leaving aside the Transmaricabollo Assembly, there have been active feminist groups within 15-M in many cities, like the previously mentioned Feminismos Sol (Madrid), but also in Barcelona (Feministes Indignades), Seville (Setas Feministas), Valencia (Comisión Transfeminista-15-M), Zaragoza (Feministas Bastardas), and Malaga (Comisión Feminismos 15-M), among others that have stressed, in some cases, their *transfeminist* orientation, including the fight against the discrimination of LGBTIQ identities in its anticapitalist and anti-patriarchal practice.

As for queer groups as such, the 15-M movement erupted in a moment of a certain demobilization, at least in the case of Madrid, where the dissolution of groups like Acera del Frente (around 2011), or prior to that, of GTQ, had left a void in relation to queer activism – even though other groups were still active, such as Migrantes Transgresorxs, a queer migrants collective, and Ciclobollos Dykes on Bikes, a queer group within bicycling activism. Fortunately, new groups are emerging, like Pandi Trans,<sup>25</sup> centered on trans politics, and more recently, Patio Trasero, self-defined as a "LGBTQ collective with the vocation for contributing to articulate antineoliberal and antipatriarchal social movements from a feminist and anticapitalist perspective."<sup>26</sup> One can

only hope that this results in a growing involvement of queer activism in the ongoing protests that, since the beginning of the 15-M movement, never ceased to proliferate all across the country. Certainly, aside from the Transmaricabollo Assembly, there are other groups that, coming from outside the 15-M movement, have shown a clear engagement with social movements, like El Comando Rosa, from Zaragoza, which has made an interesting approach to the 15-M movement discourse, identifying the privileged 1% with normative heterosexuality, and a great call to all "perverts" to join the last general strike.<sup>27</sup> Others are for example Brot Bord from Catalonia and Valencia, whose actions "involve active participation in popular and political movements", and which has also interpreted the last general strike in antipatriarchal terms,<sup>28</sup> and Towanda from Zaragoza, where they work in coalition with the feminist and the antifascist movements.<sup>29</sup> Having said that, a greater engagement with radical street politics would, broadly speaking, be desirable, to coordinate efforts in collective protests and to take part in broad-based social movements in order to participate, with our precarious queer bodies – and antibodies – in the construction of "the social form of the resistance."

The 15-M movement has helped to break the dominant apathy towards political debate and street protest and although there is still a lot to do in this sense, it is not too adventurous to recognize that the socio-cultural inertia has changed dramatically in the last few years. In general terms, the Spanish citizens are now much more inclined to articulate collective responses to all kinds of economic and political abuses of fundamental rights than it was before. Incredibly active movements such as the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (Movement of Mortgage Victims),<sup>30</sup> the health and educational *mareas* (waves), as well as neighborhood movements that oppose concrete projects that affect the people living there detrimentally, usually with a solid discourse and a strong emphasis on the fight against political corruption – like what recently happened in Gamonal, a working class neighborhood of Burgos, among many other movements that are achieving important victories in their respective struggles that have been, in many senses, made possible by the

influence of the 15-M movement.<sup>31</sup> This is due, in part, to its empowering and pedagogical effects but, mainly, because of the multiple organizational resources and activist networks that it contributed to consolidate.

However, one of the most salient evidences of the efficacy of the forms of resistance that characterized the 15-M movement is, paradoxically, a growing repression of political dissent that reveals the fears raised by its success; repression not only in the form of police brutality, but also in the tightening of the laws<sup>32</sup> that criminalize different strategies of protest. These include multiple forms of control of the "space of appearance" of the protest (Butler 2011) that makes access to public space for emergent forms of protest, such as the protest camp, difficult. In the case of Madrid, these changes have been exacerbated by a new municipal ordinance that implements a strict regulation of the uses of public space, which *The Independent* referred to as "Madrid's biggest crackdown since General Franco" (Fotheringham 2013). In addition to protest related uses of public space, the ordinance targets street sex workers and their clients, following the path of Barcelona.<sup>33</sup> This latter regulation points in the direction of the process of desexualization of public space that Bell and Binnie describes as the transformation of certain sexualized spaces into "safe domestic space" (Bell and Binnie 2000, 95), that is, to that homogenizing production of "safe" (sex free) zones that, in the words of Dianne Chisholm, promise "to be 'disastrous' to gay society and social diversity" (Chisholm 2005, 4). When addressing this issue, Bell and Binnie suggested that those sexualized spaces, "specially those of sex work and public sex" should be understood as the "most radical and utopian possibilities for a new modality of dissident sexual citizenship" (Bell and Binnie 2000, 95). As the municipal ordinance so clearly exemplifies, the homogenizing regulation of sexualized spaces of the city is symbiotically associated with the project of building a protest free city: neoliberal austerity politics demand a conservative (re)construction of public space that render the access to it a morally and politically mediated privilege. The "production of queer counter-publics" (Halberstam 2005, 6) needs to face both kinds of problems because, from the point of view of queer politics of space, they are the same struggle. Sexual-

ized uses of public space matter, as Bell and Binnie have convincingly argued, in the construction of dissident sexual citizenship. For its part, the queerification of the space of the protest, through the visibilization of queer bodies, demands and protest strategies in citizen social movements is a keystone for the production of queer citizenship in the times of austerity politics.

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## NOTES

1. As a result of the violent expulsion of some activists from Plaza del Sol, who had decided to encamp there during the night of May 15, 2011, after a demonstration organized by different antiausterity platforms and movements, including Democracia Real Ya, No les Votes, and Juventud Sin Futuro. This led to "some of the largest occupations of public squares since the country transitioned to democracy in the 1970s", especially when "similar encampments subsequently proliferated in the main squares of several Spanish cities and later extended, in acts of solidarity, worldwide" (Fuster Morell 2012, 387).
2. Self-defined as a "Chicago-based radical feminist dance troupe dedicated to challenging the white supremacist capitalist patriarchal empire one street dance party at a time". Movements that inspired their "practices of taking up public space for both celebratory and political purposes" range from Reclaim the Streets to the way "ACT Up used popular performance and culture to convey their messages to the public" (Pink Bloque 2005).
3. See [www.facebook.com/pink.bloc.paris/info](http://www.facebook.com/pink.bloc.paris/info).
4. Accurately defined by Jeffrey Paris as "not a group or a movement" but "a tactic open to anyone who seeks to escalate the social and economic costs of repressive governmental activity" (Paris 2003, 321).
5. As Judith Butler puts it: "An important set of histories might be told in which the increasing politicization of anger is at stake", including "traditions of cross-dressing, drag balls, street walking, butch-femme spectacles, the sliding between the march (New York City) and the Parade (San Francisco); *die-ins by Act Up, kiss-ins by Queer Nation*; drag performance benefits for AIDS [...] *the convergence of theatrical work with theatrical activism*, performing excessive lesbian sexuality and iconography that effectively counters de desexualization of the lesbian; *tactical interruptions of public forums by lesbian and gay activists in favour of drawing public attention and outrage to the failure of government funding of AIDS research and outreach*." (Butler 1993, 177–8, my emphasis) For a deeper understanding of the relations between ACT UP's theatrical queer tactics and the antiglobalization movement, see Shepard and Hayduk (2002).
6. "Contra la Europa del capital, placer anal."
7. For the purposes of this article, I will use "queer activism" when referring to non-institutionalized and assembly style collectives that struggle with hetero- and homonormativity in street-oriented politics. For a different approach to the term, within an interesting discussion of its shifting meanings, see Wikman (2007).
8. As a result of this critic, Harvey turned to a more normative sense of the concept of *counter-space*, that somehow rejected the concept of heterotopia on behalf of a "dialectical utopianism," that would allow us to theoretically deal with the production

- of those *counter-spaces* that confront the chaotic and dis-structured social spaces that neoliberalism offers to the inhabitants of the city.
9. In his words: "Naturally, too, it happens that a counter-space and a counter-project simulate existing space, parodying it and demonstrating its limitations, without for all that escaping its clutches." (Lefebvre 1991, 382)
  10. See Ralph Bolton's (1995) use of observant participation within queer activist spaces, and also Sullivan (2004), for an example of its use within the antiglobalization movement.
  11. One of the first objectives of Feminismos Sol, in this sense, was the adoption of gender inclusive language in each and every assembly, with special attention to the Sol General Assembly. This political-didactic work was, in fact, the first important impact that feminism had in the movement.
  12. And efficiently spread wide in social media by Mónica Redondo, from the queer collective Ciclobollos Dykes on Bikes (<http://ciclobollos.blogspot.es>), who is also a member of the Transmaricabollo Assembly.
  13. The name chosen by the people participating in the 15-M movement, in reference to Stéphane Hessel's essay *Indignez-vous!* (2010).
  14. For further information on how the activists of the Transmaricabollo Assembly define their own political identities, see Marquina (forthcoming), which includes interviews to many of them.
  15. <http://www.colectivohetaira.org/web/index.php>.
  16. See <http://queersagainststhecuts.wordpress.com/>.
  17. See <http://occupywallst.org/article/pride-season-occupy-wall-street-calls-trans-and-qu/>.
  18. See <https://www.facebook.com/LgbtBlok>.
  19. See video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4gjyJCBBDkU>.
  20. A movie that was, for its part, a satire of the "Marshall Plan," or European Recovery Program, that United States implemented to help certain European economies after the end of World War II.
  21. The assembly participated with the antifascist movement in the protest against the killing of Clément Méric (French antifascist and gay activist), and was invited to conduct a debate on the relation between fascism and homophobia at the annual conference of the Antifascist Committee of Madrid.
  22. A concept associated, among others, to the actions of the Pink Bloc in antiglobalization protests, see Amin and Thrift (2004).
  23. My translation.
  24. An approach that, as Lefebvre puts it, implies an important exegetic challenge: "The city can be read because it writes, because it was writing. However, it is not enough to examine this without recourse to the context. To write on this writing or language, to elaborate the *metalanguage* of the city is not to know the city and

the urban. The context, what is *below* the text to decipher (everyday life, immediate relations, the *unconscious* of the urban, what is little said and of which little less is written), hides itself in the inhabited spaces – sexual and family life – and rarely confronts itself, and what is *above* this urban text (institutions, ideologies) cannot be neglected in the deciphering.” (Lefebvre 1996, 108)

25. They coordinated the International Day of Action for Trans Depathologization in 2012 and 2013. See <http://octubretransmadrid2012.wordpress.com>.
26. Whose first statement denounces the municipal ordinance of Madrid and the new citizenship security law for criminalizing, at the same time, both social protest and the presence of sexual workers at certain public spaces, see <http://patiostraseros.wordpress.com>.
27. See <http://elcomandorosa.blogspot.com>.
28. See <http://brotbord.blogspot.com>.
29. See <http://www.colectivotowanda.es>.
30. Which is, at the moment, one of the largest social movements in Spain. The Platform received the European Parliament Citizens Prize in 2013 for its struggle for solutions to the housing crisis and against the abusive mortgage law (it has managed to stop over 1 000 evictions and provided housing to over 1 000; see <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>). As its former spokesperson, Ada Colau, has explained, the expansion of the Platform in the last years was made possible by the 15-M's movement and its intricate network of assemblies (see [http://www.dalealplay.com/videos/Colau-dice-que-15M-hizo-que-la-PAH-se-expandiera\\_482719](http://www.dalealplay.com/videos/Colau-dice-que-15M-hizo-que-la-PAH-se-expandiera_482719)).
31. For a comprehensive map that includes more than one hundred political movements, groups and initiatives directly influenced by the 15-M movement in Spain, see the ongoing project <http://autoconsulta.org/mutaciones.php>.
32. Like the proposed draft bill for the new "Ley Orgánica de Protección de la Seguridad Ciudadana," usually referred to as the "Gag Rule" by those who oppose it.
33. The prosecution of sex workers is in fact just a piece of the construction of a city where queer people run the risk of feeling increasingly constrained. The association, by the major of Badalona, of cruising practices with sex work, as an argument for its criminalization, is a good example of this link. The recent demonstration for the defense of cruising areas, and against police harassment of sex workers *and* cruisers in Barcelona, by Triangles Rosas, points in the right direction for the construction of the so much needed protest-oriented queer "counter-publics" (Halberstam 2005, 6).

## SAMMANFATTNING

15-M-rörelsen spelar en nyckelroll i formerandet av en kollektiv reaktion mot "ätstrammingspolitiken" i Spanien och det har, föga överraskande, varit i relation till den som queeraktivismen mer medvetet börjat artikulera sig för att konfrontera den nyliberala politik som orsakade den ekonomiska "krisen" från början. För att förstå queeraktivismens plats inom rörelsen, gör jag en inledande översikt över den rumslighetspolitik som präglade tältlägret under dess tidiga faser. Med detta som utgångspunkt undersöker jag hur queeraktivismen, och i synnerhet aktivismen hos gruppen Asamblea Transmari-cabollo de Sol, förhåller sig till rörelsen i dess helhet och till andra grupper, hur den artikulerar sin diskurs, hur den använder performanser och jag redogör också för några av gruppens viktigare aktioner, för att förstå och understryka betydelsen av queerandet av samtida sociala rörelser.

**Keywords:** queer activism, 15-M movement, protest camp, street politics, public space