

ID 1380 | SOCIO-SPATIAL JUSTICE: THE SOCIAL STRUGGLE FOR THE ACCESS TO BASIC RIGHTS SUCH AS HOUSING OR SUPPLIES IN SPAIN

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ABSTRACT: About one million and a half families live in Spain in self-built housing with an informal access to the supplies, to which more than 700,000 families have been added after being evicted from their homes after the crash of the real estate market in 2008. The response of Spanish local communities has been the emergence of a networked social movement called Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH; the Spanish Mortgage Victims Group) that aims at building a sustainable future by claiming the right to housing and other rights like electricity supplies. This networked movement has been fueled by its ability to create a hybrid space between communication networks and occupied urban space in which face-to-face assemblies and protests take place. The modes to operate of the PAH have been replicated by other movements, and their logics have contributed to transforming institutions and their political agenda. In this work we want to show the impact of the economic recession on the access for communities and families to the basics rights as housing or the electricity supplies, as well as the dissemination of the PAH's logics to other actors as the way to address the challenge. In this paper we are willing to unpack the concept of hybrid space, developed by Manuel Castells and informed by the dynamics of the PAH and to other movements emerged by imitation of the PAH. We will also analyze the impact of the struggles of these movements in the transformation of the political agendas made by the new institutional spaces such as in Madrid or Barcelona. All of this will be done by a close look of the PAH and other movements, via participation in assemblies and the observation of other activities such as their use of social networks as well as by interviewing other actors and observing the new policies proposed in the medias regarding the right to housing or to electricity supply. Finally, we will discuss how networked urban social movements as PAH have the ability to create spaces of citizenship that challenge the taken-for-granted principles of capitalism, such as the powerful discourse about the primacy of property rights over the right to housing.

1 INTRODUCTION

According to Alguacil et al. (2013), it is estimated that 30,000 homeless live in Spain and one million and a half families inhabit in sub-standard housing. In addition to these situations, more than 700.000 foreclosures have been initiated since the financial crisis outbreak in 2008¹.

According to Alguacil et al. (2013:188) "there has been an abdication of the public responsibility regarding accessible housing by all the societal sectors, entrusting speculative markets for the satisfaction of the housing accessibility". The housing exclusion problem in Spain continues being a problem of lack of political will² to guarantee the right to housing, which is included in the Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution³.

In this context of absence of effective and comprehensive policies and practices implemented by public administrations, people unable to make effective their right to housing and their supporters have mobilized to generate alternatives that respond to the housing emergency in Spain.

¹ Source: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/2017/01/26/el-tjue-vuelve-a-dar-la-razon-a-la-pah-abre-la-puerta-a-exigir-la-nulidad-de-todos-los-procedimientos-de-ejecucion-hipotecaria-y-los-desahucios-desde-1995/> Last access: April 19, 2017.

² "We all know that the obstacles to those solutions are not technical but political. Political will is needed to address certain economic interests. No more "(Colau & Alemany, 2013: 29).

³ The Article 47 of the Spanish Constitution, expresses that: "All Spaniards have the right to a decent and adequate housing. The public authorities shall promote the necessary conditions and establish the appropriate standards to make this right effective, regulating the use of land in accordance with the general interest to prevent the speculation. The community will participate in the benefits accruing from the town-planning policies."

One response from the Spanish local communities has been the emergence of a networked anti-eviction social movement known as PAH, the Spanish Mortgage Victims Group (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca), to build a more sustainable future through the right to housing. Originally born in Barcelona in 2009, the PAH has successfully spread to over 160 cities and stopped 2045 evictions throughout the country (April 2017). The PAH social movement supports householders in their negotiations with banks to prevent evictions, and has succeeded in negotiating thousands of “payment by account”, restructuring of debts, and other solutions improving the conditions of the mortgage payers. The negotiations with the banks are always driven by the householder, advised by other mortgage victims within the PAH, which has resulted in the improvement of the financial literacy of mortgage payers, and hence in their empowerment. When negotiations do not succeed, PAH activists block the evictions, gathering people together by efficient use of social networks. Moreover, PAH provides help and shelter for evicted families, arranges for over 2500 people to rent some of the vacated houses for an affordable price (called the PAH social housing project). The PAH has also led a campaign to change the eviction laws and has succeeded in presenting a popular legislative initiative (ILP) with over 1.5 million signatures. In only four years (2009-2013) the PAH gained the trust of Spanish citizens, as 86% of Spanish citizens claim to share the demands made by this movement (Metroscopia/El Pais, 26/03/2013). This support has served to propose between 2015 and 2017 two new housing laws in Barcelona and Madrid.

This paper examines the ability of the PAH social movement to influence other movements and to regain the right to housing and prompt social and institutional change in Spain in the aftermath of the economic crisis. In the paper, the method followed for the research is presented firstly (Section 2). Secondly, we unfold the main factors that have triggered to this situation: the Spanish property model and the explosion of the housing bubble (Section 3), then we show how the PAH operates and influences other movements, and how these logics have contributed to transforming institutions and the political agenda (Section 4 and 5). Finally, conclusions are drawn (Section 6), showing how the actions and regulatory mechanisms promoted by government institutions in Spain have been characterized by the promotion of housing as a speculative asset serving the interests of the real estate sector, and not as a right of the majority of the society, and how the social network movements organized and with clear goals can fight to transform reality.

2 METHOD

This paper shows the social struggle aiming at making effective the right to housing (Harvey, 2012) and to basic supplies (water, energy, etc.) in Spain, through the analysis of different actions and mechanisms of regulation promoted by different actors that constitute blocks of power and counterpower (Foucault, 1998), as well as the role that hybrid space plays in that struggle (Castells, 2009 , 2012).

The research has been carried out using the case study method (Yin, 1994). Firstly, we analysed the main factors that have led to the current situation of housing emergency in Spain, and more specifically the influence of the Spanish property model and the explosion of the housing bubble in this situation (Section 3). Secondly, we studied how social network movements as PAH operate, that is: what their objectives are, what actions they carry out, with what resources they count and what their achievements are, as well as their capacity to transform reality and to be replicated by other movements (Sections 4 and 5).

Data collection and analysis comprised four stages: immersion (description); systematic data collection (classification); data processing (making connections); and drawing conclusions (producing and account) (Frediani, 2007). All of this will be done firstly by a close look of the PAH and another movement called Assembly of dignified housing for all people (ApT), via participation in assemblies and other activities during the last years, and by the observation of their use of social networks as well as by interviewing other actors and observing the news in the media regarding the right to housing or to electricity supply. Data also comes from texts, photos, and films produced by both social networks movements (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube, and websites)¹.

Our research strategy was pragmatic in that we combined methods (Silverman, 1993) in order to understand the struggle for the right to housing in Spain, and more specifically the actors involved (in particular, government institutions and social movements) and actions implemented as well as the

¹ Sources as: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/> or <http://viviendadignatodos.blogspot.com.es/>

regulatory mechanisms imposed or promoted by each of them (Foucault, 1998). It is also pragmatic in that it is neither purely inductive nor purely deductive, but follows patterns of creative abduction (Schurz, 2008). Inspired by Strauss and Corbin (1990), our data collection, coding, and categorizing involved iterative moves between data sorting, coding, probing, and collecting until we could reconstruct the story of the struggle for the right to housing in Spain.

3 THE MAIN FACTORS THAT HAVE TRIGGERED TO THIS SITUATION: THE SPANISH PROPERTY MODEL AND THE EXPLOSION OF THE HOUSING BUBBLE

The situation of housing emergency that exists today in Spain is based on the implementation and development of a finance-property model that has its origin in the dictatorial regime of General Franco, which has persisted even with the current democratic constitution and remains an anomaly among the main members of the European Union. This model is characterized by:

The housing construction, almost exclusively based on the private property regime for those who can pay it at market price. In 1950, 90% of the Spanish population was living in the largest cities, as for example Madrid or Barcelona, where most of the housing was offered for rental. However, housing for rental currently represent only the 13.5% of the housing while the 78.9% are private properties inhabited by their owners¹. The changing model has its origin in the last decade of the Spanish dictatorship, which began to consider the property as a mechanism of social control. The Prime Minister of the Housing Ministry said in 1958: "The man, when is homeless, takes over the street ... We want a nation of homeowners, not proletarians" (José Luis Arrese quoted by Colau & Alemany, 2012:34). The credit flow by the end of the XXth century was the final input to this process.

This change has been driven by policies based on the tax relief for the purchase of new properties but not for the rental², the restrictions on the property rental market³, or by promoting the social housing construction destined to private ownership, and more specifically for households with an average income between 2,900 and 3,900 € / month, decreasing the production of social housing units destined to renting almost to extinction. While social rent housing represents between 20 and 30% of the housing in the European Unión, less than 2% is destined to social rental in Spain. Since 2000, the development of social housing has not achieved the 0.4%⁴.

The understanding of the housing and infrastructure construction as an investment based in speculation, rather than assets linked to the people needs. The model has encouraged an exponential growth of housing production that responds to speculation, instead of satisfying the real housing demand. It is estimated that 6.6 million homes (ODESC, 2013) were built in Spain between 1997 and 2007, maintaining the percentage of empty housing close to 13%⁵.

Deregulation of the land, the housing market and the credit. Urban development has focused on the application of the appropriate law for the mass production of housing and for the implementation of infrastructure. This process has culminated with a territorial law known as the "all building land", although

¹ Sources: Naredo 2012 and population and housing census 2011. Source: <http://www.ine.es/prensa/np824.pdf>. Last access: July 9, 2014.

² The average rental market in the EU-27 was 29.3% in 2010, while it did not reach the 17% in Spain. Source: Housing Statistics in the European Union, 2010 Income and Living Conditions. Eurostat.

³ The market has been characterized by a shortage of rental units, the absence of a minimum conditions for renting, the imposition of conditions difficult to fulfil (exorbitant prices, guarantees, open-ended contracts, etc.), discrimination for immigrants, indiscriminate increases of the rent every five years allowed by the law of urban tenants contracts, etc., "and in addition to all this, the proliferation of messages by the institutional authorities and the banking system about the rent as a form for wasting savings." (ODESC, 2013: 11).

⁴ Sources: data provided by The Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Housing and the INE.

⁵ Source: <http://www.ine.es/prensa/np775.pdf>. Last access: July 9, 2014. According to the president of Provivienda, 2 of every 5 empty houses were built less than 10 years ago.

not only this law has failed to achieve the decrease of the housing prices, but also it has caused the prices to be tripled¹.

The over-indebtedness became the “only way” for most of the families to effect their right to housing. In the period (1997-2007) the population has been forced to go into debt “beyond the reasonable limits” which granted loans up to 120% above the appraised value. In this way, the debt amount turned from the 55% of the household disposable income, up to the 130% (from € 50,786 to € 149,007), and the average time for a mortgage has increased from 19 to 28 years, with the implications that all of this has on the living. (Colau & Alemany, 2012)

The use of the urban planning as a tool for the production of private property. The economic and financial efforts were aimed to develop new urban areas, leaving two main consequences: the progressive abandon of the city centres and urban sprawl; both unsustainable.

Generalize and systematize the corruption in the financial, political and real estate sectors. The implementation of the speculative model has been possible thanks to the close relationship between the housing-construction sector, the financial banking and the political power. The law of “all building land” decentralizes the responsibility on urban planning², promoting speculation and corruption, with democratic consequences for the traditional parties. “The list of cases where local authorities, construction companies and real estate companies work together are so common around the territory that could even be the subject of a monograph” (Alguacil et al.2013: 18). It is frequent to see operations of reclassification of parks and green areas in order to allow building in them, the allocation of public works with substantial cost overruns, the construction of “ghost” airports and neighbourhoods, etc.

All this has revealed that Spain had a structural problem of denial of access to the right to housing that was contemporary to the “real estate boom”, both prior to the financial crisis. By the end of the 2006, following to a visit to Spain, the UN Special Rapporteur for the Right to Housing issued a report pointing out that the main housing problems in Spain were caused by the poor management of the public administration³. The report denounced the commercialization of the social housing programs. In the same line, the FEANSA 2008 report highlighted that 20% of the Spanish population was being excluded from the housing market.

In this context, the outbreak of the international financial crisis had hit Spain with devastating consequences. The rise of the interest rates and the interruption in the international credit flow, the construction sector reached the 70% of all the credit (ODESC, 2013), affected seriously to the real estate business, foundation of the “Spanish miracle”. This sector accounted for up to the 30% of the GDP and 13% of the employment rate (Colau & Alemany (2012).

In a context of widespread indebtedness, the rise of unemployment, from 8% in 2007 to the 26.6% in 2013, has led to an increase in the difficulties of owners to comply with housing payments: “From 2008 until the present, the impossibility of paying the rent or mortgage has become a major issue for families” (ODESC, 2013: 13). Since 2008, over 700,000 foreclosures have left hundreds of thousands families on the street with a debt for life, condemning them to a social exclusion life.

However, the Achilles heel of the Spanish economy is not the default of the families, but of the real estate companies, the latter estimated to be 4 times higher than that of the families (a 21% of the housing debt corresponds to the families default and in a 79% to the real estate companies). A lot of money has been invested in “toxic assets” which are hard to place again in the market. However, the real estate companies are allowed mortgage releases while this possibility is forbidden for the families (Colau & Alemany, 2012 , 2013).

¹ Since the adoption of the law in 1998 and until the year 2006, the housing prices have been increased by 150%. In this period, the rate of land prices grew 8.7 times more than the CPI, and the construction price have been increased by 2.3 times.

² “With only 15% of government revenues, local governments were facing a very high percentage of public services. In times of massive construction, the differential between income and public spending was covered by urban planning resources. These incomes were considered as an ordinary income when in fact they were extraordinary. For that reason no provisions were made for a subsequent cycle or crisis” (Burón, 2012: 7). The real estate tax revenue reached in Madrid 50% of the city budget and in Valencia up to 60%. Source: Colau & Alemany (2012).

³ Source: A/HRC/7/16/Add.2, February 7, 2008.

After the outbreak of the financial crisis, the international "markets" also required the repayment of debts, by imposing the socialization of the losses and the implementation of "austerity" measures that have supposed the contraction of the public funds to sectors such as health and public education, social aids, etc., making the situation of individuals and families in risk of exclusion even tougher.

In this context, until February 2009, the public administrations continued denying vehemently the problems of paying the mortgage by the Spanish families. In this way the public administrations have continued largely directing their efforts to protect the interests of the large landowners rather than to ensure citizens' right to housing: "The goal declared for the Housing Plan was the solution of the problems of the developers, builders and financial institutions, instead of solving the housing problems of the population" (Alguacil et al, 2013:174). A bleeding example of this was the sale, in 2014 at a critical time of housing emergency, of 40% of the scarce stock of social housing for rental to investment funds (Vulture Funds) for a price 30% below the market value and without any requirement for the new "landlords" to rent their properties as social housing¹. Something that could be done by the municipal government of Madrid because the competences on housing policies are decentralized.

As Colau and Alemany explain, more than a financial crisis, we are facing a "scam circumscribed and protected by law" (Colau & Alemany, 2012:69) with devastating consequences for most of the population, with a poverty risk rate that has reached 20.4%². As the ATD Fourth World Movement said, it seems that "poverty is part of the system and has become a business"³. The fact that over 16% of the population are denied their right to an adequate housing⁴, while there are over 3.4 million empty homes⁵, is at least "a clear example of the failure of the liberal market, both in social and economic terms." (Alguacil et al 2013: 24). This unethical question urged to seek for alternative models.

As it has been explained, the Spanish public administrations have been characterized by the denial of the emergency housing status, generating a feel of guilt in the affected persons, by the lack of significant programs to promote effective access to an adequate housing, and by the application of social aid policies in absence of social housing policies.

Regarding the demands from families living in shelters: the direct expenditure for the public housing development has only accounted the 0.2% of GDP (Alguacil et al., 2013); furthermore, social housing programs have waned, representing a mere 2% of the global housing stock built in the last 35 years⁶. There are only 240,000 homes for satisfying the demand of more than 2 million people who live in inadequate housing.

Regarding the demands from People Affected by Mortgages (PAH): besides ignoring their situation, a new law for foreclosures was issued in 2007 and, although it was declared illegal by the Court of Justice of the European Union⁷, it has been implemented affecting more than 700,000 families, while more than 3.9 million homes remain uninhabited in Spain. The affected by mortgages prepared and presented a People's Legislative Initiative (ILP), but its presentation to the Congress found many obstacles and supporters of that process were almost criminalized (Colau & Alemany, 2013).

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¹ Source: Publico.es, July 04, 2015 Source: <http://blogs.publico.es/asaltar-los-suelos/2014/05/07/fondos-buitres-ana-botella-y-la-vivienda-publica-en-madrid/>. Accessed July 23, 2014.

² Source: <http://www.ine.es/prensa/np844.pdf>.

³ Source: Compromisos comunes (2012-2017): <http://atdcuartomundo.es/que-hacemos/>.

⁴ It is estimated that around 7.4 million people are denied somehow their right to housing in Spain. 0.4% would correspond to the homeless (30,000 people); a 28.1% living in inadequate housing conditions (more than 2 million people living in slums most of them gypsy and immigrant populations); a 18.4% have suffered or are in foreclosure process (over 1.3 million), and around the 53% are young people in housing demand (3.9 million young people living at home with their parents).

⁵ Source: Census of Population and Housing (2011) in Spain,

⁶ See table in Alguacil et al. (2013:46), constructed from data from the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry for Housing and INE.

⁷ Source: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/2013/03/14/europa-declara-ilegal-la-ley-espanola-de-los-desahucios/>

In this context of absence of effective and comprehensive policies and practices implemented by public administrations, people unable to make effective their right to housing and their supporters have mobilized to generate alternatives that respond to the housing emergency in Spain.

4 THE SPANISH MORTGAGE VICTIMS GROUP SOCIAL MOVEMENT

The PAH was established in 2009 in order to respond to the tragedy experienced by 700,000 families affected by foreclosure processes. It is driven by people linked to the fight for the right to housing, but most participants are people affected by foreclosure processes.

The PAH aims to reverse a model that has had devastating consequences in areas such as: the economic, environmental, political and social affairs, by a strong social mobilization. But in a short term the PAH must give specific and immediate solutions to a population threaten by the financial institutions, abandoned by the administration, and feeling guilty, anxious and depressed.

The first challenge for the PAH was to create a space of trust and mutual support where those being affected could speak and be heard, trying to release the feelings of guilt and to generate an empowerment process. The second challenge was to transform a problem perceived as individual by the affected into a collective problem with structural causes; and the third was to promote collective actions that could transform the reality and turn the impossible into possible.

To achieve its objectives, the PAH implements the following actions:

- The assemblies as a key instrument to create a space of trust that can be established as a mutual support network, in which those affected develop the necessary knowledge and skills to advice other families; a space where victims become fearless, learn to self-organize to act collectively, and to unleash the creative power of anger that turns into hope (Castells, 2009, 2012), in which those affected become active subjects of the change (Colau & Alemany, 2012, 2013) as the preamble of social change.
- Public denounce and campaigns. The collective advice is accompanied by other actions as public denunciation of the situation faced by those affected, so as to contribute to explain the causes of the problem, while responding to the urgent needs of those affected. The following campaigns are carried out:
 - o "This bank lies, scams and kicks out people from their home": The campaign is about pointing out the banks as direct responsible of the population's suffering. Contribute to balance the unequal negotiation and to manage the anger and helplessness of the people affected; as they lose their fear "to face Goliath"
 - o The retroactive "deed in lieu of foreclosure": an urgent regulation is demanded by the affected by mortgages. Basically, this consists of returning the property to the bank as a sufficient condition to pay the mortgage debt. The deed in lieu of foreclosure is considered as a minimum regulation that would permit the families to "start again", this proposal has and it has an extensive social support.
 - o The stop evictions: in a context of lack of solutions by the administration, an unfair regulatory framework¹ and a systematic violation of the affected's rights, the campaign "Stop Evictions" has become the best way to prevent evictions through demonstrations in situ. So far the PAH has paralysed 2045 evictions².

¹ The massive foreclosures and evictions for economic reasons of the Spanish government violate, inter alia, Articles 24 (about the effective judicial protection) and 47 (the right to housing) of the Spanish Constitution; Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), ratified by the Spanish government, and more specifically the General Comments of the UN Committee DESC Numbers 3 (obligations of the member states), 4 (the right to housing) and 7 (prevention of forced evictions)" (Colau & Alemany, 2012: 124).

² Source: <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/> Last access: April 17, 2017.

- o PAH Social Work: without a stock of social housing, in a context where thousands of families were evicted, seeing how financial institutions kept collecting empty properties for speculation proposes results from an intolerable violence. The objective of the campaign "PAH Social Work " is threefold: firstly, it aims to recover the social function of the empty property, particularly those that are held by financial institutions result of foreclosures, to avoid the homelessness. Secondly, it exacerbates the pressure on financial institutions to accept the deed in lieu of foreclosure. And thirdly, it enforces the public administrations to adopt once and for all the necessary regulations to guarantee the right to housing. The PAH has managed the relocation of 2500 people¹. In addition, the pressures of the PAH have been able to force financial institutions such as the SAREB to give housing to the municipalities to offer them to the families at affordable rental prices.
- o The motions to the municipalities: in December 2010, the PAH organized a specific campaign targeting the municipalities. They proposed the creation of hybrid committees (with participation of the administration, PAH, neighbourhood associations, etc.), in order to solve and prevent the evictions, to ensure the resettlement and to alleviate the situation of those affected until the law proposal is approved. They also demanded, among other things, that social workers do not threaten the affected by mortgages with the loss of their children's custody, make a census of empty properties and persecute the anti-social use of properties, the suspension of the evictions and the cancellation of the illegitimate debts. Currently, more than 400 municipalities are supporting the deeds in lieu of foreclosure for the affected by mortgages, some of them governed by the strongest political parties, which reveal contradictions inside the parties (Colau & Alemany, 2013).
- o The Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP): in order to persuade the Spanish Parliament to apply the deed in lieu of foreclosure retroactively, the stop eviction and the promotion of the stock of social housing for rental, a Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP) was presented. For the PAH, a main aspect of this campaign was the social and political process. The ILP was a tool to visualize the problem, to make alliances and collaborations with associations and other groups, and to empathize with citizens. After two years of struggle, in February 2013 the Congress of Deputies admitted the processing of the ILP; however, a few months later the government approved the new law 1/2013 which did not include the deed in lieu of foreclosure, legalized unfair terms in mortgages and kept the forced evictions. In January 2017, the European Court of Justice fails once again in favour of the PAH. This judicial ruling opens the door to demanding the nullity of all foreclosure proceedings and evictions since 1995².
- o The PAH Housing Law: over almost 8 years, the actions of the PAH have shown that the vulnerability of the right to housing in Spain has been based on unfair laws that have been declared illegal by the European Court of Justice. "Far from solving the situation of the families, the Congress has been used to carry out measures to protect the banking and the electric, violating the Right to Housing collected in article 47 of the Spanish Constitution. It is time for the citizens' demands to finally come to Congress and be approved so that no family will ever live in the street".³

The PAH Housing Law arises in order to challenge the Government and force them to position themselves publicly in favor of citizenship and to legislate to protect and enforce Human Rights, and in particular the right to the housing and to the basic supplies. The PAH Housing Law develop measures to make effective the deed in lieu of foreclosure, the regulation of the rental market to make it affordable and stable, to stop the evictions, to promote a public park of social housing for which payments do not exceed the 30% of the families income, and finally the guarantee of basic supplies as water, electricity and gas by adjusting the prices according to the income of the families.

¹ Source: <http://afectadosporlahipototeca.com/> Last access: April 17, 2017.

² Source <http://afectadosporlahipototeca.com/2017/01/26/el-tjue-vuelve-a-dar-la-razon-a-la-pah-abre-la-puerta-a-exigir-la-nullidad-de-todos-los-procedimientos-de-ejecucion-hipotecaria-y-los-desahucios-desde-1995/> Last access: April 17, 2017.

³ Source: <http://las5delapah.com/ley-vivienda-pah/> Last access: April 17, 2017.

For all this actions, the affected have been the PAH's main resource, but they have also been supported for many professionals (lawyers, urban planners, journalists, sociologists, etc.) that have been collaborate for free; and some research centres such as the DESC Observatory, social organizations, neighbourhood associations and 15-M assemblies. Furthermore, the PAH has promoted the networking with all the institutions who want to listen and support their efforts, such as unions, governments or political parties.

In relation to their economic resources, the PAH has offered its services for free, and its economic support have been based in donations from organizations and individuals. The PAH does not receive subsidies, grants, or any other funding. This approach is vital for the PAH, allowing to continue implementing their actions with complete independence from all the institutions.

The main achievement of PAH has been to show that reality is transformable "if we got organized and we kept on course, we could change things". (Colau & Alemany, 2013: 42).

- The PAH have succeeded to turn an individual problem in a collective problem. Those affected become active subjects of a change and join with others to perform useful actions and to make visible the structural causes of the problem. In this way, an alternative discourse is constructed apart from the official view. "This is not a crisis, it's a scam" (Colau & Alemany, 2013: 36) helping to change the collective perception.
- The PAH has accumulated victories and it has shown that the reality may be transformed. Hundreds of deeds in lieu of foreclosure have succeeded, and there have been thousands of evictions paralysed and families rehoused. It has achieved the administrations to be willing to act and financial institutions to negotiate.
- The PAH has gained legitimacy. Using the social networks and the media to spread their struggle; it had achieved to empathize with the majority's feelings "it has achieved the most difficult: to articulate a demand recognized by the 90% of the population" (Colau & Alemany, 2013: 94). It promotes dialogue and organizes and coordinates a network of professionals, social organizations, unions, etc., to fight for the right to housing. It has achieved to make all citizens aware and gain legitimacy "facing the discredit of rigid and coward institutions. The platforms have become a stable and consolidated reference." (Colau & Alemany, 2013: 56).
- The PAH had changed the politic agenda. In 2013, the ILP was accepted for processing; moreover, in 2014, their demands were incorporated as essential principles in the programs of the newly emerged political formations as Podemos, and in one way or another the housing exclusion becomes a crucial issue in the political program of other parties. Finally after 8 years of struggle, in 2017, the PAH has succeeded in having the European Court of Justice pronounce in its favor, which opens the door to demand the nullity of all foreclosure proceedings and the evictions carried out in Spain since 1995.

The PAH was born with the goal of being replicable both in their actions and in their ways of organizing. Currently it has over 214 nodes spread throughout the Spanish territory. The PAH has also become an international reference. In 2012, for example, an eviction was paralysed in Berlin, replicating the practices of the PAH. In 2014 the PAH proposals has led a "Grundtvig" project which aims to create a European school for the right to housing.

We can conclude by stating that PAH is highly replicable in a context of strong violation of the right to housing where a large part of the society is affected or empathizes with the victims and in a political context of a strong lost of trust in institutions unwilling to defend the rights of those they should represent.

5 A NEW SPANISH SOCIAL MOVEMENT CALLED: "HOUSING ASSEMBLY FOR ALL PEOPLE"

The Housing Assembly for All People was born in early 2015 and is promoted by the international movement against poverty ATD Fourth World, aiming to promote that those historically excluded from the right to housing such as people living in the streets, people occupying housing, slums dwellers, etc., can join the struggle led by those affected by Mortgage (PAH).

As the PAH in the long term, it seeks a change in the model, and in particular of those policies and mechanisms that generate injustice, of which the historically excluded are witnesses and experts. The Assembly joins the social mobilization of the PAH and adopts some of its logics as the creation of a hybrid space between communication networks and occupied urban space in which face-to-face assemblies and protests take place. In a short term, the Assembly must give specific and immediate support to a population historically abandoned, criminalized and persecuted by government institutions.

As the PAH, its main challenges were: to create a space of trust and mutual support where those affected could speak and be heard, trying to release the feelings of guilt and to generate an empowerment process; to transform a problem perceived as individual by the affected into a collective problem with structural causes; and to promote collective actions that could transform the reality and turn the impossible into possible. But the starting point was very different. The affected belong to social groups historically excluded and socially stigmatized which doubles the difficulty of their fight since, on the one hand, the mobilization of those affected will be more difficult, and on the other hand, the possibility of obtaining the support of the majority of the society that they do not see them or do not empathize with their struggles. Therefore, the Assembly intends, as a specific goal, to make visible the struggle of those living in extreme poverty, a struggle that has been witnessed for years by the ATD Fourth World movement (promoter of the Assembly), which has allowed to put this experience into dialogue with the current reality.

The Assembly focuses and develops its work in the municipality of Madrid, and, to achieve its objectives, the Assembly implements the following actions:

It establishes an assembly of affected and those who support them, in order to generate a space of trust in which those affected can share their struggles and seek alternatives for those living in situations of historical housing exclusion.

- The Assembly provides support and visibility to their struggles of the affected. The Assembly provides support to people in a situation of housing exclusion that approaching it and since two years ago it has been present in a slum core of the periphery of Madrid. In both cases the support has consisted in generating spaces of trust and mutual help, informing those affected of their rights, and giving visibility to their struggles through articles in the media and social networks as blogs, Facebook, etc. In short, it make sure that those affected are heard by those who decide on the problems that affect them, such as the legalization of a situation on a floor, or the development of a real-time process, etc.
- The Assembly has produced and disseminated a document called "the 5 commitments and guarantees". Work has been carried out on the analysis and production of key proposals to guarantee the right to housing to the most vulnerable people, including the proposals in this document. Later, this document has been presented by the affected and those who support them to the different political parties at both the local and regional level in Madrid, and has been presented to the Social Housing Agency (AVS), responsible of the processes of relocation and the award of social emergency housing.
- The Assembly is contributing to modify the laws and regulations that have excluded those affected historically. Together with the PAH, the Assembly has participated in the modification of the regulations of the AVS of the community of Madrid in order that the criteria for accessing social housing do not prevent historically excluded families from having the possibility to apply. As an example, in the regulation under review, a person occupying a house could not apply for a social housing. The Assembly is also currently participating in the campaign of the new housing law of the community of Madrid promoted by the PAH.

For all of this actions, the affected have been the main resource of the Assembly, but they have also been supported for many professionals (lawyers, urban planners, journalists, sociologists, etc.) ; and some researchers, other social organizations as the PAH. Furthermore, the Assembly has promoted the networking with all the institutions who want to listen and support their efforts, such as unions, governments or political parties.

In relation to their economic resources, the Assembly has offered its services for free, and its economic support have been based in donations from organizations and individuals. the Assembly does not receive

subsidies, grants, or any other funding. This approach is vital for the Assembly, allowing to continue implementing their actions with complete independence from all the institutions.

The main achievement of the Assembly has been to make visible the reality of historically excluded families, has proved that the combat against the extreme housing exclusion has to take into account the personal capabilities and resources of those living such situations and those supporting them. The struggle of the Assembly have been recognized by other housing movements in Spain, such as PAH. In addition, as the PAH, the Assembly has contributed to show that reality is transformable:

- The Assembly have succeeded to turn an individual problem in a collective problem. Those affected become active subjects of change and join others to perform useful actions and to make visible the structural causes of the problem, helping with its fight to change the collective perception.
- The Assembly has made it possible to create links between the historically excluded and other actors. In the first place, it has contributed to the fact that historically excluded families participate in a broader collective struggle in collaboration with other social movements such as the PAH. And secondly, it has contributed to make that the affected may be heard by technicians and decision makers responsible for housing regulations and policies that impact on them. And sometimes, as in the case of the neighbourhood of the Sabinas, they have succeeded to disseminated their claims by the media, which has forced local institutions to position themselves in favour of their demands.
- The Assembly contribute to transform the society and to modify the regulatory mechanisms that generate housing exclusion. The Assembly contribute to transform the society from the belief that "the real changes and future options need an active solidarity between those who have lived in very difficult circumstances and those who commit with them"¹. The Assembly has also contributed to modify the regulatory mechanisms that generate housing exclusion through their participation in both the campaign of the new housing law in Madrid as well as in the modification of housing regulations of the AVS.

We can conclude by stating that the main challenge for the Assembly is to mobilize the people affected, with the difficulty and risks that this entails for the people and communities that have been historically excluded, and to make the social majorities support the struggles of these for becoming part of the community, like the others, and that their rights become effective.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This paper shows the struggle to realize the right to housing (Lefebvre 1968; Harvey, 2012) and to basic supplies (water, energy, etc.) in Spain, through the analysis of the different actions and mechanisms of regulation promoted by different actors that constitute blocks of power and counterpower, that is, blocks with capacity to transform the reality, to produce new meaning and to exercise the power (Foucault, 1998). The article also shows the role that hybrid space plays in that struggle (Castells, 2009, 2012; Álvarez et al., 2015).

The article presents (Section 3) how the actions and regulatory mechanisms promoted by government institutions have been characterized by the promotion of housing as a speculative asset, serving the interests of the real estate sector and not as a right of the majority of the society.

Housing emergency resulting from the blatant violation of right in Spain has led civil society (Sections 4 and 5) to organize themselves to fight to make their rights effective. First, the PAH (a networked social movement) has succeeded in changing the collective imagination. Their actions (stopping of evictions, occupation of empty housing, ILP) have contributed to remove feelings of guilt in the families affected, and to point out to real generators of the problem. They have shown a lack of political will to tackle the challenge, and have shown that "¡Yes, they can! But they do not want to". Their struggle gained legitimacy and the support of a large majority of Spanish civil society, to the point of calling into question the legality

¹ Source: "Decent housing, a right for everyone." Document drafted by ATD Fourth World, Spain.

of the current regulatory mechanisms (Spanish mortgage law) that perpetuates the problem. After 8 years of struggle, in 2017, the PAH has succeeded in having the European Court of Justice pronounce in its favour, which opens the door to demand the nullity of all foreclosure proceedings and the evictions carried out in Spain since 1995. In summary, they have contributed to transforming institutions and their political agenda.

The PAH was born with the goal of being replicable both in their actions and in their ways of organizing. This has made possible the emergence of other groups such as The Assembly (Section 5), which takes advantage of the change in the collective imagination achieved thanks to the actions of the PAH to include in this struggle the families historically excluded from the right to housing.

This networked movements has been fueled by their ability to create a hybrid space between communication networks and occupied urban space in which face-to-face assemblies and protests take place. Finally, they have shown that a civil society organized and with clear goals can transform the reality and question principles were considered indisputable until now, such as the primacy of property rights over the right to housing.

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