A Convergence of Anti-Neoliberal Movements in Spain: Squatting, Housing and the M15 Movements

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* Sol Camp as the source of identity and self-organisation of the M15 movement

* The convergence of the M15M and the squatting movement: new wave of practices and increasing legitimation

* The convergence of squatters & the M15 with the pro-housing movement: autonomy, solidarity and direct action facing evictions
Introduction

- SQUATTING tends to remain a RADICAL GESTURE, a movement in the margins, a temporary solution to housing needs, a face to face challenge to private property and to the unjust distribution of spatial resources, an experiment of COLLECTIVE AUTONOMY...

- It is verified that squatting, at least in Europe, MAY LAST FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME under different economic stages (crisis or boom) and regardless different legal regulations (tolerance or repression), although is subject to the influence of external factors so IT MAY VARY in volume and political strength...

- The main contribution of squatting and other autonomous urban movements is to provide practical experiences and radical approaches to wider ANTI-CAPITALIST movements and initiatives, in case they explode at any moment...
Introduction

- SQUATTING is a limited political experience in case it remains ISOLATED from other social struggles, from the dwellers of the areas where squats are located, from the recognition of the society at large, and from any local or trans-national network of squats.

- Squatting may differs either in terms of HOUSING purposes or in the promotion of SOCIAL CENTRES. Each may involve different social groups, alliances, places and tactics. However both types of squatting may be mutually connected and help each other.

- The thread of an immediate or future eviction of squatted buildings makes them TEMPORARY experiences of living apart or against the dominant system, in a similar flexible organisation of social time under post-fordist and neo-liberal capitalism.
SQUATTING is a viable ALTERNATIVE FORM OF TENANCY different from ownership, renting or authorised permission to use, since it entails a collective way of "possession", self-managed and use a building (or piece of land). Long duration, expansion of initiatives and useful contributions to residents and activists are crucial to the LEGITIMATION of squatting, but this is not enough to persist: RESISTANCE to all kind of attacks and agreed, convenient and creative ways of INSTITUTIONALISATION may help to spread this residential alternative.

Lessons learned from the M15 movement onwards: COALITIONS and convergence with other social movements, real OPENNESS to a wide diversity of people, organised STRUCTURES for providing potential squatters with technical and legal skills, different and mutually respected Social Centres (squatted or not) WORKING TOGETHER...
Introduction

DEBT (expanded exploitation) erodes RIGHTS (limits to exploitation)

interrupts claims

SQUATTING AS A COLLECTIVE SPATIAL APPROPRIATION satisfies NEEDS (socially defined)
SQUATTING is an end (COLLECTIVE APPROPRIATION of space) and a means for living alternatives to capitalism in terms of:

1) taking over, autonomously, MATERIAL RESOURCES and REDISTRIBUTE them

2) gaining ACCESS to a place in the city, to be close to peers, to enjoy services and facilities which are spatially concentrated and unevenly located

3) having TIME to live with autonomy from market and State dependencies, to share and to cooperate, to participate politically, to build and use public goods and spaces
Rural & Suburban Squatting
Occasional Squatting of universities, workplaces, State institutions, lands...

New Social Movements:
- Migrants and Precarious Rights
- Free Culture, Queer, Hacktivism, Gardening
- Urb. Ecology, Biking, Housing Protests, Antifascism, Students against Neoliberalism, Independent Music and Arts, Zapatism
- Solidarity,

Squatting
Just for Living

Squatted Social Centres

Anarchists / Autonomous / Leftists (Political)
Counter-cultural (Entrepreneurial)
Conservational

Hidden / Poor Families (Deprivation)
Visible / Activists (Alternative Housing Strategy)

TACTICAL DISCONTINUOUS DISCONNECTED CLOSED

Non squatted S.C.

STRAATEGIC PERSISTENT NETWORKED OPEN

activists
participants
visitors
a squat is more than a place

- regular activists
  - hard core of the assembly
  - floating members of the assembly
- occasional activists
  - participants in the self-management of the squat
- participants in activities and visitors
- sympathisers
- background network of support

coalitions with other social movements organisations
Introduction

- The strength of SQUATTING lies on the evidence that it is MORE THAN A PLACE:
  - It is a POLITICAL ENGINE that calls people to meet, cooperate and self-organise
  - It promotes and creates a SOCIAL NETWORK OF POLITICAL TIES by including different types of people involved and a diversity of social groups who can make use of the space
  - It gives birth to an ANOMALOUS PLACE, a public and autonomous institution, a porous and open social space, a common sense of place, a spatial singularity which is permanently under construction
Sol Camp: source of M15 identity

SC pre-15M

- means (resource) and end (model)
- homology
- self-managed space
- accumulation of activist exchanges
- convergence with squatters

WG

M15 identity

SA

reconfigurations

PA

15M MOV.

- public spaces at the urban centre
- public spaces at the periphery

homology
direct disobedience
specific political impacts

acumulation of activist exchanges
convergence w/ pro-housing

PAH / SD
Squatting & M15 convergence

CS pre-15M // Madrid // Centro

Centros Sociales Okupados pre 15M
Centro Sociales Autogestionados pre 15M

13 CSOA
6 CSA
1 SOA
2 SA
Squatting & M15 convergence

Centros Sociales Okupados 15M
Viviendas Okupadas 15M

CS post-15M // Madrid // Centro

8 CSOA
4 VO
1 SOA

CSOA La Morada
CSOA 16.0
Corredera Baja
Hotel Madrid
Concepción Jerónima
CSOA Magerit
EL Asamblea Popular Lavapiés
Templo del Sol

CSA Salamanquesa
Espacio de Convergencia
Sebastián Elcano
Koala
Squatting & M15 convergence

Navalquejigo (El Escorial)
CSO La Fábrica II (Collado-Villalba)
CSO La Gotera (Leganés)
CSOA Eskuela Taller (Alcorcón)

Centros Sociales Okupados pre 15M

CS pre-15M //
Madrid // Periferia

6 CSOA
1 PO

ESOA El Dragón
CSOA La Gatonera
CSOA la Casika (Móstoles)
Squatting & M15 convergence

CS post-15M // Madrid // Periferia

Centros Sociales Okupados 15M
Centros Sociales Autogestionados 15M

10 CSOA
2 CSA
Pro-housing, squatting & M15M

Some access to the State and to elites: PLI, debt cancellation, etc.

Identity frame: SD & OKUP = anti-crisis and anti-speculative concrete measures

Increasing repression to the M15, but less to SD (100 evictions were avoided)

O15 - N20 - D5 2011

M12-M15 2012

AVM (OOK, OV, Al-GT-AP) + ACS

PAH's allies: PA, SCs & NA (FRAVM) plus some practices of squatting: 15O, HM, SEC, Corralas...

Increasing legitimacy of SD and public discontent with repression

Few responses from the State and elites to the PAH's demands (500 evictions were avoided)

S25 - N14 2012
Conclusions

- Sol Camp provided a hybrid and self-managed experience that gave birth to many decentralised groups and assemblies. The M15 identity was shaped there.

- The M15M and the squatting movement helped each other due to the original collaboration in the Camp, their similar horizontal and self-managed forms of organisation and the increasing favourable public opinion related to housing issues. A shift occurred when members of popular assemblies started to squat new Social Centres.

Conclusions

- In a second stage, the anti-foreclosures campaign gained legitimacy and effective capacity due to the increasing involvement of local assemblies and working groups of the M15 movement, squatters also included.

- Direct actions of civil disobedience, close connections to popular-local assemblies, access to State institutions and dramatic events (evictions, suicides, repression, etc.) contributed to increase the social and political impacts of the pro-housing movement (in alliance with the M15).

- There was a hybrid coalition between a formal organisation (PAH) and M15 working groups.