

SOCIAL INNOVATION AND SOCIAL ECONOMY: A NEW FRAMEWORK IN THE SPANISH HOUSING CONTEXT

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- 1. INTRODUCTION**
- 2. A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE HOUSING CRISIS UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL INNOVATION**
 - 2.1. The theoretical framework of Social Innovation from a communitarian, non-utilitarian point of view**
 - 2.2. Social innovation and social economy**
- 3. APPLICATION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THE SPANISH CONTEXT**
 - 3.1. The movements of struggle against evictions as the seeds of social innovation**
 - 3.2. Housing cooperatives as an innovative alternative in Spain?**
- 4. CONCLUSIONS**
- 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this paper is to offer a new theoretical framework to the Spanish housing studies. This article combines different traditions and different frameworks (social innovation, social economy), in order to position the crisis of evictions in Spain and the emergence of housing co-operatives in a new theoretical context.

In the first Section, we study the concept of social innovation, focused on a societal and non-utilitarian perspective. In the second Section the interconnections of social innovation and social economy are studied, joining the solid working tradition of Crises- Quebec (CRISES, *Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales*). In the third and fourth Sections the authors try to apply the social innovation and social economy framework to the Spanish housing context. Thus, in the third Section the Spanish movement against evictions (Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca), surged and organized by civil society, is analyzed as a germen of social innovation. In the last part of the paper, housing cooperatives are studied, as a possible way to change the main housing model of Spain.

KEY WORDS: social innovation, housing, social economy, housing cooperatives, evictions.

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the theoretical framework of Social Innovation is wide and a bit ambiguous (since it collects different meanings and perspectives), this paper tries to delimit it from a communitarian and non-utilitarian point of view. This perspective has been recently developed by a researchers' network (Moulaert, et.al. 2013), trying to honor this concept and offering a coherent methodological perspective on social innovation. This particular approach has deep interconnections with another theoretical framework: the Social Economy one.

In much policy and management discourse social innovation refers broadly to a “better” or “more effective” way of meeting social needs (better than traditional public sector), many times with philanthropic or market-reliant individualistic approaches. But the approach of social innovation that we present here means innovation in *social relations*, with a solid

communitarian or societal basis¹.

2. A NEW ANALYSIS OF THE HOUSING CRISIS UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

2.1. The theoretical framework of Social Innovation from a communitarian, non-utilitarian point of view

Social innovation is a concept which is in fashion, although it is often construed as an ambiguous term and a jumble that unites quite different ideas, actions and lines of thought. In its official version, the European Commission comes up with an approximation of the definition of Social Innovation (the European Commission Communication of October, 2010, the Innovation Union) in the following terms:

“Social innovation consists of finding new ways of meeting those social needs which are not adequately covered by the market or the public sector...or of producing the changes of behaviour necessary for solving the great challenges of society...Preparing the citizens and generating new social relations and new collaboration models”

Some years ago, this concept was related with the organisational changes necessary for implementing technological innovations but recently the literature and the practices concerning social innovation² have undergone a significant proliferation. It seems obvious that public institutions at different levels (international, national, regional and local) establish new programmes with a view to promoting social innovation but this proliferation of discourses and practices is not often accompanied by a single integrated theoretical framework in which the different levels of ideas and practices can be found but, on the contrary, there is a wide diversity of approximations and frameworks in this field (Klein et al., 2012).

In this respect, the European Commission brings this concept to the forefront at a time when, under the motto, “Europe 2020, strategy for smarter, more sustainable and inclusive growth”, social innovation becomes especially important (the European Commission, 2013)³. That is, in

¹ As such, instead of referring just to particular actions, we refer to the mobilization-participation processes and the improvements in social relations, structures of governance, and so on.

² The theoretical current of social innovation applied to urban development has focused particularly on the processes aimed at countering social exclusion with the development of new social integration strategies with three fundamental dimensions: meeting human needs (content dimension); changes in social relations, especially with respect to governance (process dimension); and an increase in socio-political capacity and access to resources (empowerment dimension) (Gerometta et al., 2005).

³ This report reiterates the fact that the quasi-concept of social innovation does not have an epistemic community and contains few agreements due, to a great extent, to the recent incorporation of this concept in the vocabulary of the analyses of public policies. A quasi-concept is a hybrid that is built through

response to long term questions or new social problems and also to challenges of specific vulnerable groups, attempts are made to identify initiatives that arise from civil society and classify as social innovation initiatives in the catalogue of review of social policies.

The report of the European Commission (2013) “Social innovation research in the European Union”, puts the focus of the social innovation process on the following questions: “Why?: New responses to long-standing or new social problems, and challenges faced by particular vulnerable groups; how? Initiatives from civil society; what? Innovations in governance or alternate economic organization”.

However, in the opinion of some authors, certain currents study social innovation as a simple useful tool to find a solution to some of the urgent problems of our societies. This would be a reductionist, utilitarian view of social innovation (hereinafter, SI), and it would be committed to solving problems of the current development model⁴. In fact, on analysing the confusion caused with respect to the debate on the concept of SI, some authors go even further and say that the lack of clarity regarding the SI concept must be attributed not so much to an ever-changing analytical status, as to a fashionable term which often represents a simplistic use of the term in a multitude of policies and practices associated with the rationalization of the welfare state and with the commodification or commercialisation of socio-cultural wellbeing (Moulaert et al., 2013).

Along the line of thought of (Moulaert et al., 2013), the concept of SI used appropriately is a category under which, with interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in scientific research (whose epistemic, methodological posture is constantly changing), changes in which society develops are represented. Such changes refer to collective action, public policies, socio-political movements, spontaneous organisations, etc.

In this particular social (not utilitarian) perspective of SI, the concept of SI is introduced from an epistemic viewpoint and highlights the political and social potential in establishing SI as a fundamental ingredient in the design of a strategy for alternative development. In this regard, SI is presented as a driving force behind interdisciplinary research and as a guide for collective action, both of which are necessarily interrelated. Ultimately, SI is an idea of strength which includes the values of solidarity and equity, among others, and promotes research and actions that seek the construction of a socially inclusive society.

However, SI cannot be seen as a single recipe to be applied without conditions; it is dependent

empirical evidence, although it benefits from the scientific method.

⁴The need to create a strong analytical framework for social innovation from a corporate rather than a utilitarian perspective has given rise to recent initiatives which unite the efforts of various academics: one of the results was the publication of “the International Manual of Social Innovation”, which wishes to be that analytical reference of a solid theoretical framework as expressed in its preface (Moulaert et al, 2013)

on the context and the specific route and therefore researchers into SI must consider that which is global and local, and the solid interaction between theory and practice with a view to contributing to the social change expected (Moulaert et al, 2013).

Various authors of the same line of thought, who try to put the emphasis on the social dimension of SI and of the interactions of the practices, talk of the convergence of the community-based initiatives or civil initiatives designed to meet human needs, combining social enterprises, public agencies for social protection (state-managed), social movements and organisations under the category of SI (Jessop et al., 2013).

Therefore, it is possible to identify a line or field of study that is gaining strength in recent times, which unites academics of different origin, who have engaged the intersections or promoted the synergies that are created between these two key concepts: social innovation and social economy. Here, a new framework of theoretical construction is being generated and applied in various fields, all of which are intimately united with the meeting of human and community needs (social services, residential services, etc.). Some of the areas in which this term has been coined are the residential area and that of care and assistance, with community housing and nurseries as some of the materialisations of SI (Bouchard, 2005).

2.2. Social innovation and social economy

CRISES⁵ understands the processes of SI as: “an intervention initiated by social actors in response to an aspiration or to meet a need, to offer a solution or create an opportunity for action to modify social relations, transform the framework for action or propose new cultural orientations with a view to improving the quality and conditions of life in society” (Bouchard, 2013).

On analysing this definition, we could identify at least three key elements when categorising a process of change as a socially innovative process: a starting point (an initiative originating from the social actor), a method (modifying social relations) and a main end (improving the community's conditions of life).

According to Bouchard (2013), social innovations (henceforth SI) understood from this point of

⁵This section develops the notion of Social Innovation proposed by the institute CRISES, *Centre de recherches sur les innovations sociales*, which is a centre founded in 1986, promoted by Benoit Levesque and Paul Belanger, and which specialises in the analysis of social innovation processes. CRISES arose in a context of multiple crises, hence its name, as a research centre with a twofold vocation: to investigate and transform. This falls within what Levesque (2011) regards as being really a System of Innovation for the Social Economy inasmuch as there exists a wide, public-private structure of promotion and analysis of the Social Economy in Quebec. www.cris.es.uqam.ca

view can materialise in different areas of social activity, among others, in:

- i) production relations: through worker participation to design new forms of work organisation via experiences of self-managed enterprises, etc.;
- ii) consumer relations: through the participation of users in the co-production of services, co-construction of new programmes and new rules, responsible consumption, tourism and responsible leisure, etc.
- iii) inter-enterprise relations: cooperation and competition, non-commercial interdependencies (externalities), social responsibility of enterprises, etc.
- iv) Spatial configuration of social relations: new forms of governance, community economic development, etc.

These elements are clear when it comes to differentiating between this notion of SI and another of a more microeconomic nature, the result of a voluntary, individual, philanthropic, market-oriented impulse. So, in the face of this more microeconomic notion, which focuses more on pure marketing activities, CRISES promotes a notion of IS of a more collective nature, both in processes and in products. Thus, SI would not arise from a mere individual/voluntary impulse but it does arise in more far-reaching social processes of macroeconomic developments that bring about imbalances and periods of crisis and through which initiatives of experimentation and innovation materialise. The aim of an SI is to participate in the transition from one development model to another, always with the stimulus of the social actors themselves and with a vocation for social transformation.

Along the same lines, according to Klein's approach (2012), the social movement is an incubator for social innovations, whose accumulation and application lead to profound structural and cultural changes which concern the society as a whole. SI is confronted with the previous codes of conduct and this is why a reflexion on SI requires, in turn, a reflexion on collective action and on the actor who executes the action and the institutional field which is confronted (Klein et al., 2012:15).

In this context, the contribution of Social Economy is that it came into being as a response to collective aspirations and needs often in new or little-developed sectors to propose a new way of doing things based on equity, equality and social justice to set up entrepreneurship of a collective and social nature (Borzaga and Defourny, 2001). The Social Economy (also known as the third sector) differs from other forms of the economy as it brings together organisations and enterprises that do not form part of the private for-profit sector or of the public sector (Defourny and Monzon Campos, 1992).

The innovative potential of the Social Economy (SE) rests upon two factors which make it different with respect to private and public agents: its non-profit nature and its desire to

democratise various areas. The former generates confidence between users and producers whereas the latter questions the social institutions which, because of their structure, are incapable of responding to certain social needs (Bouchard, 2013). So, through the combination of these two factors, the SE shows a greater potential as far as responding to certain social needs is concerned but also sets a clear goal for SI and that is the transformation of social and institutional relations.

Therefore, through this participation of the SE in the processes of SI, a triple aim is sought: i) the defence and the creation of employment; ii) the democratisation of access to services, and; iii) community participation for the development of communities.

Traditionally, one of the most studied fields of the abovementioned participation of the SE in the processes of SI is the residential one. Community dwellings in Quebec are considered as a materialization of the social innovation (Bouchard, 2005). Instead of covering housing needs in the private (and for profit) market, this kind of communitarian dwellings offers an alternative residential model through cooperatives and not for profit organizations.

In fact, the residential field has a great importance in the research of CRISES, and in the tradition of the Social Economy in Quebec. Since a deep lodging crisis took place in the 70s in Quebec, this housing third sector emerged, and the generalization of the urban culture fostered the prevalence of living in urban areas prior to the home ownership.

3. APPLICATION OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THE SPANISH CONTEXT

It is possible to identify a line or field of study that is gaining strength in recent times, which unites academics of different origin, who have engaged the intersections or promoted the synergies that are created between the two key concepts of social innovation and social economy. Here, we have presented the generation of a new theoretical framework, which is being applied in various fields, all of which are intimately united over the meeting of human and community needs (social services, residential services, etc.)

In this section we will use the abovementioned framework in two ways: firstly to identify and recognise the potential of the movements of struggle against evictions (in Spanish, “Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca”, PAH) as the seeds of social innovation, explaining its different phases. Secondly, we will try to analyse the model of housing cooperatives in Spain, and evaluate to which extent it is a useful model (from our SE and SI approach) and a possible proposal to overtake the crisis in Spain.

3.1. The movements of struggle against evictions as the seeds of social innovation

In the first sense, the literature regarding social innovation distinguishes various phases within the innovative processes, which establish the steps that, from the beginnings of the social movements, would give rise to the institutionalisation of some socially innovative practices. Thus, after the initial phase of the surge of social movements and claims to rights, a second phase of experimentation, pilot projects, etc. would come. The final phase would deal with the institutionalisation and the maturation of a system of social innovation (Bouchard and Levesque, 2010).

The anti-eviction movement in Spain has been a very strong movement, denouncing and defending the infringement of the right to housing in Spain, initially crystallising above all into the paralysing of evictions and support for those affected. This movement has been structured around a Platform known as PAH.

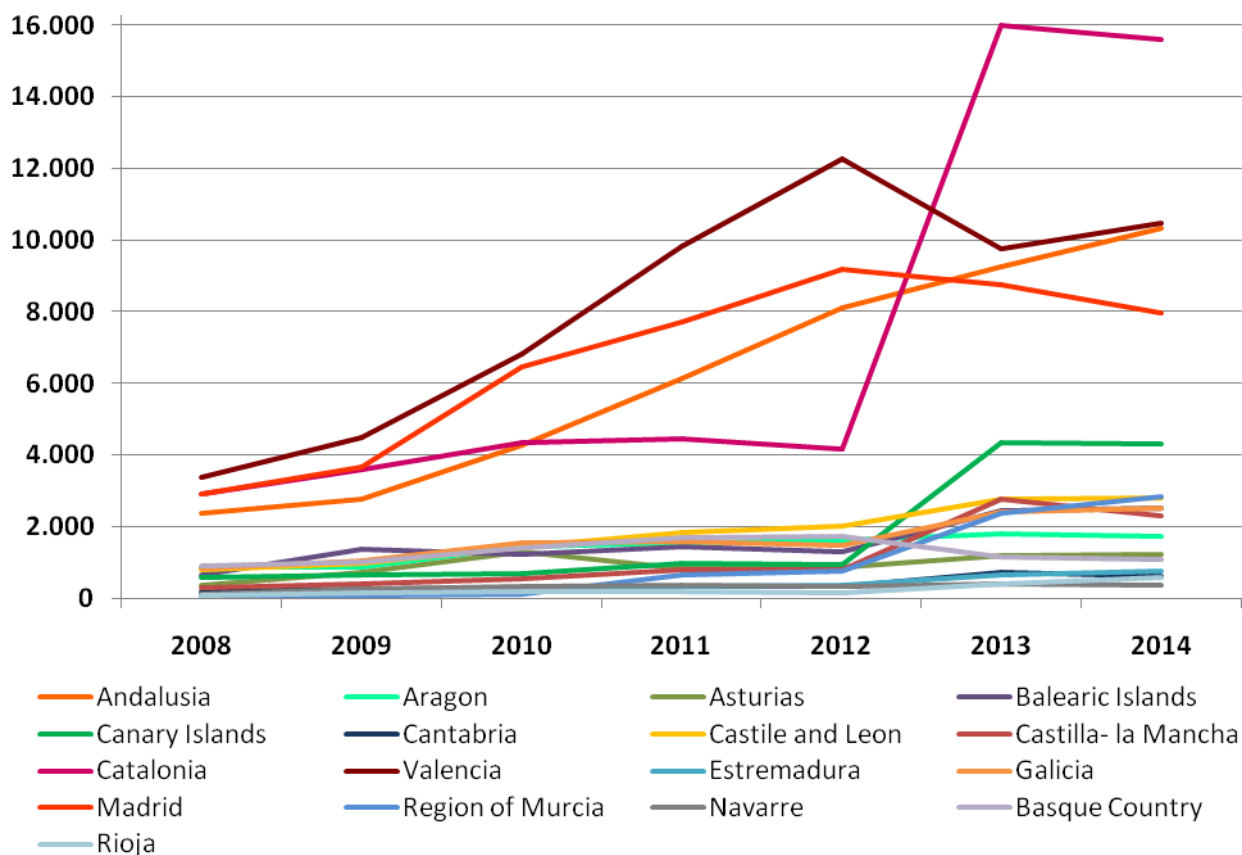
The PAH (Spanish initials), or the Platform of those Affected by their Mortgage, is a platform that groups together over 200 local assemblies, which, since 2009, has been offering free advice to people affected by their mortgage and in risk of being evicted (after foreclosure for non-payment) and has mobilised its bases, among other things, to put a halt to hundreds of eviction attempts: when the police or firefighters are on the point of making an eviction, dozens of people have blocked the entrance to the dwelling of the person to be evicted to prevent the act of eviction being carried out (several groups of firefighters have also rebelled against these situations). In this way it has been calculated that 1663 evictions have been avoided and 2500 people have been reallocated until May of 2015⁶.

The PAH has also been a common platform which has brought together various forum and information sources, and from which, among other relevant items of information, the study carried out by (Colau and Alemany, 2012) has been disclosed. Furthermore, the evictions executed and halted have been monitored and the problem of eviction has been put into perspective.

The abovementioned authors have published several research works, analysing the evictions from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspectives (using the data of the ministry of justice, but also interviews and questionnaires to affected people).

⁶ <http://afectadosporlahipoteca.com/>

Graph 1. Evictions in the Spanish Autonomous Communities



Source: Tribunal Superior de Justicia

2011 saw the collection of signatures of the Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP in Spanish), whose aim was to raise the main measures to the rank of law, meaning that dation in payment could be hold as a legal solution, and the paralysation of evictions of main dwellings (not second houses) as well. This initiative also proposed other measures for debt, foreclosures and so on.

Finally, for the municipal elections of 2015 in the movement's territory of reference, Catalonia, people connected with activism and the defence of the right to housing such as Ada Colau and Gerardo Pisarello (both have published reference books, (Colau and Alemany, 2013) and (Pisarello, 2003) respectively) got together to form a government coalition for Catalonia⁷ that leads us into another very important sphere and which is a major milestone in the evolution of the struggle to defend the right to housing.

Therefore, relating the history and the role of the PAH in the literature concerning social

⁷ Not only in Catalonia. There have been also civil society coalitions in other Autonomous Communities, as alternative models of politicians and governments.

innovation, we assume that the PAH and the movement united around the struggle against evictions are initially the seeds of social innovation and consequently of social transformation, which could be a breeding ground for exploring new ways of crystallisation into a second and third phase (in other countries through experiences, for example, of community housing in cooperatives⁸). Below, we analyse to what extent the episodes mentioned in the PAH's history translated into the so-called three phases can be seen:

- In the first phase, the PAH as a social movement gradually organised into local level nodes, originating from a group of people connected with the struggle for the right to housing, particularly "V de Vivienda" (this would translate as "H for Housing"), a social movement founded in 2006. The PAH was founded in Barcelona in 2009 in response to the drama of evictions and to protect the most vulnerable and defenceless, as the legal framework overprotects the interests of financial entities in detriment to the weaker and the defenceless: citizens with a mortgage. There are 229 nodes or assemblies throughout the national territory and Catalonia, the autonomous community where the movement originated, is where there is a greater presence of the PAH, with 76 assemblies. Their main activity centres on free, collective advice for people "affected by their mortgage" and on physical and effective support in the halting of evictions. This could fit in the framework of SI in an initial phase – that of claims and social movements with demands and political grievances. This phase would be the prelude to those that follow and have already been mentioned such as the experimentation phase and that of pilot projects and also to a third phase of institutionalisation and maturation of the system.
- In the second phase, concrete experiences and initiatives emerged: such as the reallocation of 2500 evicted people, and the Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP in Spanish), where a genuinely strong structure of the movement in terms of organisation was registered. The PLI process provided the movement with a clear, reformist objective. Moreover, it was a process with a fundamental aim: to collect as many signatures as possible so that the PLI would enter into force. One of the consequences was the visualisation of the wide network of people who collected signatures throughout the State. The implication and involvement of the people that made up these networks

⁸In fact, one of the fields in which this term has been coined is in the residential field with community housing as one of the materialisations of SI (Bouchard, 2005). This community housing, with respect to meeting the need for housing on the market, considers the meeting of such a need through cooperatives or other non-profit organisations. This aspect has a traditionally strong influence in CRISES and the social economy in Quebec, although it has not followed the same lines in the Spanish context.

was transformed, deepened, something which is fundamental in the expansion and consolidation of the social movement.

- In the third phase, the territory of reference for this movement, Catalonia, saw how people committed to activism and the defence of the right to housing such as Ada Colau and Gerardo Pisarello got together to form a governing coalition for Catalonia, which would plausibly imply a sort of institutionalisation of the struggle against evictions and the defence of housing rights. In their election campaign they emphasised this point and attached a primary importance to the area of housing, which had never before figured in an election programme or government programme. This coalition was the most voted political force in Catalonia in the elections of the 24th May, 2015 and they will most likely take control of several municipal (e.g. Barcelona) and regional institutions in Catalonia.

Therefore, on assuming this scheme, the process of crystallisation of social movements in the area of housing would be justified and, consequently, we could say that a process of social innovation has developed in Spain over the last decade with a budding but potential institutionalisation of this process, thanks to the entrance into institutions (as the most voted force) of people most committed to this struggle.

These social movements lay bare a structural problem in the Spanish Welfare state with regard to housing. Unlike in Northern Europe evicted households in Spain have little opportunity to get a shelter over their head from public housing companies or (independent) non-profit housing providers. The Spanish housing model has pursued a high rate of owner occupation, which has proven to be unsustainable during a (strong) economic downturn. One logical solution would be to promote a public rental sector, but the Spanish state is struggling with its finances. Another solution then lies in the field of social innovation with regard to affordable rental housing provision⁹.

3.2. Housing cooperatives as an innovative alternative?

In our environment, housing cooperatives have been built (as have state-subsidised dwellings) for the more disadvantaged social sectors, which were traditionally excluded from the housing

⁹ This does not necessarily mean entirely new forms of housing but lessons can be learnt from past experiences or experiences from other countries. Here we wish to investigate the possible role of rental cooperatives.

market, especially at times when the situation regarding housing demand was not propitious for traditional property developers to offer a product of a limited price (Etxezarreta and Merino, 2013).

The most common type of housing cooperative applied in the Spanish context is linked to the promotion and construction of dwellings under a cooperative regime, for their later allocation and sale to the cooperative members. In this way, the future recipients of the dwellings (now cooperative members) save themselves the business profit of the property developer. This is why the housing cooperatives have been an instrument of Social Economy, which, when applied to the volatile property market, have pursued the acquisition of dwellings at more affordable prices and which allow for the democratic participation of the “promoter” members in decision making¹⁰.

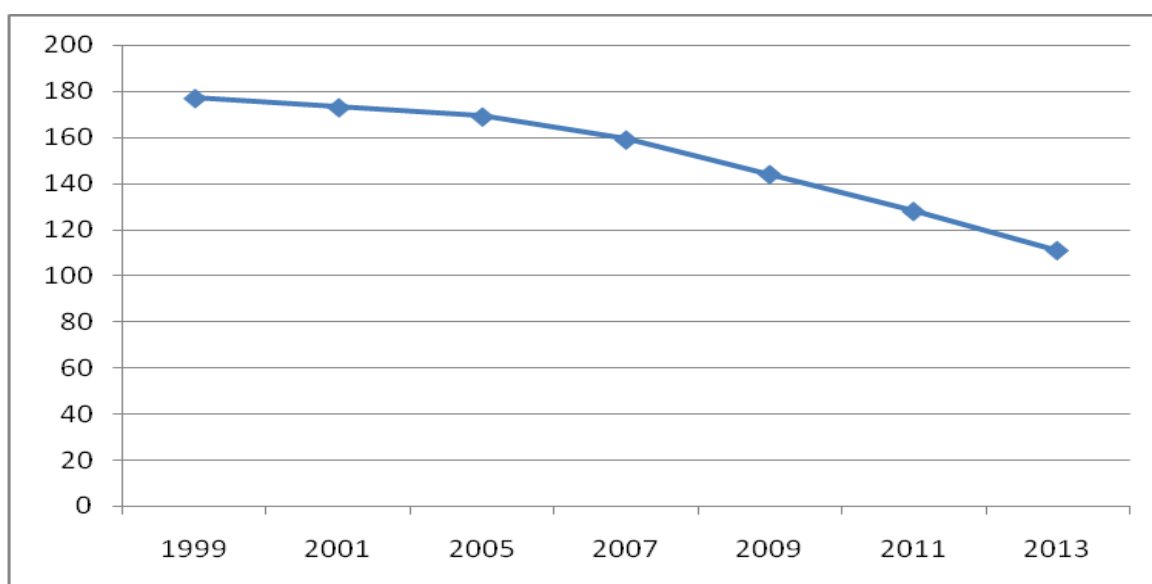
Historically, housing cooperatives in Spain have promoted dwellings under the legislation of state-subsidised housing (Low Income Housing Laws, the Salmón Law, etc.). Therefore, in Spain it has basically been a legal structure, a tool used for the construction of state-subsidised dwellings: up to 90% of the total was protected in 2003 and the remaining 10% were second residences or non-subsidised dwellings by decision of the cooperative members who were allocated these residences (Salinas and Sanz, 2003).

Nevertheless, taking into account the dimension of housing cooperatives in Spain, the evolution of the number of cooperative societies according to type highlights the progressive fall of this legal form. In Spain in 1999, there were 177 housing cooperatives and this number has gradually fallen (at an increasing rate as of 2007), to 111 in 2013. This shows a clear tendency in the decrease of housing cooperatives, which has gone hand in hand with a parallel drop in the construction of state-subsidised dwellings in Spain.

¹⁰The Cooperative Housing platform (www.viviendacooperativa.eu) also says: members of housing cooperatives are at the same time indirect promoters of their dwellings as well as their recipients. It must be said that the greatest advantage of being a cooperative member is the economic saving implied in self-promoted housing.

Furthermore, members participate, from the moment they join the cooperative, in each of the phases of the promotion through each of the general assemblies or the “special members’ meetings” when there are various promotions or phases in the same cooperative (“*junta especial*” is the name given by law to the general assembly on the promotion).

Graph 2. The evolution of the number of housing cooperatives (1999-2013)



Source: The Ministry of employment and social security. Statistics: Cooperative Societies Registered with the Social Security according to type, over several years.

In this current model, therefore, the declining housing cooperatives are a specific class of consumer cooperative. Once the dwellings are built and adjudicated, the cooperatives disappear and, consequently, in our geographical context they are merely a tool of a transitional nature and they identify to a lesser extent with collective social economy initiatives. On the other hand, in other geographical context so their models of cooperativism have been developed (mainly in Nordic countries, Canada and Uruguay, as well as other geographically closer experiences as in Italy and France) with a very different function, associated with permanence and democratic governance (Fajardo, 2013).

So housing cooperatives have developed in very different ways in the international context and, below, the different models of housing cooperatives that can be found are described, namely:

- Self-construction under a cooperative regime, with few experiences in Spain due to the complexity of its implementation
- A cooperative for the allocation of owner-occupied homes, which represents the most widespread model in our environment. The cooperative is liquidated after the allocation of housing. Therefore, because neither the cooperatives nor their values remain (they are of a transitional nature) in the European environment, they are a residualist model and they do not generally identify with the values of housing cooperatives¹¹.

¹¹However, there are several reasons that cause our cooperative model to base itself on traditional property. And they are: the lack of regulation –development- of other models such as those regarding the

- A cooperative for the allocation of housing and administration and/or management of common elements. In this model, the cooperatives are not liquidated once the members are allocated a dwelling and/or other premises but they continue with the administration of common elements (for example, management through the renting out of common premises or their community use).
- Cooperatives created for the management of common uses. These are cooperatives directly created for the administration and management of goods and/or services.
- The regime of use and enjoyment: the Andel model. The idea is to focus on the Scandinavian model regarding the promotion of cooperatives of flats for rent with very low rents and not transitional¹². The aim is to promote the Scandinavian rental model somewhere between ownership and leasing (the dwellings belong to a cooperative in which the members enjoy the right to indefinite use of the dwellings with rents at a reduced price).
- Housing Cooperatives for users and tenants. These are cooperatives that associate with the users or tenants of the cooperatives, grouping together to manage the administration and conservation of the building in a cooperative manner. In this model the ownership of the dwellings is usually public and structured around policies aimed at the promotion of renting.
- Rehabilitation cooperatives. Developed by the shareholding members of cooperative dwellings and other premises for the joint management of the rehabilitation of property.

The fact is that the housing cooperatives which have developed in Spain have done so under the promotion of state-subsidised dwellings. However, if we continued with the current model of housing cooperatives we would never have a model of dwelling tenancy that would comply with the criteria of the social economy (only the promotion and construction of dwellings could comply) and, therefore, if we intend to present the housing cooperatives as an innovative alternative we will only be able to do so by changing the bases and the model of the very housing cooperatives in force in Spain.

In this regard, the Andel model, which brings us close to the model of Scandinavian cooperativism, could be a model that leads us to that end: that of the use and enjoyment of

agreement to cede the use of the dwelling in general, the Spanish mentality concerning property, the function of cooperatives based on the logic of construction companies and not companies managing housing stock, as occurs in other countries, a certain obscurantism on one part of the sector which means that there is no advertising or public registries, the lack of interest and regulation on the part of administrations when faced with the problem of housing cooperatives, the posture of the cooperative management companies and of the construction companies, etc.

¹² We can actually find some Spanish experiences, such as Sostre Civic in Barcelona.

dwellings under a cooperative regime, indefinitely and at low cost and which do not automatically become private property after the construction and allocation of the dwellings.

The reference of the communitarian dwellings of Quebec results of great interest in this context (Bouchard, 2005). It is one of the so-called crystallizations of the social innovation model. In this model there exists a combination of the private use of the dwellings with the collective property of the neighborhoods (organized in cooperatives). The size of these organizations is relatively small (30 households approximately), and it is avoided the spatial segregation of poverty. These experiences are considered successful socially innovative initiatives of the social economy.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The theoretical framework of social innovation is very wide and ambiguous, but the present paper has tried to delimit it from a communitarian and non-utilitarian perspective. Far from the concept of the social innovation as a simple useful tool to meet social needs (generally based on individuals-micro, philanthropic and market-reliant approaches), we defend a concept that means innovation in social relations, with a solid, communitarian or societal basis.

Therefore, the concept of social innovation implies a new response to social needs, but also a new way to reach it, with a communitarian basis, where there is an improvement in social relations, structures of governance, and so on. That is why this specific approach of the social innovation is intimately united to the social economy, because of the principles of the latter one.

The Social Economy (also known as the third sector) differs from other forms of the economy as it brings together organizations and enterprises that do not form part of the private for-profit sector or of the public sector. This implies a different functioning of organizations, based on equity, equality, democracy and social justice to set up entrepreneurship of a collective and social nature. The innovative potential of the Social Economy rests upon two factors which make it different with respect to private and public agents: its non-profit nature and its desire to democratise various areas.

Traditionally, in the main reference of the research of CRISES in Quebec, one of the studied fields of the abovementioned participation of the Social Economy in the processes of Social Innovation is the residential one. Communitarian dwellings in Quebec are considered as a materialization of the social innovation, since they offer an alternative residential model through cooperatives and not for profit organizations (nor public, nor private for-profit).

Regarding the application of the theoretical framework of social innovation and social economy in the Spanish context, we analyse two points: the movements of struggle against evictions

(movements anti-desahucios) and the Spanish housing cooperativism. In the first sense, the literature regarding social innovation distinguishes various phases within the innovative processes: the initial phase of the surge of social movements and claims to rights, a second phase of experimentation and a final phase of institutionalization and maturation of a system of social innovation.

The anti-eviction movement in Spain has been a very strong movement, which since 2009 has been paralysing of evictions and support for those affected. In the evolution of this Platform we have distinguished three phases:

- In the first or initial phase, the PAH was a social movement gradually organized into local level nodes (founded in Barcelona in 2009). Their main activity was focused on free and collective advice for people “affected by their mortgage” and on physical and effective support in the halting of evictions.
- In the second phase, concrete experiences and initiatives emerged among the PAH, such as the reallocation of 2.500 evicted people, and the Popular Legislative Initiative (ILP in Spanish)
- In the third phase, a plausible institutionalization could occur since people committed to activism of PAH got together to form a governing coalition for Catalonia (Ada Colau and Gerardo Pisarello), and won the elections of the 24th May 2015.

Finally, the Spanish housing cooperativism has been studied. Historically, housing cooperatives in Spain have promoted dwellings under the legislation of state-subsidised housing. In our environment, housing cooperatives have been a specific class of consumer cooperatives, which, once the dwellings are built and adjudicated, disappear. Consequently they have been merely a tool of a transitional nature and they identify to a lesser extent with collective social economy initiatives.

Nevertheless, the international context offers different models of housing cooperatives, such as the Andel model (close to the model of Scandinavian cooperativism), which could be a model that leads us to use and enjoyment of dwellings under a cooperative regime, indefinitely and at low cost, and which do not automatically become private property after the construction and allocation of the dwellings. This model would allow meeting residential needs with the Social Economy’s principles.

Therefore, one of the aims of this work would be to rescue an old concept such as the housing cooperatives but with a new function and an innovative role within the housing system, which would make it possible to apply the criteria of the social economy in the field of Spanish housing in a lasting and truthful manner.

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