



Urbano

ISSN: 0717-3997

ISSN: 0718-3607

azazo@ubiobio.cl

Universidad del Bío Bío

Chile

Fernández Rodríguez, Juan Francisco; De Manuel Jerez,
Esteban; Barragán Robles, Vicente; Gutiérrez Barbarrusa, Virginia
PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL HOUSING
PLANS: THE CASES OF BORMUJOS AND BOLLULLOS DE LA MITACIÓN (ANDALUSÍA)
Urbano, vol. 22, no. 40, 2019, November-, pp. 64-87
Universidad del Bío Bío
Chile

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22320/07183607.2019.22.40.04>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=19864321005>

- How to cite
- Complete issue
- More information about this article
- Journal's webpage in redalyc.org

redalyc.org

Scientific Information System Redalyc

Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and
Portugal

Project academic non-profit, developed under the open access initiative

PARTICIPATORY DIAGNOSIS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MUNICIPAL HOUSING PLANS: THE CASES OF BORMUJOS AND BOLLULLOS DE LA MITACIÓN (ANDALUSÍA, ESPAÑA)

JUAN FRANCISCO FERNÁNDEZ RODRÍGUEZ
ESTEBAN DE MANUEL JEREZ
VICENTE BARRAGÁN ROBLES
VIRGINIA GUTIÉRREZ BARBARRUSA

I. INTRODUCTION

The serious socioeconomic and environmental situation experienced in Spain since the property bubble burst in 2008 forced rethinking the current housing and city management and production model. The policies which, in recent decades, have linked housing with urban growth, essentially speculative in nature, have created in the current global crisis context, an imbalance between their price and the economic capacity of the demand. Thus, the those who demand housing face serious complications when it comes to acquiring a home, while the number of evictions, undeveloped urbanized areas and empty houses abound (Alguacil et al, 2013; Vinuesa, 2012).

With the competences for housing matters transferred to autonomous communities (1988), these design the residential program and plans being implemented in each region (retrofitting, promoting protected housing, encouraging renting), under the budget allocated from central government. Local municipalities, for their part, thanks to the power given to the Local System Guidelines Regulatory Law (1985), have the capacity to carry out concrete actions. For this reason, the Andalusian Housing and Land Use Plan (2016-2020) establishes that it is these powers, provided with a Municipal Housing and Land Use Plan (PMVS in Spanish) as a requirement to access financing of the different autonomous programs, that propose actions to face the existing problem, by assessing the reality of each location. Said plans must also be developed using the participation of the different social agents involved, which implies the opportunity of establishing a new political framework for municipal housing.

The goal of this article is to take out key aspects of the participative process designed to write the PMVS of two Sevillian municipalities, Bormujos and Bollulllos de la Mitación (Table 1), to determine their capacity to involve local players in the evaluation of the housing situation and to build shared knowledge about the existing needs and available resources, namely in this case, empty housing and unused land which could be destined to satisfy these needs using suitable actions.

Table 1. Context of the municipalities. Source: Own preparation.

For this, after defining the theoretical framework of the research, we will present the method used to carry out the comparative study of both cases. This is linked to the development of a participation plan that is organized around workshops, under the dynamics of Participative-Action-Research. We will show the results from the work done during the participative process. Starting from their analysis, we will present the main conclusions of the study, aimed at answering the research question about how the development of a participative process, linked to the writing of a Municipal Housing and Land Use Plan, contributes to the qualitative evaluation of the housing situation, the unsatisfied demand and the available resources, to later set public policies in motion for their social management at a local scale.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The epistemological approach the design of the plans involved in this study falls within, is Social Management and Production of the Habitat, as a response to the challenge of making the right to housing and the city effective. The Right to the City appears in the work of the French philosopher and sociologist, Henri Lefebvre (1968), as the democratic understanding of the city's construction which reclaimed the role of the human being as a lead player. David Harvey (2013) also says that this right is not limited to the existing city, but rather that it implies transforming the city into something radically different. Ana Sugranyes defines the right to the city as *"the possibility of building a city where one can live in a dignified way, recognizing oneself as part of it, where the balanced distribution of the different types of resources is made possible"* (2010:75). In the context of the current global crisis, the right to the city appears to be a key tool for the formulation of public policies that value *"feedback among players, as well as between theory and action"* (Sugranyes, 2010:74).

The term Social Production of Habitat was introduced by the Latin American group of the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) in 2002. According to Enrique Ortiz, *"by social production of habitat, we understand, all those processes that generate inhabitable spaces, urban components and housing, that are implemented under the control of self-producers and other social agents [...] and that imply different levels of social participation in the diverse phases of the habitational process: planning, construction, distribution, use"* (Ortiz, 2002:13). After the national HIC meeting (Mexico, 2007) the "Social Management and Production of the Habitat" (PGSH in Spanish) would be spoken about, acknowledging other realities that are not so closely connected to the urbanizing phenomena, but rather to managing housing when facing speculative use, among other aspects. Thus, PGSH assumes the change of role of the user, who becomes the lead player when making decisions about their habitat.

Along these lines, Esteban de Manuel (2010) proposes the construction of the social habitat triangle, which connects the three dimensions outlined by Horacio Capel (2003) as components of this (Urbs, Civitas, Polis). According to De Manuel, any transformation of one of these dimensions (physical, social, organizational) will affect the other two. However, the most effective one for the transformation of the social habitat will be the organizational aspect, which can only be achieved if the citizenry becomes aware of their necessary involvement and participation in the development of urban policies.

We will understand participation, as José María López Medina defines, as “a means of balanced distribution of decision-making power in collective construction processes and agreement among players” (2011:144). Talking about participation implies opening up a process to other players who previously had no access to it. Countless authors propose the image of the participation ladder to represent the different levels of scope within a participative process (López, 2011:147). In this way, direct management without participation tends to occupy the lowest level, before moving onto information or opinion consultation processes about decisions that have already been made. Co-decision processes, to build collective, self-managed proposals, linked to the transformation of social relations between the participants, are found on the final steps (Rosa & Encina, 2003). In these cases, any public consultation process will be tied into the decision-making by the specialists, politicians and neighbours, as a means of fostering the democratic system and construction of citizenry (Rosa & Encina, 2003).

Participation, in the framework of social research, becomes a support for the construction of scientific knowledge. According to the sociologist, Manuel Montañés (2009), there are as many objectified realities as observing subjects that, without being equivalent, can be compatibilized by the researcher through participation. This is what Víctor Pelli (2010) refers to when talking about the jump from transdisciplinary to transectoriality, as a means of knowledge production that combines the different sectors of society that are affected, or what Josep Maria Montaner and Zaida Muxi (2011) mention as a feature of the current paradigm of postmodernity, “the view towards the other and of the other”.

Participative-Action-Research (PAR) appeared in the ‘80s and ‘90s with the work of different Latin American groups who were influenced by the ideas of Paulo Freire and Orlando Fals Borda, among others. In Spain, Jesús Ibáñez, Tomás Rodríguez Villasante or Tomás Alberich stand out. They define PAR as a “study and action method that looks to obtain reliable useful results to improve collective situations, basing the research on the participation of the same collectives that are being researched” (2007:6). Montse Rosa and Javier Encina outline PAR as “a time-space spiral which, on being encouraged by methodological experts, helps the population define their needs and seek satisfying factors, which generate a process of exchange and collective construction of knowledge that can provoke actions of change” (2003:94). Rocío Valderrama adds that PAR facilitates the analysis of “wishes, conflicts, concerns, needs,

capacities, resources, and allows planning actions and measures to transform them [...] under the population gaining the critical awareness about their reality, their empowerment, their collective movement and their transforming action” (2013:60).

In this way, we can state as substantial aspects of PAR, its condition as a method, which places research in the hands of the lead actors of the reality being analyzed, linking study and action; and its condition of collective construction process of knowledge, which seeks to achieve the transformation of the reality being analyzed and that of the participating groups. In turn, its cyclical nature accentuates the idea of permanent reworking, this being processes where questions are opened and reopened to go into further depth in their analysis, in the proposals and in their appropriation by the participants, which Rosa and Encina call “jumps from the individual to the collective”. These are also characterized by the exchange between technical and popular knowledge, and must be designed with the idea that all the relevant players are involved in their development.

III. METHODOLOGY

Methodological framework

We will use a comparative case study as a work method within the already defined PAR framework. This is a tool to approximate complex situations based on their understanding through the description and analysis within their context (Murillo et al, 2002). It also handles data from practice and experience, which facilitates a direct approach to reality and contributes in that its results transform the studied phenomena, incorporating it in the design of intervention strategies (Muñiz, 2012).

For this reason, two towns from the Province of Seville, Bormujos and Bollullos de la Mitación, are chosen, with local governments interested in developing their PMVS through a Participative-Action-Research process led by an interdisciplinary team linked to Seville’s public universities. To carry out the comparative study, the same questions were asked in both towns, which are similar in nature, contrasting the results obtained to reach solid conclusions that allow defining generalizations (Murillo et al, 2002). Hence, from the descriptive perspective the study was addressed under, and the interpretation of the results achieved, the conclusions provided by this experience will try to contribute to the field of knowledge and to the development of future research.

Under a dialectic conception of the research, and the PAR’s own methodological framework, we will define an assembly as the most suitable technological framework (Alberich, 2007), as a negotiation process between agents who start from unequal positions to reach a situation of better equality within diversity. Under the assembly model, carried out in workshops, different work dynamics are used (Table 2), aimed at addressing key aspects for the plan’s documentary development. The information obtained is assessed by the specialist team, using triangulation tools to make the views of

specialists, politicians and citizens compatible, using coding to group them into similar categories (Fernández, 2006), systematizing them to constitute the evaluation report of both housing plans.

Table 2. Dynamics of the research process. Source: Own preparation using Alberich, 2007; Rodríguez-Villasante, 1993; Ibáñez, 1986

Participation Plan

In this context, the writing team designs a participation plan around three milestones: two linked to the evaluation phase and a third one to the strategic phase. The participative process is conceived under an interdisciplinary and interdepartmental technical approach, linked to the dialogue between the technical and experiential knowledge. So that this dialogue is effective, the participation plan distinguishes two parallel work spaces: one technical-political and another citizen based, which will work independently in the evaluation phase.

Focusing on the preparation of the participative evaluation, subject matter of this article, a layout which connects the two milestones of this phase with the workshop calls carried out for its developed is outlined in Table 3, specifying the goals and techniques/dynamics used in each case.

Table 3. Matrix of participative calls in the evaluation phase. Source: Own preparation.

The initial calls (Milestone 1) were devoted to presenting the plan's goals and methodology and identifying key players, as well as forming the technical-political commission and the citizen driving force, as opportunities for parallel participation. The players social mapping dynamic was used in the initial technical-political call (figure 1), through the preparation of a sociogram (Braceras, 2012). These already identified players were invited to the initial citizenry call (figure 2), also carrying out, in the case of Bormujos and the communication's technical opportunities, a broad and open dissemination campaign. The mapping of players was completed in this workshop and work is being done on a mapping of the pre-evaluation of the housing-city issues detected by the participants, which were drawn out on a plan of the town.

Figure 1. Formation of the technical-political commission and social mapping workshop. Source: Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop

Figure 2. Formation of the citizen driving force and housing collaborative mapping. Source: Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop

The second citizen and technical-political call, associated to Milestone 2 (Figure 3), had the purpose of performing a self-diagnosis from the information provided by the writing team. Thus, the results of the technical diagnosis about the needs detected and potential resources were presented in a systematized way, paying special attention to the housing stock and vacant land (Table 6). The map of the empty housing in both areas was also presented (Figures 4 and 5) and the different

categories of empty housing found, were illustrated (Figure 6). With this information, the participants worked in groups of 6-8 people using a record-matrix to validate the data presented, explaining or completing it, and debating about the challenges and general lines of action to direct the plan to, as a first approach to develop the later strategic phase (Milestone 3). The citizen self-diagnosis was completed using a cross-sectional analysis aimed at visiting and mapping the different housing and land use issues detected, consolidating the results of the evaluation and discussing about possible solutions to the situations acknowledged.

Figure 3. Technical-political and citizen self-diagnosis workshop. Source: Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop.

Figures 4 and 5. Map of empty housing in Bormujos and Bollullos de la Mitación

Source: Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop (Fernández & De Manuel, 2018)

Figure 6. Empty housing situations. Bollullos de la Mitación and Bormujos. Source: Own preparation.

IV. RESULTS

Milestone 1: Social evaluation: Mapping of players and Pre-diagnosis

Mapping of players and identification of action groups

The sociogram's technique allowed detecting the action groups of both towns. In this way, each player is placed on the map depending on their level of affinity with the plan's goal (close to, indifferent, opposed) and their capacity of influence. Institutional players, organic social fabric and non-organized social sectors are distinguished (represented by different geometric shapes and colours). Later, the relations that exist or may exist between these are defined, aiming at the most relevant groups to develop the plan and who, therefore, shall be part of the proposed participation opportunities.

Figures 7 and 8 consider the map made, synthetizing the results reached in table 4, which were similar in both towns. In this way, technical experts and politicians have a high degree of affinity and influence, while those demanding housing and the vulnerable citizenry have a high affinity but low influence. The property developers, land owners, construction companies or financial entities, for their part, are seen as opposed and distant to the plan, while the different organized social entities hold a distant although relevant position as a result of their capacity to establish relations between institutional and unorganized social agents.

Figures 7 and 8. Sociogram of Bormujos and Bollullos de la Mitación. Source: Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop.

Table 4. Synthesis of the sociogram's results. Source: Own preparation.

Participative Pre-diagnosis

The collective mapping done in the citizen workshop evidenced abnormal situations that were common to both places, and some specific ones of each case. These are systematized in Table 5, along with the plans made (Figures 9-10), which show the areas where a particular concentration of empty housing, occupied housing or failed promotions, in different stages of advance (skeletal, finished, vandalized), are identified. In the case of Bollullos de la Mitación, it also looks at urban issues related to the perceived insecurity that undeveloped sites generate within the urban setting.

Figure 9. Collaborative mapping of housing in Bollullos de la Mitación. Source: Laura Alard, Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop.

Figure 10. Collaborative mapping of housing in Bormujos. Source: Laura Alard, Habitat 4 Ecosocial Workshop.

Table 5. Pre-diagnosis of needs and resources. Source: Own preparation.

Milestone 2: Self-diagnosis, definition of challenges and goals

Technical-political and citizen self-diagnosis

Table 6. Technical evaluation results. Source: Own preparation.

In this phase, the conclusions thrown up by the technical diagnosis (Table 6) are validated/completed/explained. After this, additional contributions are made and the main challenges laid out (Table 7). Regarding housing stock, both places show a lack of conservation on their part, caused by the owner's economic inability to face this. The poor state, in some cases, leads to the housing remaining vacant, which presents the challenge of adapting them to be usable again. This adaptation also refers to typology, with large houses needing to be adapted to the surface area required by new family models in both locations. In this way, the uninhabited, vandalized, skeletal housing or unbuilt land become a resource to face existing demands, for which the challenge of implementing mechanisms to reactivate their use is defined, creating legal formulas to guarantee the civil liability of the Local Authority.

One of the main challenges pointed out is, apart from facing situations of social vulnerability, bringing the offer of affordable housing and the demand of emancipation housing closer. For this, the need of influencing the price of rentals is targeted, excessive considering the economic capacity of the families, which other transversal challenges would contribute to, like the provision of public social housing stock, either rental or rental with the option to buy, the mediation to activate empty housing at an affordable price, as well as driving cooperative experiences of social housing, self-builds or self-retrofitting, which offer collaborative solutions to access affordable housing through work payment formulas.

Table 7. Technical-political self-diagnosis. Source: Own preparation.

Onsite contrast: Citizenry cross-sectional analysis

The issues detected were finally contrasted onsite by the citizen driving force, through the cross-sectional analysis technique (Figure 11). Table 8 shows the results reached, outlining the visited casuistries and the observations and proposals from the participants which, in general, corroborate and consolidate those already noted in the self-diagnosis.

Table 8. Systemization of proposals to situations identified in the walks. Source: Own preparation.

Figure 11. Digital mapping of the citizen's cross-sectional analysis of Bormujos6. Source: Own preparation.

Starting from the results reached in the diagnosis phase, some of the issues detected as work cases (failed promotions, unfinished housing, disperse empty housing) were extracted for the development of Milestone 3 (strategic phase). Hence, from the participation opportunities created, concrete actions will be defined to face the agreed upon challenges of each case (definition of necessary players, means of financing, resources, timeframes), as a base to prepare a purposeful and program-based document for the plan.

Milestone 3: Setting up participation opportunities

Technical-Political Commission

An interdepartmental technical-political commission was set up in each one of the locations, which was put in charge of the plan's strategic leadership (Figure 12). In the case of Bormujos, the lead was taken by the mayor, with the technical support of the local authority's deputy secretary. In Bollullos de la Mitación, the lead fell upon the urbanism delegate. Given the implications of politicians and specialists in both places, the commission's work implied an important boost for the participative process, establishing a clear commitment of its members with the plan and its goals. This opportunity for participation is considered as the seed of a future Municipal Housing Office, aimed at managing the development and execution of the plan and, in general, the municipal housing policies.

Citizen driving force

The response to the citizen call in the two locations was uneven. While in Bollullos de la Mitación it was circumscribed to social activists, in Bormujos, it mainly comprised vulnerable people who sought housing, with the citizen response exceeding the participation prediction made. This conditioned the dynamic of the workshops: in Bollullos, it was possible to focus on the issue and quickly go into greater depth; in Bormujos it was necessary focus on clearly staying with the goal and the participative preparation methodology of the plan.

6 <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1QiovIVRkYnePI1-PafIX1AJ7QJ2DIhxM&ll=37.37101303701156%2C-6.074420250000003&z=16>

The driving force was consolidated in the second call in both locations, with most members coming from those demanding housing. The participative process allowed generating a group committed to the plan, and interested in seeking innovative solutions from the social initiative, although with an uneven degree of commitment, in many cases linked to a higher or lower urgency about their housing situation. Despite that, from players' mapping, the target was on the importance of incorporating agents linked to property promotion, financial entities, owners of empty housing or organized social groups linked to these, their widespread participation was not achieved, either in the technical-political meeting or the citizen-based one.

Figure 12: Municipal areas involved in the technical-political commission. Source: Own preparation.

V. ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

As it has been said, the writing of a PMVS entails the opportunity of establishing a new local political framework framed by concepts like the Right to the City (Lefebvre, Sugranyes) or the Social Management and Production of the Habitat (Ortiz). -Tying its preparation to the development of a participative process allows doing so through democratic consensuated solutions, recognizing the diversity of the players involved and their transforming capacity (Alberich, Rosa, Encina, Valderrama).

To reach this goal, the process associated to the Bormujos and Bollullos de la Mitación plans is faced from a conception of participation linked to co-decision and self-management, emphasizing the transformation of social relations and the construction of citizenry, as Rosa and Encina state (2003). For this, work has been done in the creation of two participation spaces: the technical-political commission and the citizen driving force. Through these, and during the pre-evaluation, self-diagnosis and cross-sectional analysis of the PAR process, the participants have compatibilized their views regarding the reality of their town (Montañes, 2009), to collectively define their needs, resources and challenges, and in this process they have appropriated the consensuated results, understanding themselves as an active part of the actions needed to face them.

For this, within the citizen group, it was necessary to adapt the work rhythms to the different optics of the participants: while social activists and members of the organized social fabric started from a more strategic vision of the problems to be addressed, those demanding housing (the largest group) focused on seeking solutions to their short-term problems. With it being important to foster the joint work of social players, due to the aforementioned dialogue of knowledge, it would have been positive to go into greater depth in the work with those demanding housing, to improve their degree of commitment with the process. For their part, the distinction between technical-political and citizen-based meetings in this initial phase of the plan is evaluated as adequate, given that it provides social players with their own space where to participate without being restricted by the presence of council authority figures.

The process has allowed politicians, specialists and citizens to become aware of the gap there is between the price of housing and the economic capacity of the population, as well as the situation of unsatisfied demand in their town, which in the case of the emancipation housing extends to two thirds of the citizens. Likewise, the insufficiency of public housing stock to face this challenge has confirmed and the existence of an important underdeveloped built stock has become noticeable, as a potential resource to satisfy the demand for affordable housing, which the different social mapping and cross-sectional analysis techniques used have positively contributed to.

In this way, the different players have acquired a commitment with the challenge being faced, aiming at innovative solutions that have already begun in this phase of the plan (social projects, self-building, activation of empty housing). In turn, spaces for participation which will serve as the seeds of a deliberation, follow-up and control instrument for housing policies being implemented in both towns have been sown, which will need to keep the role of the agents involved active, incorporating action groups linked to the property and construction sector, who are currently outside the plan.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Going back to the question the research set out, about how the development of a participative process contributes to the qualitative diagnosis of the housing situation within the framework of a PMVS, we can conclude that:

- The participative process has allowed reaching a diagnosis shared by specialists, politicians and citizens about social housing needs and the limitations of the current stock to satisfy them.
- Spaces for participation have been generated, which have channeled the involvement of different local agents. In this way, the technical-political commission is understood as the seed of a future Municipal Housing Office, made up of different municipal areas, to manage the plan and municipal housing policies.
- Committed citizen driving forces have been consolidated, who can play a key role as a social catalyst in the development of the plan, in particular in those lines of action that require active social organization.
- The commitment of institutional and social players with the plan's goals opens the door to collaboratively seeking innovative solutions, with the active involvement of the citizens and municipal intermediation.

As limitations of the process, we can point out that it has turned out to be incomplete, on not being able to involve an important set of players: the housing and land owners and the property development and construction sector. In addition, the limited time and resources have prevented going into greater depth on the work with those demanding housing, although the foundations have been created to

do so in the plan's implementation phase. Finally, the continuity of this concerted decision-making model in the long-term will depend on institutional support and political will, with citizen involvement and social initiative being just as important.

Thus, the research contributes to the debate about the role of participation in decision-making processes for the preparation of public policies, in this case, municipal housing plans in Andalusia. In future studies, it will be necessary to go into greater depth on the participative definition of concrete strategies and actions that start from the diagnosis made, as well as to follow up on the role the institutional and social players adopt inside the spaces for participation that were generated, to determine to what extent these are consolidated as control instruments for the development and execution of plans and municipal housing policies.