

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

Miguel A. Martínez López // Ángela García Bernardos

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

miguelam@cps.ucm.es // angela.gb7@gmail.com

www.miguelangelmartinez.net

Contents

- * 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 legitimatisation
- * 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...

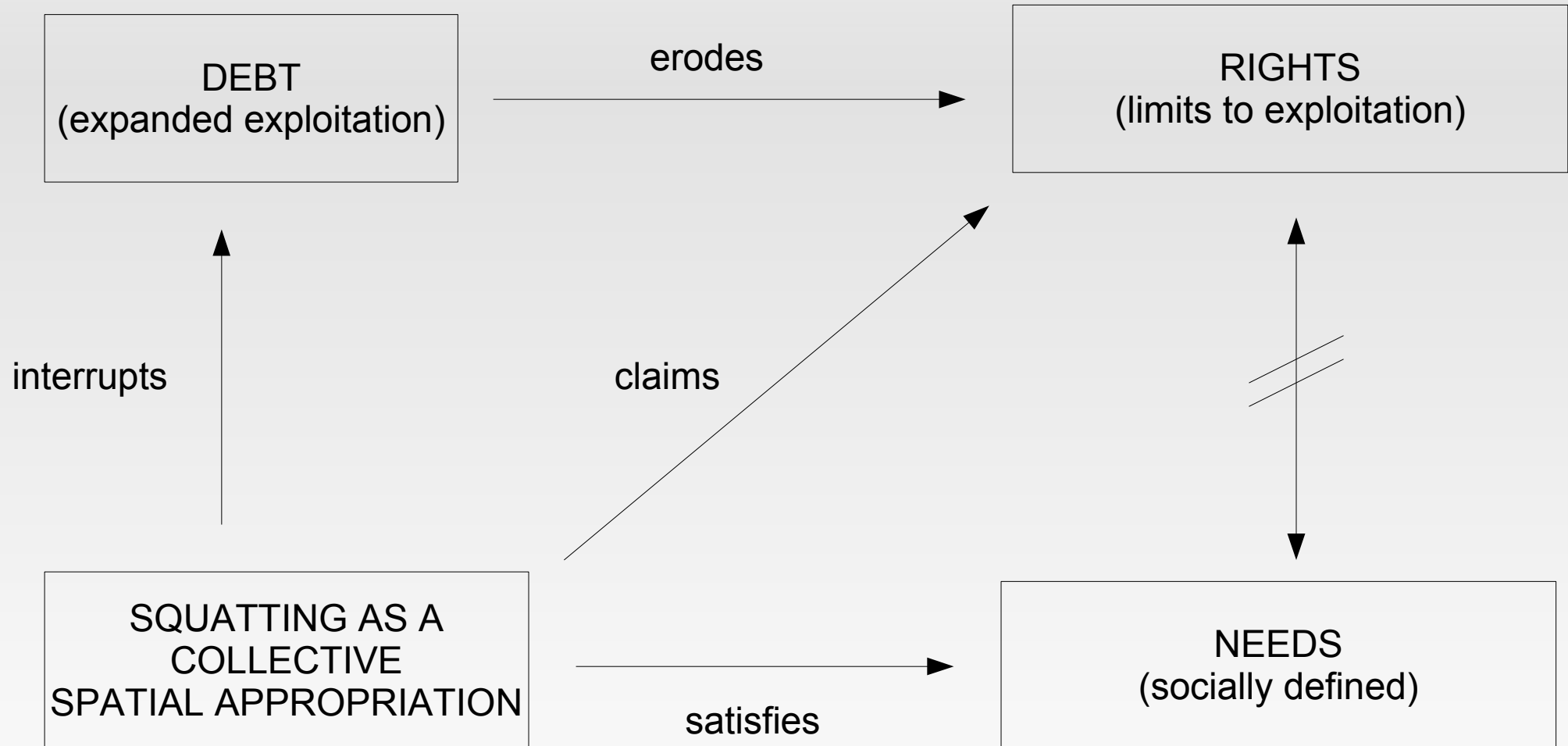
Introduction

- 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 differ 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 threat 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.

Introduction

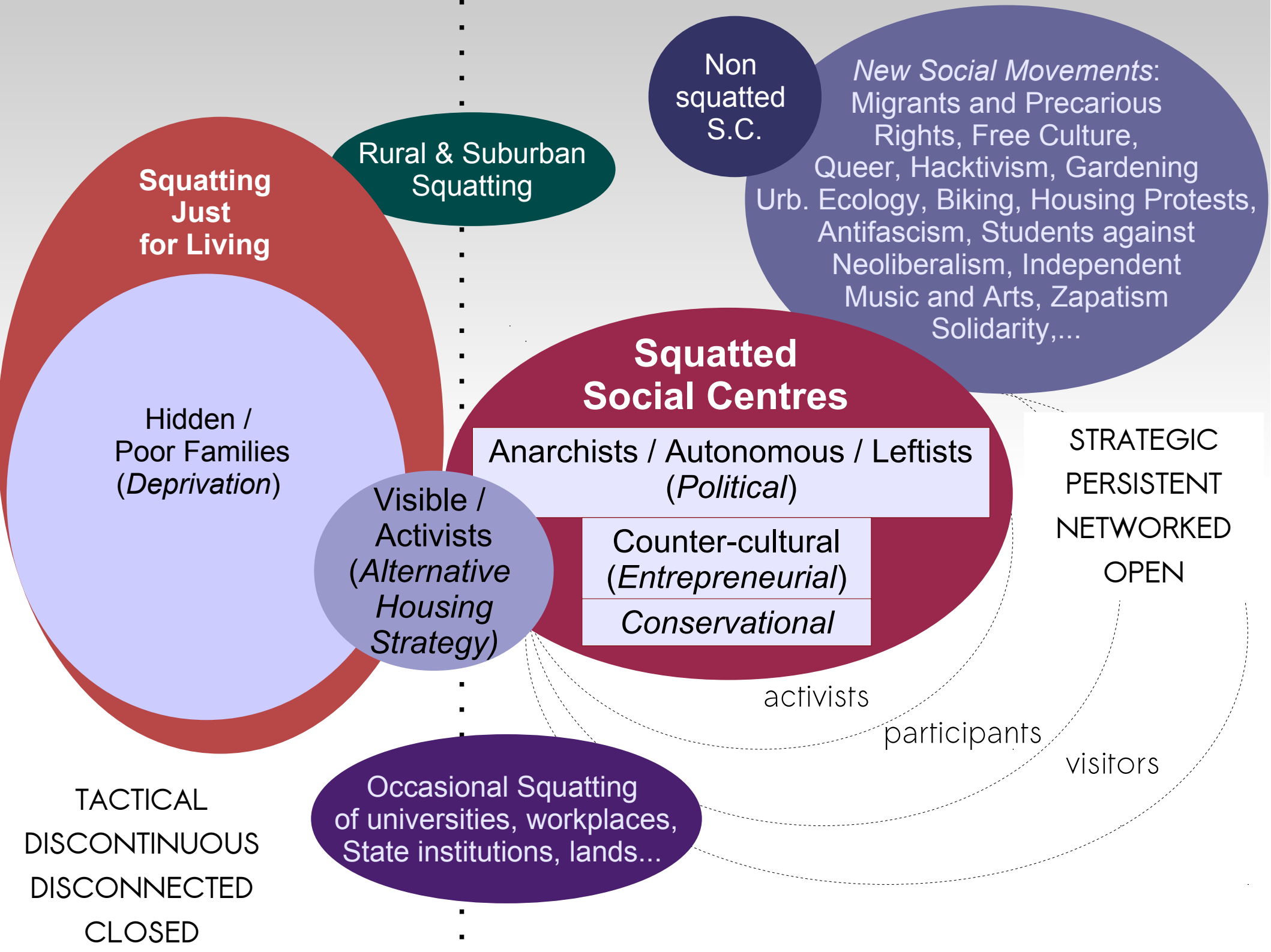
- SQUATTING is a viable ALTERNATIVE FORM OF TENANCY different from ownership, renting or authorised permission to use, since it entails a collective way of "possession", self-managed and use a building (or piece of land). Long duration, expansion of initiatives and useful contributions to residents and 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



Introduction

- 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



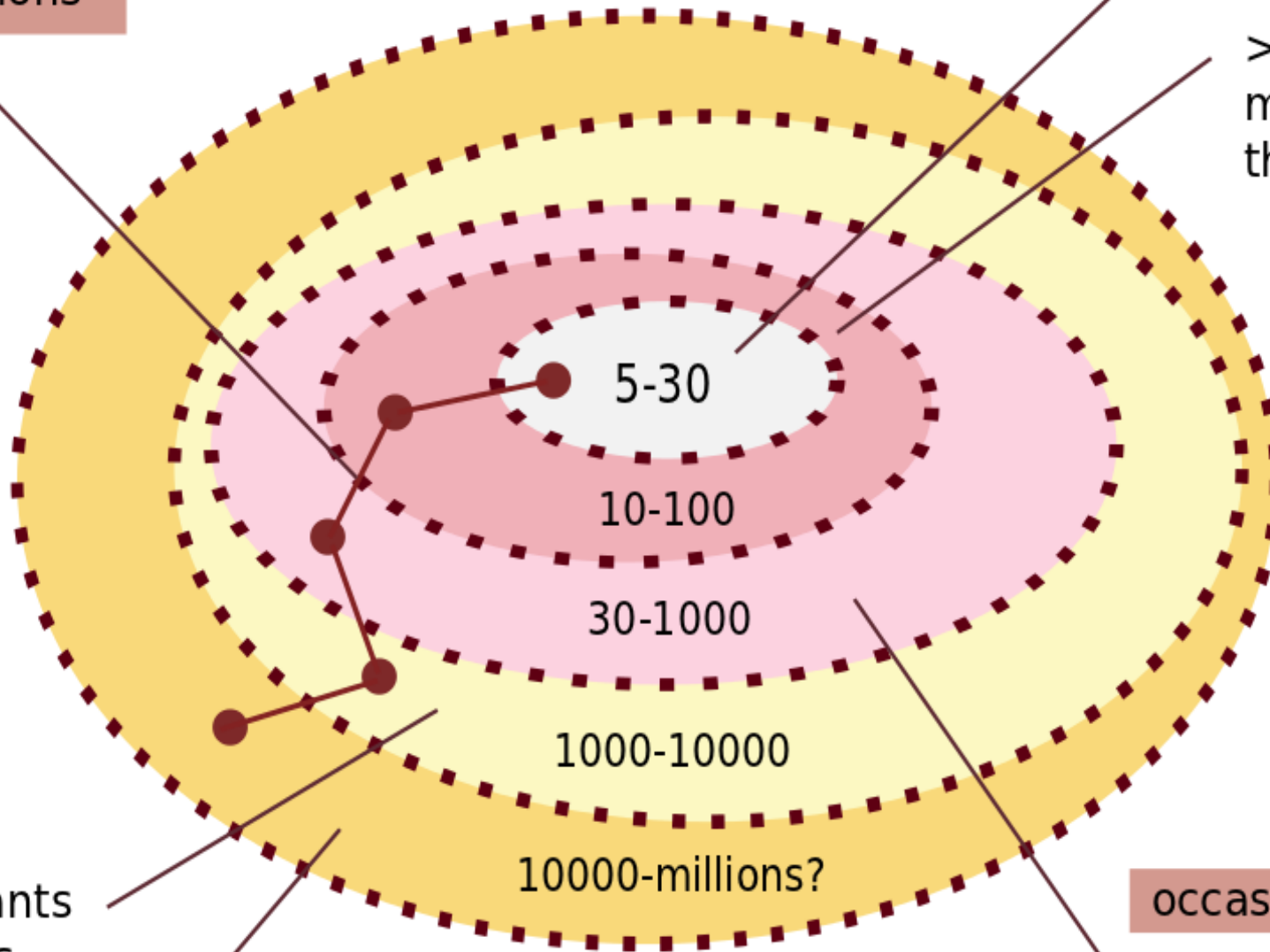
a squat is more than a place

coalitions with
other social
movements
organisations

regular activists

> hard core of
the assembly

> floating
members of
the assembly



> participants
in activities
and visitors

> sympathisers

background network of support

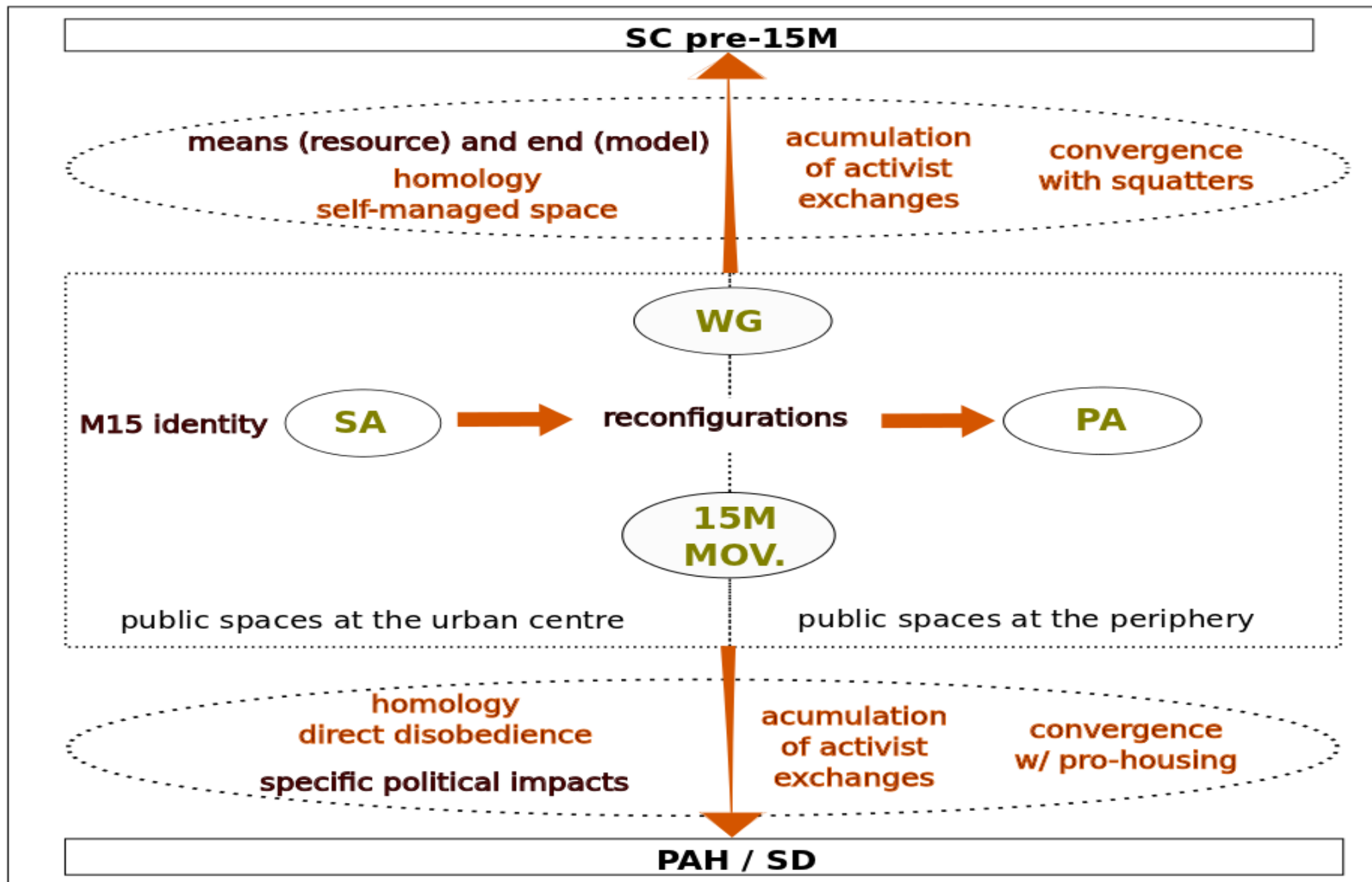
occasional activists

> participants in the
self-management of
the squat

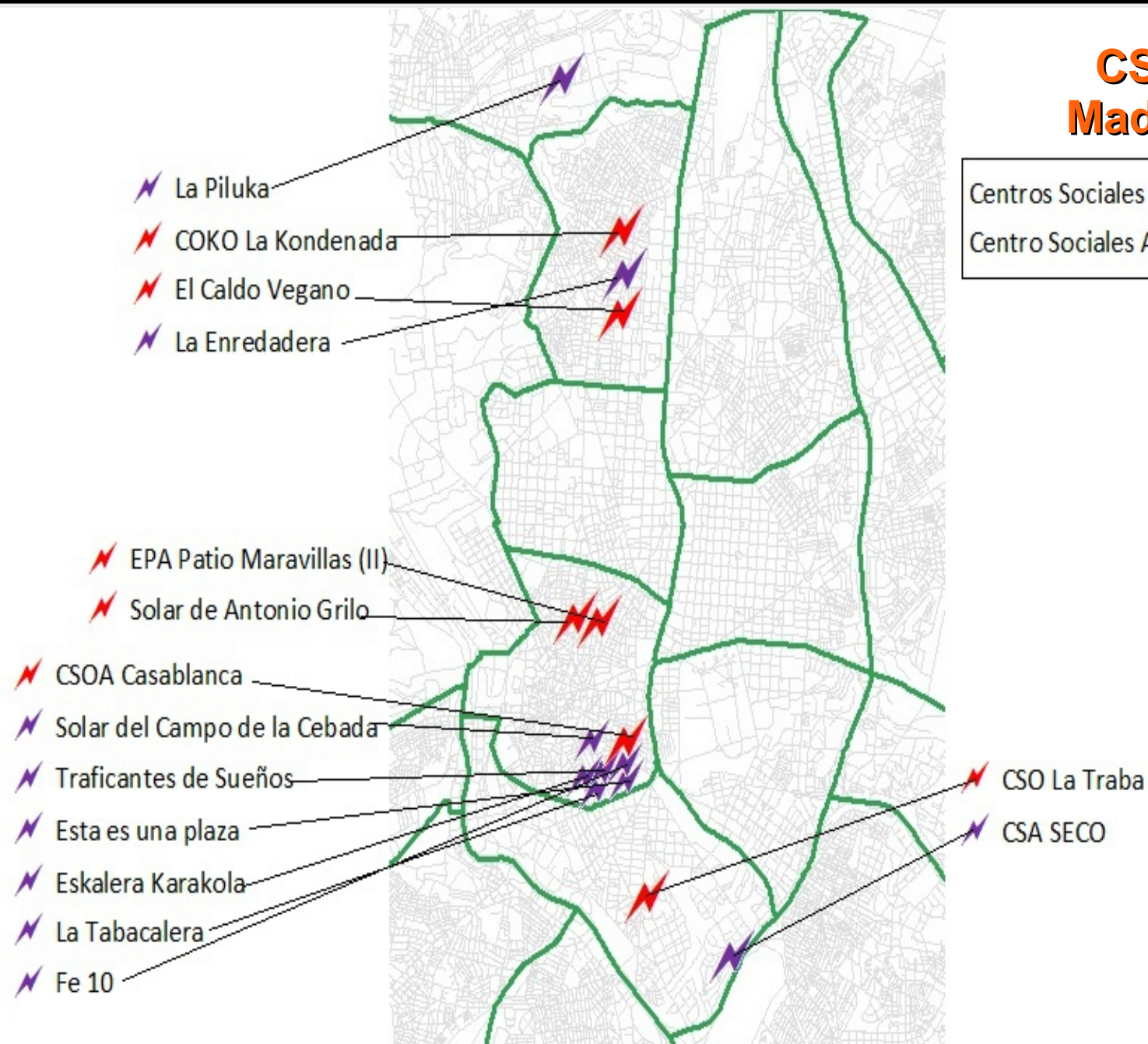
Introduction

- 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

So1 Camp: source of M15 identity



Squatting & M15 convergence



CS pre-15M // Madrid // Centro

Centros Sociales Okupados pre 15M

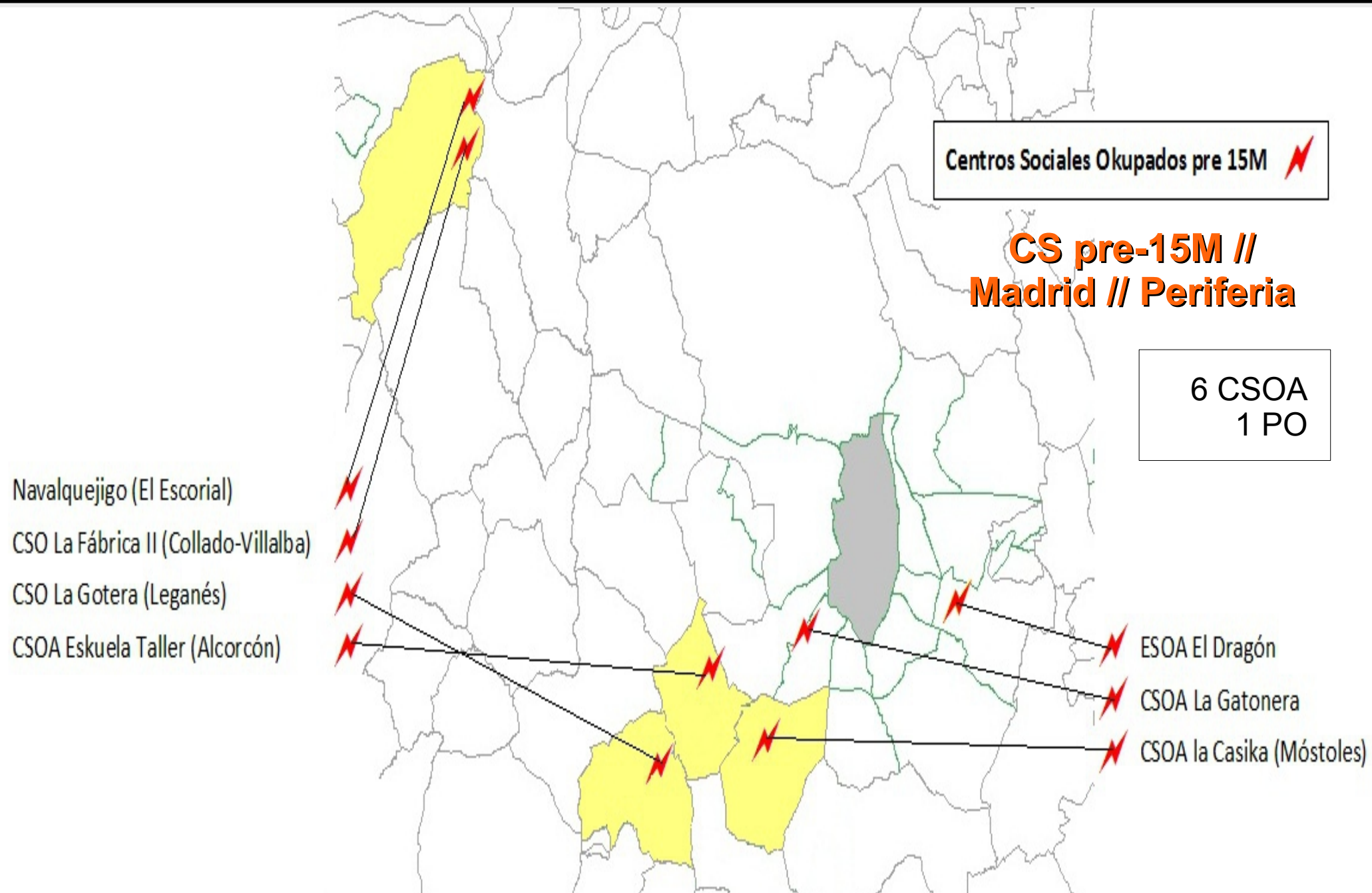
Centro Sociales Autogestionados pre 15M

13 CSOA
6 CSA
1 SOA
2 SA

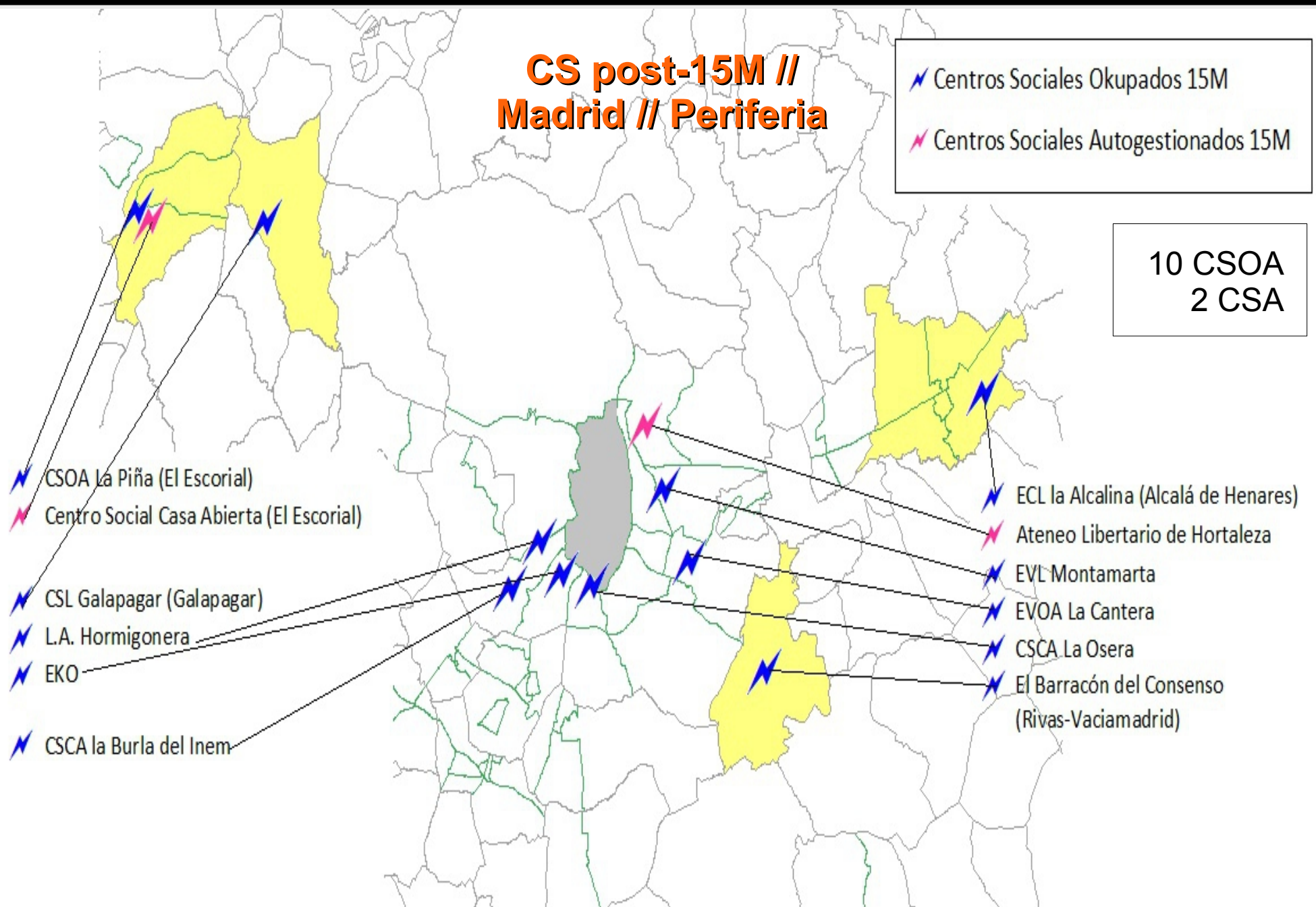
Squatting & M15 convergence



Squatting & M15 convergence



Squatting & M15 convergence



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 legitimacy
of SD and public
discontent with
repression

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

O15 - N20 - D5
2011

M12-M15
2012

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

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

S25 - N14
2012

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

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.
- Novelties: popularity of the Squatting Office (and the HandBook), media coverage, M15-like discourses and new coordination / mutual aid of Squatted 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.