**Transcription of Participant observation notes**

Location: Corner of a street in Santo Domingo, at Patos and Llave

Type of event: Assembly of Water Defence Committee

Duration: One hour

Date and time: November 18, 2022. From 6:15 p.m. to 7:19 p.m.

Additional notes (in addition to field notes): Second assembly in which I participate as a participant observer.

Observer: A

I arrive at one of the pedestrian entrances to Santo Domingo, at around 6:15 p.m. and move to the place of today's meeting through Tetl street. Today is Friday. The meeting will be on a corner in the street, at the intersection of Patos and Llave streets. This is the same corner that was the first time I introduced myself. The meeting is at 6:00 p.m., so I'm a little late today. It takes me approximately 10 minutes to walk to the meeting spot. Public transportation took longer than I expected, which made it difficult for me to arrive on time. I'm going to hurry and hope to be in most of the meeting. As I walk through Tetl street, I see many people out of their homes, especially dining at taquerías or other street food stalls. I also see cars and trucks go by in the street. It is getting dark, but the lights of cars and businesses illuminate the road.

As I approach the meeting place, I see the silhouettes of the neighbours between the lights of the cars. I arrive and observe that the meeting started, though it appears to have recently begun. I ask another assistant, and they tell me the meeting started 5 minutes ago. Waldo is talking about the fact that they are all aware that there has been no water these days, so the Committee will ask for pipas (water tank trucks) from the government of Coyoacan to resolve the situation. They talk about making a list of people to ask for the pipas, and that it is necessary that the neighbours also commit to going to the meetings. Only the households that have someone attending the meetings and registering their attendance will receive the pipas. This is to avoid some people receiving the pipas without being part of the committee's activities and meetings. A neighbour has a notebook and will be responsible for keeping a list of people at the meeting who will need the pipa. Waldo says that people should sign up properly within this list and that everyone should be responsible for their follow-up. People who do not go to the meeting and who are not supporting the activities of the Committee will not be on the list to receive the pipa. That would not be fair to the other people that do go to meetings.

I recognize, attending this meeting, Waldo and his family. I see Tita and Beni too. I see that there are approximately 60 people this time, more people than the last meeting I was in. About 13 are men, and 47 are women. There are different age groups, but mostly I see adults.

Cars are passing, and I can hear the noise of cars, trucks and motorcycles. Between the noise of these machines and the people passing by, the meeting continues. He also talks about the work being done by the local water administration office to build the water well. A list of people is taken on the same notebook that the list of attendees, this time to sign up for monitoring the water well construction. Waldo invites people who have not been signing up normally to sign up. He asks them to get more involved and to commit, so it would not always be the same ones who go to monitor the well. A list of people who sign up for monitoring, which involves going once during the day, is made. People sign up to ensure there is at least one person going to monitor each day of the week. I see that the same person who is making the list for the monitoring is the one who keeps the list of attendance for the meeting, written down in their notebook.

Waldo comments that when the well is connected to the water network, which will be soon, this would not mean that the Committee's activities are over. There will be even more work to do because this group will also have to monitor if there are leaks or problems in the network. They have to keep intense monitoring and notify that everything works well. He also mentioned a conflict and dispute with the people who live adjacent to the construction area. This implies that a group of neighbours opposed the construction of the well. In the end, the well will be built, and these neighbours negotiated with the local government. They ask to receive compensation for any damages to their homes during the construction. Waldo comments that, as a committee, they will support mitigation actions in the houses of neighbouring residents affected by the construction of the well. He says that, however, the actions and negotiations must be the government's responsibility and initiative, and that the Water Defence Committee will not do the work for the government. Waldo also says that the support will be out of a feeling of solidarity with these affected neighbours, who are not part of this group but are part of the neighbourhood. The Committee will work to support them as a community, as was done in the early days of the Santo Domingo neighbourhood. These neighbours will be supported according to the capacities of the members of the Committee, as a collective work. This appeal includes appreciating the effort to start the neighbourhood. I can identify, however, a distinction between the members of the Water Defence Committee and this other neighbourhood group.

Then Beni takes the floor and talks about the progress of the well. There are no microphones or seats. everyone is standing in a circle or sitting on the pavement, and whenever someone speaks, they have to do it loudly to be heard. Beni says that in the following weeks the well will be completed and connected to the water network. According to the advance of the construction works, this well must be completed no later than December. As Beni speaks and says these words, I see a water tank truck pass along one side of the assembly, turning on the adjacent street. Beni talks about the need to commit more as a group. Beni repeats the existing issue with the neighbours that live nearby the well and mentions that as a committee, they should be ready to support, but that the adjoining neighbours should also be clear about what they are looking for, just as the Committee has clear objectives and goals. Beni once again urges people to get more involved, to go to the meetings, and to participate in the activities. He says that few people in the neighbourhood maintain a contentious and supportive spirit, which is needed in these movements. He mentions that it is no longer like before, in the beginning, when everyone is supported selflessly to build the streets of Santo Domingo.

While Beni is speaking, a person who is not part of the committee passes by and is walking down the street. This person, who is probably a resident of Santo Domingo, interrupts Beni and asks him loudly if he can ensure that this group does not take advantage of the people. He says that many groups in this neighbourhood promise many things, but then take advantage of the people who participate. He says that many neighbours are constantly deceived by these groups. That many groups in the neighbourhood supposedly support the people, but their words make no difference. Some of the people attending the assembly tell him that this is a group that has been working for a long time and that they know what they are talking about. They shout that they can guarantee that this group does not take advantage of anyone and that they work as a collective. The neighbour answers loudly and doesn't let them talk. The conversation is lost among the loud replies. Waldo asks this person to listen and not to interrupt. The heckler leaves and one neighbour comments loudly that this kind of person only criticizes but then they are asking to be given the water pipes.

This interaction and the relationships with the group that opposed the well, show how this Committee does not have the only representation of Santo Domingo. There seems to be a distant relationship, and not much cooperation, with the other neighbourhood group. I can't speak of a homogeneous community with a single collective will. Santo Domingo is not a homogeneous space. The activities of the Committee are part of a dispute over the neighbourhood's identity, well-being, and future.

After Beni, Tita speaks. She says first that she is glad to see more people at the meeting, but this is an ironic comment because she also says that there are more people only because they have not had water. She says that she hasn't had any water in her house for four days. She comments that there should always be many people in the meetings and not only when there is no water. Tita also invites people to get more involved in the fight, saying that they are defending their territory. She comments that they must defend their neighbourhood from people who want to displace them because this is their territory.

After Tita, Waldo talks again and introduces me to the Committee, giving me a moment to speak. I then introduce myself again to the neighbours and tell them I'm glad to see them again. I explain once again, as I did a couple of weeks ago, that I am carrying out this investigation and that I will soon start the interviews with people who are interested in participating.

After I speak, the meeting ends. Tita greets me, and we talk a little about how we've been. Verne, a neighbour whom I hadn't met yet, also approached to say he was interested in participating. He asks me if it is necessary to "sign up" with someone to be able to be part of the project, or if he has to wait for instructions from someone. I told him that I would be in touch with him soon and that in the following days, we shall agree on a date and time to have the interview. I see that a queue forms with people who sign up to ask for water pipas and that the same person who kept a register of attendees, also writing down names on this list.

I say goodbye and walk towards Tetl street. As I walk, I hear the announcement of a cart selling bread and announcing it from house to house its products. I see many people walking, arriving at their homes and to the neighbourhood as it gets dark, probably finishing up a long day and week of work.