Tactical Urbanism and the production of the common - an approach to emerging urban practices

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Abstract
This article presents a reading proposal of the emerging urban practices, called tactical urbanism. The goal is to identify in today's urban tactics how the crowds find to inspire, emancipate and build themselves towards the appropriation of their commons. Therefore, a Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism is under construction in order to collect examples of practices through cartography and to systematize it from the desires or subjectivities that have raised them. In this taxonomy the experiences are characterized according to the types of practices, the local potentiality, the articulation and the new possibilities generated by the tactical action. Thus, from the immanent desires of the crowd expressed in the these tactical actions, we seek to understand their potential for the production and appropriation of urban commons.
Keywords: tactical urbanism, commonwealth, multitude, neoliberal capitalism, urban justice.

1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture and urbanism express how the authority manages to order and oppress the society that shapes it, therefore, they are always matters of politics. Considering the crisis of the contemporary city, its frustrations and its signs of overcoming, Montaner and Muxí [1] point to the need to strengthen a critical culture capable of pointing out alternatives from the deconstruction of the dominant processes. More specifically, a critical project to unmask the dominant ideology of globalization, individualism, private property, consumption, and neoliberalism.

Hardt & Negri [2] propose the concept of multitude as a possibility of political organization for an escape from the present form of social organization, to the unity of the people submitted to the leadership and hierarchy of sovereign power. In this perspective, it is urgent to build the self-organization of the crowd in order to resist all form of exploitation. And organize politically its immanence, in the sense of apprehending its own subjectivities, which would indicate desires for other forms of life. For the authors, it is necessary to investigate the biopolitical production capacities of the daily life of the crowd, their forms and interests in producing alternatives and, from there, to know and organize their political composition.

Pelbart [3] explains that the common is the productive space of the crowd, now sequestered and expropriated by capitalism. The latter, which domination acts over the bodies, also has the capacity to adjust itself to the phenomena of its immanence, to incorporate the criticisms elaborated against it. The crowd creates and the Empire tries to capitalize. Thus, the common is permanently under construction, being manipulated but also emanating subjectivities. Resisting to the Empire is, for the author, to escape to the clutches of capitalism through the immanent experimentation of the compositions of the common.

For Harvey [4], a great political possibility of the body is to understand it as a desiring machine: if desire guides capitalist production it can also guide an escape from the oppression of capital and shape alternatives to production, exchange and consumption.

Activations of public spaces promoted by organized or non-organized communities, varied forms of living the urban, time banks, reconstruction of landscapes according to the needs of a given community, are examples of tactics used to escape sovereign domination of the state and capital in the production of urban life and space. This is how the practices of the so-called 'tactical urbanism' operate. They are urban practices with different doses of rebelliousness to the order and bureaucracy imposed by the institutions, and that point to the city's wishes to which its practitioners aspire.

These Do It Yourself and Do It Together actions and revolutions are reflections of the current crisis of representativeness that makes a part of the current generation, super-connected in all kinds of networks of communication and information, no longer recognizes in direct democracy the means to fight for more rights, nor the ideal form of participation in political life. Moreover, for Rena [5], the precariousness of the worker of the present time characterizes him by indebtedness to the financial system that expropriates his life time and his intellect, and by the consequent tendency to do together, to creative collaboration.

Could urban tactics contribute to the democratic control of the crowd over the surpluses of the urbanization process? This response indicates the potential of tactical urbanism in promoting the full right to the city. For this research, the interest in the 'right to the city' is to see it within a process of struggles that aspires to urban justice: a situation of jurisprudence where the law is created from the assemblages of the struggles; the right to the work (to the city built by the people and for the people), the right to the appropriation; a process of transition from the present precarious urban situation to a utopia of the economy of the common.

Therefore, it is sought to understand the characteristics of a new urbanistic practice capable of mediating the conflicts necessary to promote urban law, understood as the appropriation and control of the commons, in the contemporary city. Thus, tactics in the urban, characterized by local action and bottom-up, seem adequate for the experimentation of alternative possibilities for the city and the urban, closer to the biopolitical production of the crowd and experienced in finding loopholes in the current institutions.

Accordingly, a Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism is under construction, in the framework of the master's thesis of the author, who is mapping urban tactics and relating them to the desires that move its practitioners. This research also supports the work of Sobreurbana, a studio of urban interventions where the author works, based in Goiânia, central Brazil.

In the survey and organization of the data collected for this Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism, were considered the types of practices, location, promoters and a characterization based on the Rosa method [6], identifying the local potentiality, the articulation developed and the opportunities generated. From that point, it is sought to learn lessons, to expand repertories and to understand the arrangements formed by the resistance movements of the contemporary city.

2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

The artistic and political experiences produced since the 1960s have contributed to the affirmation of interest in everyday urban life, citizen action and the lessons that can be drawn therefrom for the construction of more inclusive, playful and powerful cities. Since then, an activist art took place in

the public space (artivism), opening up more and more channels of participation, discussion and creation of the common.

Artistic collectives, community art such as site-oriented actions, urban performances, 'situations' and happenings are practices that reveal more political rather than artistic intentions and that dilute the authorial issue. The surfaces of the city, which from the beginning of the twentieth century were already beginning to be the stage of the symbolic disputes mediated by art, at the present time are affirmed as the most fertile space of activist art [7]. Graffiti, bombs, "pixo", panels and projections in city walls, "hacked" billboards, squatters, campers, and other community, artistic and political events reveal urban surfaces as the space of resistance tactics to society alienated by consumption and battered by the expropriation of the common.

Little by little, there has been a certain atomization of the urban practice, since it is perceived that it does not need and should not be restricted to the offices of the public administration or to the offices of the most expensive professionals of the world. In this context the so-called tactical urbanism, often associated with artivism, seems to offer a possibility of resistance against the hegemony of the capitalist production of urban space, as a practice and as an opportunity for the renewal of the discipline of urbanism. Urban tactics are not exactly new, but boosted by new information and communication technologies and also by a widespread dissatisfaction with the political and economic processes that drive urban development today, they have gained more visibility and even some academic interest in recent decades.

Considering the conception of tactics elaborated by Certeau [8] from the operations of daily life, it is considered here as tactical urbanism urban practices unrelated to a totalizing plan in which the tactician, dealing with opportunities found in a territory at a given moment, manipulate them aiming to interfere in the production or use of the urban space. Starting with diverse motivations and from actors from the most varied backgrounds (professionals, social classes), these practices have in common the repositioning of the citizen in the appropriation of the urban commons, although this political and technical vocabulary often are not even used in these actions.

For Lydon [9], who studies tactical urbanism in various parts of the world, involving artists collectives, communities and administrative bodies, there are at least five characteristics common to their practices: a voluntary and gradual approach oriented toward changing one reality; the process of ideation on a local scale to solve planning challenges; short-term commitment and realistic expectations; low-risk actions with the possibility of high rewards; and the development of social capital and institutional capacity among citizens, public and private organizations.

Besides these characteristics found by Lydon, we can raise other important questions that characterize the actions of tactical urbanism, as for instance, its realization in contexts of scarcity. Practices that unfold there may be traced back to the beginning of an as yet untold story of tactical urbanism. To provide themselves with the basic urban infrastructures that are denied by the state and expropriated by the market, poor populations have for a long time providing with their creativity, cooperation and solidarity - the Brazilian slums (favelas) are a great example of an urban space whose forms and norms of living together are fully created and permanently negotiated by its inhabitants.

Analogously, it is now in some of the territories most usurped by neoliberal and rentier policies that tactical resistance has proliferated. Spain, Greece, Portugal, the United States of America, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, India, are countries where several citizen initiatives have used the social force and resources they have at hand to reinvent themselves politically and claim, create, manage and enjoy public and common spaces, physical and virtual.

Another important issue to note is the work and professional activity especially of young people linked to creative economy - architects, urban planners, designers, artists, advertisers, cultural producers - who in different ways adapt to the current and worldwide situation of precariousness of their jobs and to the consequent culture of collaboration. It is well-known the number of tactical actions coordinated by collectives, research institutions and organizations from many different areas, motivated by an idea of social economy and creative entrepreneurship that invents new services and products. On the other hand, this 'independent', unstable, informal and often philanthropic professional activity allows to open paths in a market historically consumed by the elites (access to the work of the architect and urbanist, consumption of artistic and cultural production), for localities that, despite lacking these services, had not hitherto had the prospect of hiring them.

Technology is another issue that affects tactical urbanism, from the intense use and production of new ICTs - information and communication technologies - to the appreciation of artisan and ancestral techniques. The articulation of the networks that combine the actions of tactical urbanism is subsidized by the so-called technopolitics - a social technology that foments the political renewal using the new ICTs, especially the social networks, hacker culture, wireless Internet, georeferencing and smartphones [10]. Technology, which had already inserted photography and other machinic devices as a medium and material for artistic creation (print, film, video, television, computer) in the first decade of the twenty-first century provoked a convergence of art around the internet, social networks and smartphones [11]. The informational and communicative connectivity driven by the networks made it possible to bring together not only artists and activists, but also the ordinary characters of real and virtual daily life.

On the other hand, the improvisation that characterizes tactical actions often leads to an aesthetic associated with the precarious and the artisanal. Reuse of residual materials, re-readings of objects to serve unusual uses, rescue of constructive techniques considered minor, form the repertoire of the tacticians. The provisional character of these practices allows them to be considered as solution experiments that can then be improved for a future and definitive application in the urban fabric, as prototypes to be later replicated, which in certain cities has been adopted in the design and management of the public space.

Given the flagrant insufficiency of the urbanism discipline in promoting justice and social well-being, it makes sense to pay attention to the current role of the intellectual who, according to Hardt & Negri [2], should, from within the social struggles of his time, translate their practices and desires in new theoretical arrangements and new social and institutional organizations. One way of bringing research into the field of forces of the global struggles of contemporary society is, for Rena [5], thought - action or philosophy - praxis, which allows one to understand but also to experience the pluralism and complexity of current political reality. Understanding by doing, extrapolating any imposed totality, seems to be the most adequate way of resisting cognitive capitalism in a society whose relations are rhizomatic, no longer binary.

2.1 Proposed Method

The idea of prototyping, working in collaborative networks and the use of technopolitics are part of the territory of action of Sobreurbana. Based in the city of Goiânia/Brazil, it faces the qualitative scarcity of local public spaces by connecting with creatives and communities, in projects that seek to strengthen resistance movements to the city that oppresses social life, cultural expression and citizen action. To better learn from our peers, we began a work to categorize tactical urbanism, organized into a taxonomy that observes the desires and subjectivities that irrigate urban tactics.

For the collection of the examples it is suggested the cartography as method because this is a way to make visible what is hidden in most maps and official documents, to perceive the movements of

desire. It requires the researcher to be inserted in the field and, therefore, also reflects the affections of the cartographer [12]. Cartography is a political practice and depends on the cartographer's ability to invent his procedures according to the openness to the life to which he allows himself.

In order to organize the collected examples, an online platform[1] was adopted to insert complex information in a rhizomatic way, allowing the visualization of relational maps or views (Figure 1). For Pelbart [3] the idea of rhizome is open to movement and transformation. It is not a static or evolutionary form, but composed of passages, bridges, tunnels, a quite adequate form organize collective intelligence.
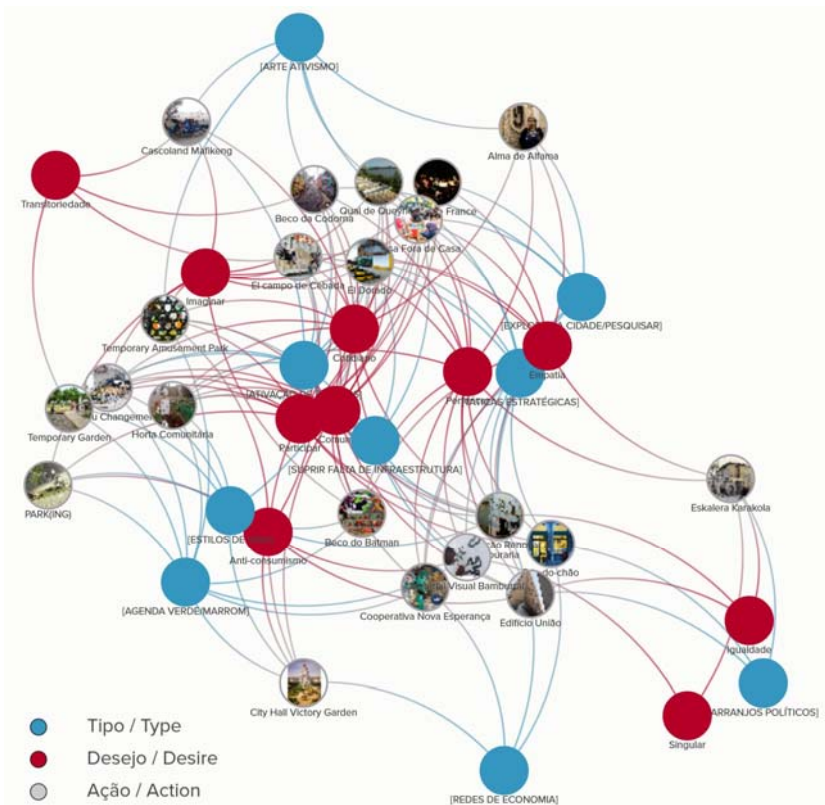
Figure 1. Screenshot from the plataform <https://kumu.io/sobreurbana/urbanismo-tatico> which hosts the Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism.

The taxonomic organization of the examples is given by the interest of the powers of contagion revealed in the exercise of classification, denomination and description. As Foucault [13] observed, it is a groping and seemingly empirical method, this effort to find an order among things, analyzing them, isolating them, approaching them, and joining them.

The studies and subjectivities that direct this research were raised according to what David Harvey [4], Peter Pál Pelbart [3], Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt [2], scholars on the biopower of the crowd, point out as lines of force for an anticapitalist turn of urban development, towards a new economy of the common. They are desires already perceived in the movements of resistance observed worldwide by the authors, organized and grouped as follows.

[Common] - Produce the common/ Inhabit/ Take ownership of the common - Desires of the future linked to the social, ecological and cultural environment in which they are located, materialized through micro-interventions activating public (spheres) spaces with the capacity of resignifying

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[1] Kumu is a plataform created to organize complex information throughout interactive visualization maps of data. It is free to use publicly. For more information: <https://kumu.io/>

them as social spaces, producers of singularities and power of the common (in products and processes).

[Participate] - Collaborate/ Collect/ Communicate - Desire for the participation of 'ordinary' people in the processes that define life in cities. Desire to be protagonist, producer of space. Desire to collaborate, to gather intentions and collective actions, to form networks. Desire to communicate, to sensitize, to contaminate the other.

[Anti-consumerism] - Anti-private property/ Anti-development/ Anti-misery - Desire for economic arrangements based on the ideas of 'common good', sufficiency rather than the need for accumulation, a solidarity economy. It understands the finiteness of natural resources and understands them by the abundance - 'there is for all', simply to improve distribution flows. Encourages DIY and DIT. Against poverty, colonization, extractivism, patriarchy.

[Transience] - Virtual/ Nomadism/ Ephemeral - Desires for dematerialization and transcendence made possible by the metaphysics of new technologies. Desires for new spaces, for the simultaneous and the movement, instead of the static. Desires for the vicissitudes of time, for the transient, for chance, eventual.

[Belonging] - Identity - Desires to be part of something. Desire for pertinence. Desire for emancipation through the evidence and appreciation of identities.

[Daily life] - Living daily life/ Idleness / Playful - Desire for the ludic experimentation of the city. Appreciation of idleness, of not being obliged to produce something 'useful'. Desire and attention to the ordinary, the common life of ordinary people. Desire for the concrete city, for the sidewalk ballet.

[Singular] - Singularity/ Universality/ Multiplicity/ Diversity/ Otherness - Desire to recognize, value, practice the particularities that make up the whole of the crowd. Interest in the differences of the other, the exercise of otherness.

[Imagine] - New utopias/ New aesthetics - Desire for new ways of understanding the world, exercise of preparing the present for a new future. Desire for new ways of sharing sensitivities, for new 'ways of doing'.

[Equality] - Equality against hierarchy - Desires for inclusion, for horizontality. Do not delegate importance to those who are indifferent. Experience ways of direct democracy or other systems truly based on equality.

[Empathy] - Joy/ Love - Desire for the force of love that unites the singularities of the crowd, which overcomes individualism, egocentrism and that guides the production of the common (for the good of all). Desire of loving the other. Desire of being loved by the other. Desire for processes moved by the joy of loving the other, in affective identification by the other.

The platform used allows the insertion of various levels of connections (or points of contagion) among the examples. In addition to the desires and subjectivities, it is considered important to observe among the examples collected what types of practices are used. To date, the taxonomy of types of practices is organized as follows:

[Economy Networks] - Practices that promote the transaction of products and services in alternative ways, such as time banks, local currencies, trade fairs, etc.

[Provide lack of Infrastructure] - Practices that seek to provide a certain locality or group of people with urban infrastructure such as housing, 'public' services and equipment, etc.

[Green Agenda] [Brown Agenda] - Practices based on eco-centric issues (Green Agenda), such as environment conservation or climate change; and practices based on anthropocentric questions (Brown Agenda), i.e., the basic needs of the human being such as urban environmental problems, industrialization, social development, economic growth, etc. [14].

[Exploring the City] [Research] - Practices that promote the experience of urban spaces or those associated with research, data collection, scientific research, etc.

[Activation of Public Spaces] [Micro Environments] - Realization of physical interventions in the urban space, building them, making them available for use, improving their ambience.

[New Ways of Life] - Practices that suggest new ways of living the city or new social arrangements.

[Strategic Tactics] - Practices that, although of a tactical nature, are subject to some sort of planning or are linked in a program of actions of some institution or company.

[Art Activism] - Practices that use art and/or political activism to sensitize, involve communities.

[Political Arrangements] - Practices that experiment new political arrangements such as the varying levels of representation of the democratic system or even anarchy and other forms of exodus to the state.

Both desires and subjectivities defined in the Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism can each relate to several examples since they generally address various urban and social issues and experience various languages, various ways of doing.

In order to subsidize the analysis of these relations with more information about the examples, it was adopted the method developed by Rosa [6] that links data on: local potentiality (characteristics of the fields of action, the action itself and its agents); the articulation made (the context and the arrangement of objects and uses in the concrete space and the negotiation/ opening triggered by the practice); and the opportunity created for the territory and community affected, from the new encodings generated. It is believed that this will allow analysis, hypotheses and conclusions about the potential of urban tactics to direct the struggles of the crowd towards their common welfare.

3. CASE STUDY AND DISCUSSIONS

The cartography started in this work is not restricted to any territorial or temporal cut. The interest in this vast field of investigation is justified by the possibility of recognizing in different locations and moments, similar solutions to similar problems, useful to strengthen common struggles. That is, the adoption of the proposed method, at this stage of the research, rather than closed conclusions, aims to achieve a panoramic view of tactical urbanism based on the established themes of interest: desires/ subjectivities and types of practices.

Thus, the twenty-one practices mapped so far come from several countries such as Brazil, Colombia, USA, France, South Africa, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Peru. But it presents a greater number of Brazilian and Portuguese examples, which are the territories where Sobreurbana has sought to act building networks of collaboration. Cartographic activity, as Rolnik [12] understands, derives precisely from the anthropophagous arrangements of the cartographer, demanding and, finally, revealing a definite approach between the object of research and the researcher.

The desire/subjectivity with the greatest number of connections is the 'common', connected to 15 different cases, followed by 'participation' and 'belonging', with 14 connections each. At the other end, the desire for 'singularities' still has the least amount of connections (2), followed by 'equality' (3) and 'transience' (4). Naturally, this variation depends on the nature of the examples collected which also depends, in cartographic practice, on the cartographer's eye.

Regarding the types of practices, activation of public spaces is the most frequent one (11 connections), followed by Green/Brown Agenda (9 connections) and promotion of new ways of life and strategic tactics (8 connections each). The least practiced are those relating to new political arrangements and new economic arrangements (3 and 4 corresponding connections).

As for the founding agents of these practices, local inhabitant or sympathizers for these causes are responsible for four of the examples. Five practices were raised by local-based associations or initiatives, and the rest were initiated by collectives of artists, architects or designers.

The platform we used allows to create the most varied connections and extract partial views. One example is the territorial grouping of practices carried out in the cities of Goiânia and Lisbon, shown in Figure 2.
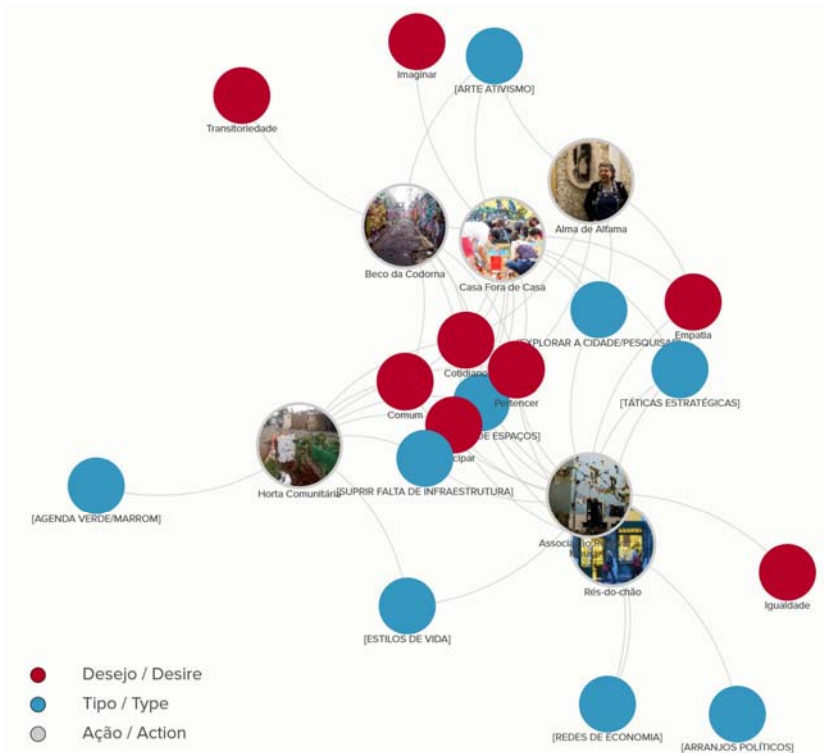
Figure 2. Screenshot of connections between cases from Goiânia/Brasil and Lisbon/Portugal.
<https://kumu.io/sobreurbana/urbanismo-tatico#taxonomia-do-urbanismo-tatico/gyn-lx>

In this 'view' it is possible to perceive that, while in Goiânia practices predominantly seek to activate public spaces and improve the infrastructure of these spaces, in Lisbon, which generally have well designed and equipped public spaces, practices appear to be more concerned with the social arrangements between communities of different cultures and economic arrangements to resist the processes of gentrification. One can therefore observe differences and similarities between practices carried out in territories of specific interest to the researcher, as well as comparing practices that happened at different times or from different agents.

Table 1 shows the individual presentation of two cases. Both occur in places of commercial use. In Beco da Codorna (Goiânia/Brazil), the field is an alley of services used exclusively as parking lot, and due to the absence of urban amenities the space does not favor other uses. The focus of action was the public space itself, with the activation of the alley through collaborative urban art and the production of cultural events. Participation was a key element in the process of improvement of the space, valuing it as a common space for people to meet, hold parties and provoke new surprises to enrich urban experience.

Table 1. Characterization of two cases, according the Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism

	BECO DA CODORNA	RÉS-DO-CHÃO
LOCAL POTENTIALITY		
FIELD	Alley of service, used as parking and surrounded by the back of commercial and services buildings.	Properties with ground floor (*rés-do-chão*) unoccupied, in a traditional neighborhood with a commercial vocation.
DESCRIPTION	Open urban art gallery (graffiti) installed in the walls that delimit the space, organized by the gallery Upoint, based in the alley, where also holds events open to the community.	Social entrepreneurship initiative articulating a network between people interested in occupying vacant properties and their responsible owners. Also organizes a fair with products produced locally and other actions to occupy public spaces.
ARTICULATION		
CONCRET SPACE/ CONTEXT	Mainly used as parking lot. Located in a interior court, with no vegetation or urban furniture and surrounded by buildings, mostly of 1 to 3 floors, with their backs facing the space.	Streets of large flows, narrow sidewalks with various closed and abandoned real estate on the ground level.
NEGOTIATION/ OPENING	The intervention in the alley through graffiti and other activities, allowed the emergence of a playful and attractive living space in a previously inhospitable parking lot.	The built network facilitates the access of small businesses to a suitable property on the ground floor, preventing them from being expelled from the neighborhood. This occupation on the ground floor favors the vitality of the streets.
OPPORTUNITY		
NEW ENCODINGS	The introduction of graffiti and cultural events enables to meet people, especially youngsters, to promote the work of local artists and to activate a residual space in the urban fabric of the city center.	The initiative carries out an economic arrangement detached from the large real estate corporations in order to facilitate the access of local inhabitants to the vacant properties, also valuing the connection of these with the streets, the public space.

On the other hand, the territory where Rés-do-Chão (Lisbon/Portugal) operates, is a neighborhood which is currently living the process of gentrification, holding a significant number of old properties, many just waiting to earn more value. Here, the focus was the management of private properties, in order to help the neighborhood to keep busy and vibrant, particularly at street level. Belonging and participate are common desires shared by both initiatives.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This cartography of urban tactics, while still at an early stage, demonstrates potential in making visible power connections and lines of desire important to better understand the emerging urban practices.

The method used allows the insertion of more data and layers, depending on the interest of the research, the need to understand new issues or to deepen into specific themes. It is also intended to explore, for instance, visualizations showing the types of agents (community, private initiative, research institution, architecture studio, etc.). Such information may be useful for discussions about the relationship of tactical urbanism with labor issues or access to 'city planning services' or 'art products'.

As stated above, the reading standard established by Rosa [5] is used here in a simplified way, sufficient for this level of the research. However, the complete method includes built mass plant (for the analysis of the space morphology), aerial photography, an iconography to demonstrate the tools used (insertion of activities in the field of action, devices for the re-signification of space), and a diagram with several layers for the demonstration of the levels of density of social occurrence (social connections resulting from the practice). These data that can be incorporated, like others that are necessary to better understand more dynamics and effects.

Thus, from the panoramic view provided by this cartography, one can start the immersion in more specific and deeper analyzes, depending on the presence and proximity of the researcher with the fields of action, the practices and their agents. And bring the magnifying glass closer to the cases that matter most at the time.

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