Liga-te ao Bairro – tactics of teaching and research in community participation

Ana Carolina C. Farias – Student at Architecture of the Metropolitan Territories PhD at ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon / carol@sobreurbana.com

Alexandra Paio – Professor at Architecture of the Metropolitan Territories PhD at ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon / alexandra.paio@iscte.pt

ABSTRACT

The inclusion of community participation in processes of design, planning and management of territories is one of the great challenges of the contemporary city. The concept of the right to the city, in critique of the hegemonic production of neoliberal urbanism, reinforces the importance of democratizing the use of the city as a work and stimulating participatory processes that decentralize and redistribute decision-making power over the production of space. And, in this perspective, to value and learn from the initiatives that address the real challenges of communities, that establish combinations of knowledge and experiences between different spaces of dialogue (community life, social organizations, academic research, governance, etc.) and between different areas of knowledge (architecture, urbanism, social and political sciences, art, etc.). Therefore, it is necessary to train agents capable of translating community desires, mediating interests of different actors and capable of constructing feasible alternatives to the injustices that the official means of producing the city still have in their *modus operandi*. The specialization course in Collaborative Territories offered by ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, in partnership with the Architects without Frontiers and the Lisbon City Council, proposes to face this challenge. Already carried out in two editions the course aims, through the involvement of students in real communities and problems, to meet the needs of community workers in order to develop and implement responses to their local demands. As a result of the course activities, it is possible to simulate solutions in the real scenario and design proposals of interventions, together with local community organizations and framed with public financing programs, such as the Participatory Budget and the BIP/ZIP Program, both from the Lisbon City Council. This article will demonstrate the experience of Liga-te ao Bairro (Connect with the Neighborhood) project, one of the proposals developed in the first edition of the course, aiming to understand and record how the initiative articulates local potentialities to generate opportunities for the territory. Therefore, it inserts the analysis of the project into a Taxonomy of Tactical Urbanism, platform built in the framework of the masters dissertation research, developed and advised by the authors. The platform maps practices from the broad spectrum of initiatives identifiable as urban tactics - bottom-up practices, both in opposition to and in addition to the strategic dimension of the official means of producing the city - and relates them to different categories such as the desires and subjectivities that motivate them and the kinds of actions they trigger. Then, the project is read according to criteria about the context of the action, the negotiations promoted in the location and the new codifications generated for space and social relations. Thus, it is possible to visualize who are the actors involved in the actions, the arrangements that are formed and how a collective vision is built on the claimed public space, among other aspects. It is expected to contribute to the study of various emerging urban practices that represent, to some theorists and researchers, possibilities of resistance and disruption to the predatory forces of the official means of producing the contemporary city. And also to offer its agents methodological tools for the criticism and practice of architecture and urbanism.

KEYWORDS: Liga-te ao bairro, tactical urbanism, right to the city, design processes, community participation.

Third Session: Shaping the habitat through community participation