Cartographies of Everyday Conflicts in Public Spaces. Informal Micro-activities on Formal Infrastructure. Carapungo Entry Park, Quito

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Abstract

Through the understanding of cartography as an alternative representation tool, this paper researches the existing and usually invisible relationships between informal micro-activities and formal public spaces. For this purpose, Carapungo Entry Park located in the north of Quito (Ecuador), is taken as a case study, being a paradigmatic case of the complexity and multiplicity that constitutes informality in Latin American cities. After a first analysis based on the formal planning of this park, we will focus on dissident spatial practices carried out by inhabitants who occupy and appropriate a formal space. These situations of conflict originate spatial constructions based on spontaneity, fluidity, adaptability, movement, and temporality, which include local culture, economy, and social interaction. With the production of cartographies, the processes and activities generated by formal and informal vendors, passers-by, and public transport passengers, are made visible and analyzed. The expected results based on cartography as an alternative representation, are the presentation of relations of tensions, forces, conflicts, and negotiations that allow us to identify patterns, trends and behaviors that have no place in the supposed precision and rigor of the regulations in the formal planning of public space.

Cartografiando el conflicto cotidiano en espacios públicos. Micro-actividades informales en infraestructura formal. Parque Entrada Carapungo, Quito

Resumen

Este trabajo investiga, a través del entendimiento de la cartografía como herramienta de representación alternativa, las relaciones existentes y usualmente invisibilizadas entre microactividades informales y espacios públicos formales. Con este fin se toma como caso de estudio el Parque Entrada Carapungo, al norte de Quito (Ecuador), al considerarse paradigma de la complejidad y multiplicidad que constituye la informalidad en las ciudades latinoamericanas. Tras un primer análisis basado en la planificación formal del Parque de Entrada de Carapungo, nos focalizaremos en prácticas espaciales disidentes realizadas por habitantes que ocupan y se apropian de un espacio formal. Estas situaciones de conflicto originan construcciones espaciales basadas en la espontaneidad, fluidez, adaptabilidad, movimiento y temporalidad, que incluyen a la cultura local, economía e interacción social. Con la producción de cartografías, visibilizamos y analizamos esos procesos y actividades generados por vendedores formales e informales, transeúntes, y pasajeros de transporte público. Los resultados esperados basados en la cartografía como representación alternativa, es la presentación de relaciones de tensiones, fuerzas, conflictos y negociaciones que nos permiten identificar patrones, tendencias y comportamientos que no tienen cabida en la supuesta precisión y rigurosidad de la normativa en la planificación formal del espacio público.

Introduction

Carapungo as case study

Carapungo, part of the northern parish of Calderon, is a relatively new neighborhood in Quito, a product of a social housing project that the Ecuadorian government promoted in the 1970s and 1980s (Acosta, 2009). The project intended to address housing needs for low-income sectors; however, it was generally the lower middle class that came to inhabit these properties (Serrano Birhuett, 2016). The government allowed this socio-economic group to get access to land and housing property, which consequently provoked the organization of land use and urban development, and soon Carapungo became one of the most intense areas of growth in Quito (Acosta, 2009). In 2002, this process was accelerated when the municipality expanded the (Serrano Birhuett, 2016) land use from only residential to industrial and commercial uses which led to a significant increase in the construction of illegal dwelling units and informal settlements on these non-residential lands (Serrano Birhuett, 2016). In its 79.17 km2 (Municipio de Quito, 2021), the population has expanded drastically in recent years. The neighborhood of Carapungo has a population of over 40,000 people, while Calderón parish grew from 84,000 inhabitants in 2001 to over 185,000 in 2010, surpassing the 120% growth rate and being one of the densest areas for hosting 7.8% of the city population (Municipio de Quito, 2021)[1] (Figure 1).

Located on the most northern border of Quito, Carapungo constitutes the main entrance to the city from this direction. In addition, the construction of the Pan-American Highway in 1971 established a referential point for urban growth and, at the same time, benefited the city with an increase of commerce and transportation. The Highway's construction coincided with the oil boom in the country that brought significant capital in-flows with a direct impact not only on road improvements throughout the country but also on development and 'modernization' of areas like Carapungo (Zambrano *et al.*, 2021). However, the development in this district did not consider criteria for urban expansion and local migration.

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1 The Zone Administration (*Administración Zonal Calderón*) carried out a census projection through direct work with the entire neighborhood and community leaders of the parish, who helped to verify the number of families and their members in each neighborhood.

Figure 1.
Carapungo location in Quito.

Calderon district
Carapungo neighborhood
Pan-American highway
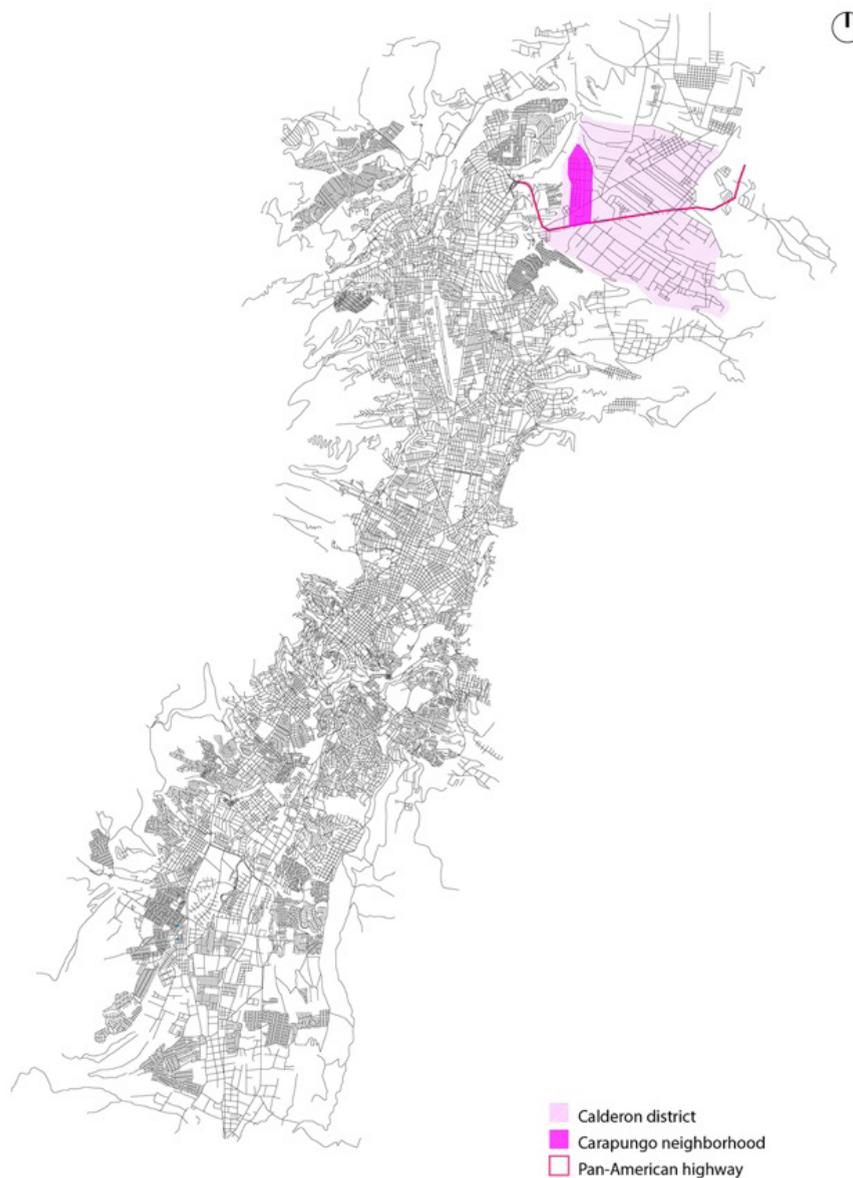
Source: the authors

In 1990, the Municipality of Quito established the construction of two new lanes in the Pan-American Highway, allowing the embrace of mixed land use that included industries. Today, there is a high volume of vehicular flow on the highway, with six lanes in either direction (12 in total) that cross the parish from north to south, dividing the urban fabric in two sectors. The pedestrian connectivity between these two sections is limited, as there are only three pedestrian crossings along the three km stretch. The main entrance to the neighborhood is a crossing at the Pan-American Highway and the avenue Luis Vaccari. In that corner is located the Parque Entrada Carapungo [Carapungo Entry Park] and two areas designated as bus stops2 – where some of the most important bus lines connect to the city's bus stations–, a plaza in front of the police station, one pedestrian crossing, a formal market and an informal market spread around the park, sidewalks, and the pedestrian crossing ramp (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
Carapungo Entry Park.
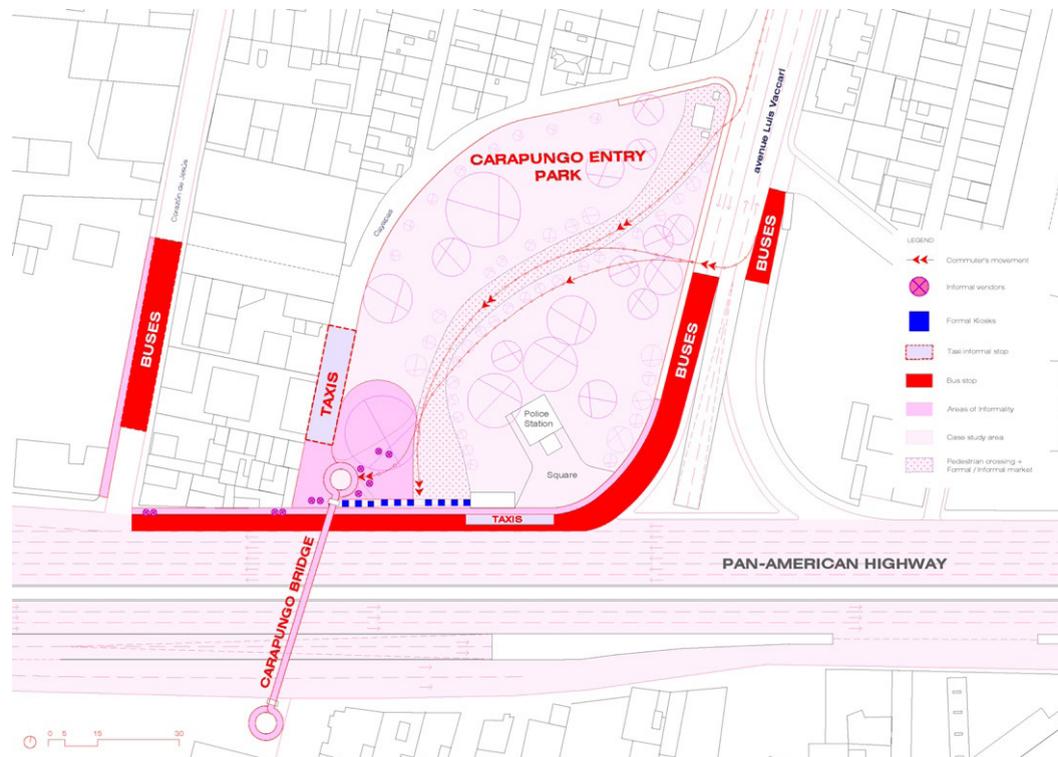
Source: the authors.

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2   These bus stops are not formally identified with urban equipment or furniture. Instead, there are some blurred or vanishing lines on the asphalt with the word 'BUS'.

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A residential neighborhood that is, at the same time, connected to the country's most important highway, Carapungo has undergone a sustained boom in commerce and industrial activities. In a sense, the economically-active population responds particularly to these two processes, in which commercial activities represented 20%, followed by manufacturing with the 18%, construction and transport with 7%, each according to the last census carried out in 2010 Census. Adding to the residential landscape, Carapungos' streets include grocery stores, micro-companies with formal, autonomous, and minor commerce, independent professionals, and services such as manual workers, telephony, communication and information, prepared food, craftsmanship, and organic agriculture. There is one main market that supplies food products of vegetable and animal origin that is complimented also by chain supermarkets. Zones of bars, karaoke, and discotheques are insecure because of drug dealing, the presence of gangs, and assaults on passers-by (Municipio de Quito, 2021). At the entrance to Carapungo, vehicular mobility predominates, and pedestrians face vulnerability along the Pan-American Highway. Problems of transport, mobility, accessibility, roads, public space, and services, imply social inequality, health problems, insecurity, and elevated costs of services and products.

For this research paper, we aim to visibilize micro-activities developed at Carapungo Entry Park along several parameters –formal, informal, spontaneous, flow, and adaptability– with the purpose to understand the complex socio-spatial situations of local inhabitants. In doing so, we explore the cartography as an alternative representation method for urban design and for highlighting the production of public space over the 'formal city'. We consider everyday spatial practices produced by locals, who understand them as strategies to operate in this public space, as intrinsic relationships between the urban and social configurations that depend on each other to exist (Segura, 2006).

State of Art

To shed light on this research, we anchor this work on theoretical propositions from different scholars that emphasize causal functions of human activities within the spatial order in public informal contexts –economic, social, infrastructural, urban, and cultural– through informal practices. Thus, we point out some of the key approaches to informal occupations, tactics, and affections in public spaces.

INFORMAL OCCUPATION OF PUBLIC SPACE

Informal practices –associated to socio-spatial conflicts– are usually built up, removed from, and reassembled at themselves in short periods, for what we bring Ananya Roy's understanding of informality as a "series of transactions that connect different economies and spaces to one another" (Roy, 2005, p. 148). This allows individuals and groups to elude the social control or architectural restrictions and regulations, becoming

dissident agents with power over their own actions (Certeau, 2011). This defiance occurs as inhabitants, in the case of Carapungo, act, create, and attach with their experience from the place and community. The appropriation and occupation of public space "responden a lógicas sociales que pueden ser desentrañadas con las herramientas de las ciencias sociales" [respond[s] to social logics that could be unraveled from social sciences][3] (Connolly, 2009, p. 15) by understanding social processes that are not regulated. It is their quotidian actions that let them defy and expand their space and fulfil their goal: an economic revenue from informal practices acting on formal structures (Hernández *et al.*, 2009), creating, as Krugman points out, an economic geographical structure determined by the tension between these formal and informal forces (Fujita & Krugman, 2004, p. 180).

Hence, informality in public spaces is not a set of dominant rules defined by official regulations for the sake of maintaining social order; it is rather a contested network (Silva Arriola, 2010) where inhabitants are creative enough to manage different complexities to achieve their own spatial practices.

INFORMAL TACTICS ON PUBLIC SPACE

Policies and programs applied to informality from governments show that these actors do not completely understand all the variables in the informal political economy; governments have continuously tried to either regulate or eliminate informality through public interventions (Duhau, 2013). In this initial conflict, inhabitants use dissident tactics to respond to those spatial regulations, which is largely seen as a manifestation of "informal processes in the urban environment" (Roy & AlSayyad, 2003, p. 8), that allow them to operate in the public space, even if is momentarily, their cultural 'realities'. Informal sectors provide a major income to inhabitants that depend on daily production to receive a revenue (Lutzoni, 2016), grasping most of the time, a socio-spatial complexity that is made visible in the public space: "the creative capacity in question here is invariably that of a community or collectivity […] a social reality capable of investing a space –capable, given the resources (productive forces, technology and knowledge, means of labour, etc.), of producing that space" (Simonsen, 1991, p. 115).

Tactics and activities are usually exposed and practiced in the public space, where norms and regulations are challenged at a daily basis, and where people generate contested spaces through informal activities practiced on 'formal' structures.

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3   Translated by the authors.

INFORMAL AFFECTIONS ON PUBLIC SPACES

Informal actions are a form of power that is shared by communities through their informal practices, despite their differences and heterogeneity –relying entirely in the act of occupying the public space (Laguerre, 1994). They are dissident collective performances for providing protection to themselves. The collaborative perception in informal practices is familiar for having different transactional positions (Simone, 2004), especially when inhabitants operating in the public space develop affections and a sense of community. The philosopher Jacques Rancière presents two ways to build and feel the existing or the real. On the one hand, from *consensus*, it refers to the regulated power and the visible –distant notions from what this research has found–; and on the other hand, from *dissensus*, asserting from a deference of sensitivities that generate exactly that sensible conflict that we can see in each corner of Carapungo.

For Ranciere (2010, p, 139), "dissensus is a conflict between a sensory presentation and a way of making sense of it, or between several sensory regimes and/or *bodies*". If conflict is sensitive to the bodies that generate it, the representation of those spatialities relies on being a sensitive method not only to the visible –shapes–, but to the invisible or sensitive –forces/affects– that mobilize those bodies.

These reflections highlight that formal and official planning are not usually in coherence or synchronized with people's reality in zones where informality has an important presence and affect is the driving force behind these overlooked spatial constructions (Thrift, 2008). The relationships and networks that Carapungo's inhabitants develop as informal practices illustrate the contrast and exclusion that these actions generate as affections of urban life. For that purpose, and following this theoretical approach, we expand the spatiality of informality through cartographies to make visible and to understand the conflicts and negotiations that drive in such a complex public space.

Methodology

THEORETICAL-METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Understanding Carapungo's socio-spatial conflicts requires a critical alternative method that goes beyond the conception of urbanism or architecture as a mere provision of static objects, more or less accurate to their shape, aesthetic, scale, or program, which only offer us the so-called 'dead geographies' (Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000). Making these geographies come alive requires considering the bodies and affects that construct them, which brings us to Non-Representational Theory (NRT) proposed by Nigel Thrift (2008). For Thrift, space cannot be something already given to analyze the planned and regulated (and usually represented), but rather bodies, relations, affects, forces or conflicts (normally non-represented, silenced and

oppressed) which, both in the case study of Carapungo and Latin America, are the real spatializing agents, the ones that understand "space as an active operator, rather than a passive sign standing for something else" (Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000, p. 427). At this point, the following question emerges: how to make visible those public spaces shaped by these performative bodies? The answer we propose is through cartographies.

The NRT methodological approach is strongly influenced by the thinking of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, specifically by their understanding of the notion of affect, which is understood "as a form of thinking" (Thrift, 2008, p. 175) by forces that our body receives and emits in order to move, relate and interact with the environment (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 287-288). What Deleuze calls cartography is making visible these displacements and affections (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 303-305).

In this paper, cartography consists of identifying and characterizing, through a series of lines, all these relationships that affect and define the bodies of Carapungo. Cartography makes visible the lives of inhabitants: "What is tell in someone's life, individual or group, is a certain set that can be called cartography. A cartography is made of lines (…) that vary from individual to individual, from group to group" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 303). Likewise, this method requires a way of approaching public space not from a perspective of grand narrative but from the existing singularities of each context – "to think is to issue singularities" (Deleuze, 2015, p. 178), to build those "new maps that allow us to orient ourselves in the thickness of the constructed situations and not only in the thinness of their surface" (Cortés, 2008, p. 10). Reckoning with the deep complexity of the most unfathomable of the individual and of the territory is one of the main challenges of our cartography. This notion of deleuzian cartography has been moving from the 21st century (Cobarrubias & Pickles, 2009) towards becoming a tool of critical knowledge with the purpose to manifest a haptic, polyhedric, and multidimensional spatiality of our cities. It is a claim of the new and alternative way to analyze public spaces, where the formal, static, objectual, and hierarchical are exceeded by forces, dynamics, bodies, and relationships of power and counter-power at a local scale.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: DATA COLLECTION AND CONTENT OF CARTOGRAPHIES

Cartographic production, as a method developed for this research, uses information collected through fieldwork and critical representation. Verbal and observational data serve as a basis for understanding the user's daily experience in a socio-spatial order. To gather data and information, this research conducted hours of site observation, interaction with short-term and temporal users, casual interviews to street vendors, both formal and informal, passengers, eye-level videos, and drone flights recorded at 30 meters altitude.

We visited the place three times at different hours over a period of three months in 2022, mindful of the multi-dimensional aspects of urban scenarios (Yeung & Savage, 1996). The first visit was on Friday, February 4th from 11:00 to 12:30 and we recorded videos and took pictures; we came back on Wednesday, February 9th from 5:00 to 7:30, were eye-level videos and drone videos were taken, and also people were interviewed; and the third time on Friday, April 22nd from 15:00 to 17:00, we recorded eye-level, drone and 360 videos, took elevated and 360 pictures, and interviewed users and passers-by, to then triangulate this

information (Creswell, 2018) with official urban plans, allowing us to find a meeting point of the data that enhance the scope and range of our research question. This data allowed the production of cartographies with a more sensitive approach, in which the observation and ethnographic fieldwork enhanced a more critical representation of conflictive spaces and of hidden dimensions. Linked to Momoyo Kaijima's architectural ethnography description: "a method of observing and drawing architecture and urban space from the viewpoint of the people who use it" (Kaijima *et al.*, 2018, p. 9).

We draw a base cartography accompanied by four more detailed ones. The cartography has a legend specifying five different variables: 1) Informal bodies in Carapungo (commuters and vendors); 2) spatial relations (through very specific notations); 3) movements (through different sort of lines); 4) vehicles; and 5) specific areas. It is also worth noting that formal situations are depicted in blue tones, whereas everything related to informality is drawn in pink tones.

Findings and results

CARTOGRAPHIES OF CARAPUNGO ENTRY PARK

Carapungo Entry Park comprises 10.500 sq. m., a perimeter of 420 m., and it is located two blocks away from an overpass built in 2016 and shopping mall inaugurated in 2019. The analysis of occupancy practices in this public space is made visible through cartographies, and through the relationships between formal urban landscape and informal micro-activities.

We foreground spaces that produce conflicts related to movement, displacement, waiting areas, and commercial activities, to then address a set of situations where informality operates over formal order. The cartographies show strategies used by locals to mitigate some vulnerabilities in this public space and can recognize their "right to the city" (Simonsen, 1991) by claiming and occupying some places temporarily (Roy, 2005). We consider it essential to make visible and discuss the types and relationships of inhabiting places where people spend more time. To this extent, we have distinguished two specific situations: people that wait for a bus or the ones that arrive by bus –*pendular displacements*–, (Brikman, 2021; Córdoba *et al.*, 2015) and people that work formal and informal.

In the study "Transportation demands of Quito" (Idrobo & Asociados, 2007) was found that among four neighborhoods in this zone, Carapungo presents the highest amount of time for travelling to the city center, including the highest number of people commuting during peak hours ("Fortalecimiento de centralidades urbanas de Quito", 2009). The second situation is triggered by the park's strategic location; it brings a high number of people to gather within and around it, especially when they are waiting for a bus or when they are arriving to this zone. This reality has brought commerce to the inside and periphery of the park, with both

formal and informal vendors. The formal vendors are located linearly in front of the bus stop area on the Pan-American Highway (Figure 3), and informal vendors are usually in movement along the sidewalk or seated on other areas around the park (Figure 4).

Figure 3.
Left Location of the kiosks in front of the Pan-American Highway. Right. Formal kiosks.

Source: the authors

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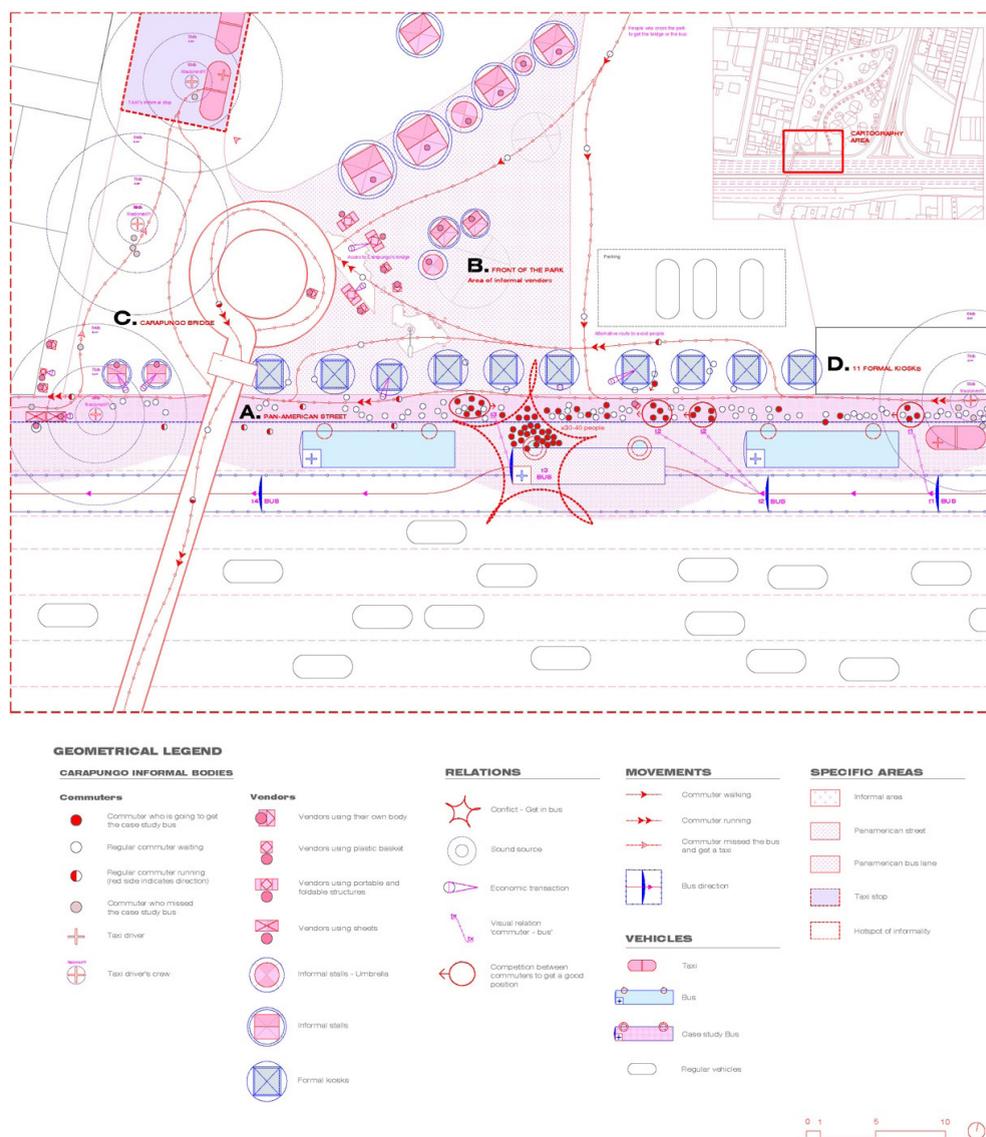
Figure 4.
Types of informal vendors and their tactics to sell.

Source: the authors.

Our particular interest is exploring how public space becomes a place of conflict and negotiation through strategies of flux. Hence, we focus on four areas (Figure 5): A) the front of the park –the Pan-American side; B) the internal pedestrian crossing that operates as a temporal street-market; C) the ramp of the pedestrian bridge; and D) the eleven formal kiosks.

Figure 5.
Cartography of the four areas with its legend.

Source: the authors.

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A. Front of Pan-American side

On the sidewalk fronting the Pan-American, bus passengers accommodate themselves within the two-meter-width sidewalk, while others confine themselves to the spaces in between the kiosks. There are three public-private bus lines[4] that stop on the Pan-American side: *Transporte Calderón, Semgyllfor,* and *Quiteño Libre*; and three public bus lines: *Ecovia Alimentador, Trolebus Alimentador,* and *Metrobus Alimentador.* When a bus approaches, especially bus lines from *Trolebus*, *Ecovia*, or *Metrobus*, people start rushing to get a seat or place within it. In these moments, people become a mass that follows the bus until it stops, and while waiting for the door to open, the struggle for getting inside exceeds the limits of personal space. Once the door opens the brawl continues, and gradually, that mass disappears as it gets in the bus. Nevertheless, if the bus has not enough space for everyone, it starts moving again and closes its door while still in movement, provoking an adventurous few men to grasp the door handrail with half their body outside the bus in their fight to maintain a place. There is people's frustration for not getting inside the bus, but also on those that are inside as the bus is overcrowded. This undignified way of traveling for basic needs such as work, education, and access to health centers, are routinely squeezed together-contorted, uncomfortable, and even in pain.[5] As the bus leaves, pressure and tension are released until the next bus arrives, when a similar situation could be repeated (Figure 6).

While other means of transportation are available, such as taxis and shared taxis, the price is prohibitive. A bus ticket costs 35 cents, while a shared taxi to Av. Naciones Unidas is one USD. Carapungo's inhabitants are largely working-class people, many of them having inadequate employment. Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos (INEC, National Institute of Statistics and Census, in its Spanish acronym) published a report indicating that by June 2021, the 62.95% of Ecuadorians had inadequate employment, meaning they are underemployed or under unpaid jobs, including informal vendors (INEC, 2022). The average age of informal vendors in Quito is 35 years old, and the proportion between men and women is balanced (Guatumillo *et al.*, 2021). The following table (Table 1) summarizes the income, expenses, net profit, and working hours of informal vendors before and during the pandemic.

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4   Public transportation in Quito is both publicly and privately owned and one of Quito's biggest problems, in a sense because private transportation companies do not have adequate oversight.

5   It is inevitable to compare this situation to the photograph series of Michael Wolf "Tokyo Compression", where he presents the daily situation of Tokyoites commuters when taking the train in rush hours. There is an inhuman crush of their bodies for being constrained between glass, steel, and people.

Table 1.

Informal vendors' income in Quito before and after the pandemic.

Daily income	Before pandemic	After pandemic
High sales day	$20.00	$12.00
Low sales day	$10.00	$5.00
Normal sales day	$15.00	$8.00
Working hours per week	47h	51h
Daily expenses	$5.00	$3.00
Net profit	$10.00	$5.00

Source: the authors based on data taken from Grupo FARO (2020).

In such manner, if people miss a bus, they might need to take a route taxi and then a bus to reach their destination. Considering the low-income of informal vendors and the country's basic salary,[6] paying this much represents a bigger effort in their economy. It is a situation in which people have developed specialized skills and "sensitivities that can adapt to the unpredictable range of scenarios […]. Regularities thus ensue from a process of incessant convertibility […]" (Simone, 2004, p. 410). The presence of these means of transportation does not indicate that transport problems between Carapungo and the rest of the city are solved; on the contrary, it evidences the many problems the city has in terms of mobilization.

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6   According to data from INEC (2020), the average monthly income before the pandemic was $302, which decreased by approximately 46,36%, obtaining an average income of $162 after the pandemic. It should be noted that this income is lower than the unified basic salary and the basic household provisions.

Figure 6.

Left: cartography of spatial conflict. Right: passengers trying to catch a bus in movement.
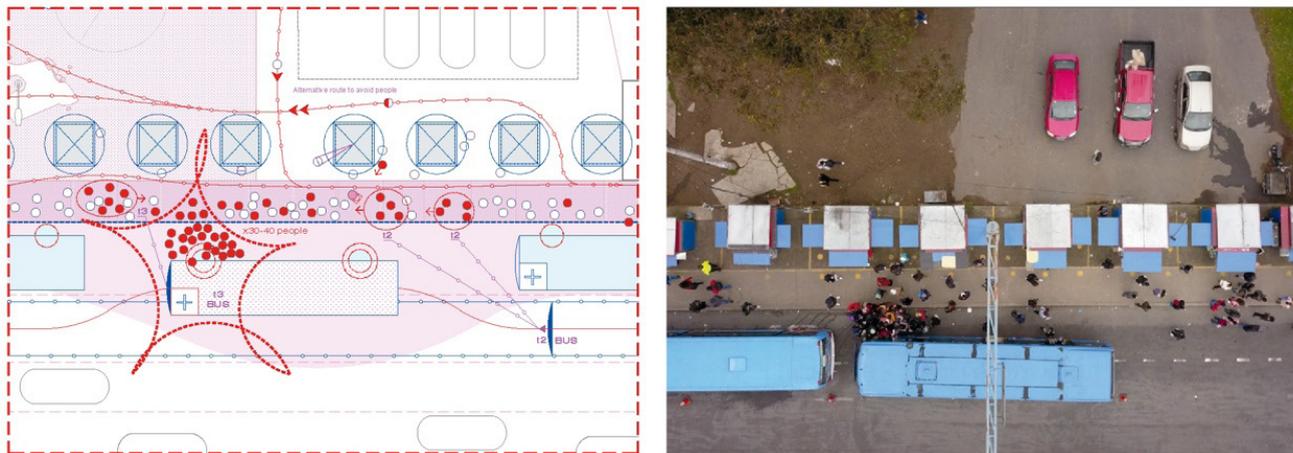
Source: the authors.

B. INTERNAL PEDESTRIAN CROSSING

The internal pedestrian crossing during the street-market days, Fridays and Saturdays from 8:00 to 18:00, brings more than the usual number of people. In a serpentine 4.75-5.75m-wide-walkway, over 70 light structures are installed as commercial stands, most of them made of metal structure, textiles, fabrics, tents, and sunshields, drying racks made of ring are attached to trees, plastic chairs that placed together form a table, or mobile metal structures. The portable stalls, covered with tarps or cloth tent, are small sized and multifunctional, highly flexible for physical and functional adaptation that accommodate mixed commercial activities; moreover, these structures are rapidly constructed and use everyday materials. In this walkway, people tend to slow down out of curiosity, engaging with the commercial traders, or because of the crowd's size. There is always music playing around the street-market from a speaker placed in the green area behind the stands, a technique used very often in Latin cities to attract passers-by to shop. The small stands deliver various kinds of household goods ranging from furniture, fresh food, cooked food, flowers and plants, clothes-dyeing, clothing, jewelry, and essential services such as knife sharpening and beauty accessories.

The act of building a place for informal commercial trading has long been among the strategies of people in precarious economic situations, as they spend a high amount of time in these places, but also by making visible objects and structures that they need for their stands or selling spots. These spatial relationships

are, one the one hand, social productions and, on the other, daily life survival strategies. These structures, objects, and environments are a critical part of Carapungo's urban landscape as in other informal cities.[7] Such gathering of informal structures for vending activities, have transformed the everyday pace of passers-by: they are small scale –or human scale– that are easy to manage and adapt with their everyday circumstances. Whilst vendors operate at a small scale, there is a continuous adaptability of the structures and products they sell, which makes them flexible to deliver services and even becoming strategists that adapt to local practices and timing (Polakit & Boontharm, 2008) (Figure 7).

Figure 7.
Left: cartography of street market on the internal walkway. Right: view of self-assembled stands.

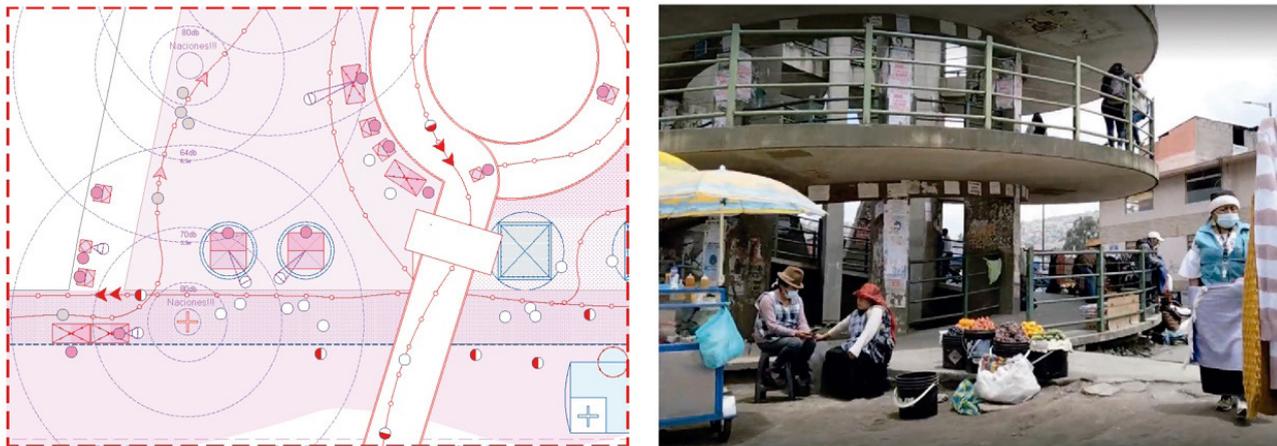
Source: the authors.

C. Pedestrian Bridge Ramp

This ramp is a spiral approximately 10 meter in diameter, two meters in width, and reaches 10 meters in height. It is made of concrete and faced with a continuous metal fence along the length of the ramp and bridge. It connects both opposite sides of the Pan-American Highway, where people that come from the city center need to use it to enter in Carapungo or leave the district to reach the city center. Because the buses lack an electronic tracking system, it is common to see travelers running along the bridge and ramp, either going

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7   In Ecuador, INEC has estimated that there were 3,6 million informal workers in 2019, and by November 2021 there were four million; meaning that in two years, around 400.000 people entered the informal labor market. The research center FARO, conducted a study on informal commerce in Quito during COVID-19, estimating that in 2020, there were over 190,000 informal workers (Grupo FARO, 2022).

down or up, as they try to take the coming bus. On the spiral ramp, especially on the starting point, some informal vendors place their goods on the floor or holding on the handrail, and as it goes up, there is more distance between the vendors. Some vendors carry things by hand, on a wood stick, on plastic baskets that hang on their shoulders or chest and back, and some use a metal rack to hang their goods. They know this is not an ideal place to sell their items, yet they remain between seven to nine hours a day if the local police do not remove them. Informal vendors are conscious that they benefit themselves from keeping the pedestrian flow open and without constant obstacles (Roy, 2005) so they carry their products on their bodies, to move more easily along the sidewalk and bring quick attention to people that arrive or wait in this zone. Thus, this ramp –together with its informal vendors and passengers– represents a significant source of livelihood due to the movement of people and the adaptability that all of them must place themselves in these nonlinear and regular places (Figure 8).

Figure 8.

Left: cartography showing movement and interaction within and around the ramp. Right: informal vendors using the ramp and its surrounding.
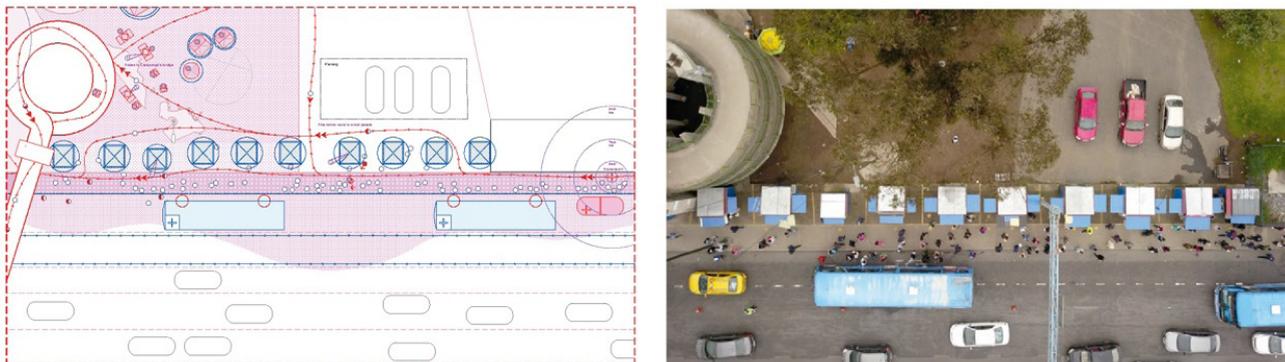

Source: the authors.

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D. Formal Kiosks

Kiosks are a traditional form of street vending, though not the most used form in Latin-American public spaces. The 11 kiosks on the sidewalk were provided by the municipality in 2016. They are fixed to the floor and are at an equidistant distance of two meters among each other along 44 meters long. They are made of metal and have metal zinc sheets for roof, nine of them are 200x200x240 cm and two 180x180x240 cm, with an opening on the front at 100cm height that faces the highway, two windows on their left and right sides, usually covered by products or posters, and a metal back door that faces the park. Notably, nine of the eleven kiosk-keepers are women, a situation consistent with many other studies of informal cities which find that most stationary vending traders are female, for associating the static to safety as they are more recognized by municipal officials, other traders, and people that quotidianly come to the "bus station"; contrary to the mobile condition that is more linked to vulnerability, intimidation and insecurity by passers-by, other male traders, and customers (Peimani & Dovey, 2018; Roy, 2005).

The kiosks sell goods such as prepared and semi-prepared food, beverages, cellphone accessories, cigarettes, magazines, and so on. The proximity between each other creates an interface with street traders, people waiting for the bus, and people arriving to the park. During rush hours, there is a high pedestrian flow, making this interface a prime retail opportunity and a shopfront. Formalized street trading allows the products of offer to typically be more permanent, stored, and lasting (Kamalipour & Peimani, 2019). However, their fixity also makes them least adaptable and fluid –– a representation of formalizing the informal (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Left:
cartography representing the interface on public space. Right: kiosks in front of Pan-American Highway.

Source: the authors.

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Discussion

Urban design and architecture are disciplines that put special emphasis on organizing a space or environment (Yatmo, 2008). They represent the official plans to order and give aesthetics to a place. However, Carapungo Entry Park has demonstrated that the official formal planning does not always commune with the changing economic and social situations, especially when people work on a daily income in public spaces in non-formal jobs. It is plausible the existing gap between the traditional imaginary of these disciplines and the actual inhabitants' needs and affects.

This is a phenomenon that happens largely in informal cities (Ball, 2002; Yatmo, 2008) where conflicts and negotiations are a daily-life-modus-operandi on public spaces. In trying to follow official urban plans, the city acts with numerous laws, zoning codes, nuisance regulations, and local authorities' actions that constantly try to remove informality from streets. Nonetheless, informal economy supports largely the formal economy (Martínez *et al.*, 2017), especially as the products sold by street vendors frequently benefit middle-class and low-income urban people since these products are more affordable, varied, and convenient that those found in formal markets (Kamalipour & Peimani, 2019; Saha, 2016).

BROADENING THE NOTION OF INFORMALITY AND CONFLICT IN PUBLIC SPACES

Informality is typically understood by decision-makers (politicians, economic power, architects, or urbanist linked to these spheres) as a major problem of contemporary cities, especially in South Asia or Latin-America (Roy, 2011). From Carapungo's experience, this paper aims to deepen the characteristics of informality in public spaces and to challenge such conceptions of informality that frame it as only poor and conflictive settlements (slums, favelas, villa miseria) or only streets vendors occupying publics spaces. Informality, following Ananya Roy's words, is a mode of metropolitan urbanization (Roy, 2005) and follows up the academic discourse that identifies informality to the 'right to the city', whether it is because informal actors are citizens and they not only occupy the space but backup the formal economy, or because informality transgresses the 'official' conditions for other users. Informality is a complex situation that happens on a regular basis, configuring the inhabitants' daily life and the city urban landscape. In this regard, Certeau's distinction of strategies and tactics is the state's organization "to confront the self-organized tactics of citizens" (Kamalipour & Peimani, 2019, p. 2), by creating a range of urban morphologies withing the formal city (Certeau, 2011; Kamalipour, 2016; Kamalipour & Dovey, 2017; McFarlane, 2012; Roy, 2011).

In Carapungo's public space, inhabitants promote, build, and create informal spatial practices to survive economically as a complex spatiality that depicts either a slum or a collective of street vendors, and brings together repetitive and micro situations such as the struggle of people to get in a bus. These 'spatial informalities' developed in public spaces–based on dynamic processes where bodies become sensitive to the

particularities of the territory– need to be analyzed with a view to understanding urban and architecture design in conflictive contexts. Examples as 'Subaltern Urbanism', coined by Roy (2011), or 'Gang Urbanism', proposed by Cano-Ciborro (2017), are emergent instances of new approaches to the city. In Carapungo, these bodies are informal vendors, taxi drivers, and regular commuters, due to their subversive actions that are linked to economy. However, it is not only individuals that fight for their survival; it is also bodies and their occupations that build and generate public spaces shaped by conflicts. Conflicts, anthropologist James Holston writes, are "collisions of multiple and often contradictory claim, identities, and differences that both shape and are shaped by the commitments residents make to the city as their political community of belonging in their daily lives" (Holston, 2012 p. 10). Expanding the concept of informality in this way implies viewing it as an informal construction by bodies in constant conflict with each other and with the territory in which they live.

ASSESSING INFORMAL BODIES

In this research, we witnessed different actors that engaged, in their everyday, to this space:

Informal vendors, especially mobile ones, depend largely on the contact they have with potential customers; as such, they identify and apply three main characteristics to act within this park. First, movement and pace become primary factors in the vendors' timing, always expecting an occurrence such as when a bus arrives, when schools finish, or when there is an event at the park. Vendors identify these nodal moments and negotiate with the spatial situations by understanding the possibilities of spontaneity that can take place within this formal public space. The temporality of the different types of informal activities, brings to the area a sense of constant fluidity. The second characteristic is the social interaction reflected when different people gather either to interact with vendors or to stay in the park, whether they are passers-by or passengers waiting for the bus. These local spatial practices become rooted patterns and associate behaviors of Carapungo Entry Park. Thirdly, informal activities are highly capable to adapt to different situations, social or spatial. As most of these activities operate on a small scale, it is easy for them to change and manage their goods, products, movement, time, or routes.

Taxi drivers, who along the Pan-American Highway, have created a very particular spatial construction. They are mindful of the problem of local public transportation –in the case of Quito the bus system– when people miss to take a bus. In these situations, route taxis (shared taxis) pace around while shouting '*Naciones, Naciones, Naciones*' (route taxis can take these people to Av. Naciones Unidas). Again, informal transport drivers use their knowledge of the site and timing, when during peak hours, this public transportation problematic becomes their chance to work.

Regular Carapungo's commuter, who are passengers that do not receive any specific benefit from their informal construction; their informality is just to reach the formal or the ordinary: to catch up to the bus. They are living in a permanent uncertainty, explained in both the text and cartographies; thus, they are always

running, stressed, and anxious. The situation is that hectic that it reaches a point in which commuters do not care if they end up pushing people –either women or children– to have a place on the bus.

These actors have developed spatial practices that we represented in the cartographies, and as performances practiced by these collective bodies, they are largely replicated in formal public spaces, showing that they can sustain themselves in an ever-changing environment while being part of the urban landscape. However, we should not associate informality only with certain groups of people (typically the poor and working class) nor with certain deprived neighborhoods. Rather, we should acknowledge that informal practices are used by a great range of social groups and in a great range of places. This understanding comes from the study of people making place, in which Lefebvre's theory of 'right to the city' and 'social production of space' (Simonsen, 1991; Varriale, 2014) approaches to the changing urban dynamics (Figure 10). In informality, it is the spontaneity and fluidity which plays a major role to discuss whether a public space promotes social interaction and intensity in its use.

Figure 10.
View of informal activities on Carapungo Entry Park.

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CARTOGRAPHIES AS ALTERNATIVE TOOLS FOR ANALYZING CONFLICTIVE PUBLIC SPACES

If we are fostering a more complex, bodily, dynamic, specific, and sensitive concept of informality (consequently public space or city), we need new or alternative tools to make visible those informal spatial constructions. In this fashion, we have introduced the operative concept of cartography as an instrument to displace spatial relations that are usually overlooked by official plans and official planers: the cartography as "instrumental in the construing and constructing of lived space" (Corner, 2011, p. 89). The representation of public spaces is usually simplified to aesthetics and static forms, but the active relation between bodies and bodies with architecture (the interface with forces), plays a crucial role in the construction of our cities (Cano-Ciborro, 2021; Medina, 2018). These cities are not only built with visible layers or materials, but overall, with invisible, secret and/or hidden stories, events, and ordinary actions.

In contrast to normative plans, cartographies do not seek the 'desirable' or 'utopic' city. Instead, they reveal the configuration of a public space –Carapungo Entry Park–, from the inhabitants' position, proving to be a place of opportunities for spatial practices determined by different types of social interaction. Formal regulations and spaces are perpetrated like fixed structures in which inhabitants must understand first their physical and legal components, to then operate at a human scale through usually informal micro-activities. Carapungo's inhabitants understand public spaces as active forms; here the form is the action (Easterling, 2014).

Conclusions

This research concludes that, based on observation, analysis, and cartography of day-to-day informal micro-activities at Carapungo Entry Park, there are certain characteristics that modify public spaces when 'informal' meets 'formal'. Informal activities challenge what is formal and fixed –the park as public space– whose program does not include any of the activities that are practiced by inhabitants. Hence, informal actors hold different physical settings by occupying the formal infrastructure through micro-activities. Micro-activities become means of disrupting the official architecture throughout the construction of human-object entanglements that are deployable, easily assembled and stored. Micro-activities are actions that demand spaces to respond to their social, economic, and cultural needs. The presented four cases are produced by multiple dissident bodies, whose activities are explained through cartographies and narratives, and re-create a place that is human and humane. The Pan-American sidewalk, the internal pedestrian crossing, the pedestrian bridge ramp, and the eleven kiosks, have features of flow, adaptability, spontaneity, intensity, movement, and interaction, at different temporalities and through people's interaction and occupations. Embracing these factors can lead architecture and urban design to go beyond the conventional official planning and instead, include spaces for inhabitant's real everydayness. After examining how people produce and behave in public

spaces when they are looking for a means of income –in this case through informal commerce–, the notion of design cannot remain only as a conceptual work, but rather it should be seen as a spatial practice that adapts to this common reality.

This research suggests understanding dynamics of informal micro-activities that are carried out every day at Carapungo Entry Park, from a behavioral point of view that depends on social interaction. Knowing that this public space is an asset for informal actors, cartography becomes a tool to understand and make visible this conflictive situation. It represents what has been typically hidden in formal planning. The power that informal activities and dissident spatial practices have in public spaces stresses an essential manifestation in urban design, especially in Latin American cities planning.

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