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# **Right to the City and Tactical Urbanism in Medellín State-Driven vs. Activism/Grass root**

**A Thesis submitted in the Partial Fulfillment for the Requirement of the  
Degree of Master of Science in Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design.**

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**July 24<sup>th</sup> of 2023**



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# Disclaimer

This dissertation is submitted to Ain Shams University (ASU) and the University of Stuttgart - Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning (USTUTT) for the degree of Integrated Urbanism and Sustainable Design (IUSD), in accordance with USD-ASU regulations.

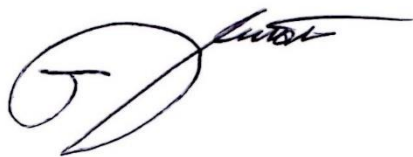
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07/24/2023

Gustavo Adolfo Rivera Echavarría

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'G' followed by a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Signature



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# Abstract

## **Right to the city and tactical urbanism in Medellín: State-driven vs. Activism/Grass root**

Gustavo Adolfo Rivera Echavarría

In recent years, tactical urbanism has emerged as a striking and impactful solution by communities to problems and needs in mobility, public space, environment, and culture. A strategy so effective in its bottom-up model that even the municipal administrations themselves have begun to implement tactical urbanism as an element to be considered in the execution of permanent projects.

This study will analyze the case and boom of tactical urbanism in the city of Medellín, Colombia, the first city to record how tactical actions managed to permeate the public administrative structure and that, since 2016, has had two major players: the mayor's office of Medellín (public sector) and activism/grass root initiatives (civil society).

This research will record, document, and explain in depth, through the analysis of eight tactical urbanisms, the existing differences in terms of design, planning, financing, citizen participation, and appropriation, among others, of the tactical urbanism actions that come out of each side of the spectrum, answering the questions How do they do it? And how do they promote the right to the city?

**Keywords:** Activism, Civil society, Community engagement, Experimental, Grass root, Participation, Pilot test, Right to the city, State, Tactical urbanism.



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# 1. Introduction

Urban spaces are constantly changing and evolving, often due to the transformations and social events the territories undergo. Over time, these spaces' appropriation level and state reflect the community's met or unmet needs. Likewise, appropriation indicates how involved or not the inhabitants of a sector have been in developing their spaces.

It is then that the concept of "right to the city," introduced by the sociologist and philosopher Henry Lefebvre in 1967, arises and means, fundamentally, "the possibility of appropriating public space by building it" (González & Valencia, 2020, p. 15). This concept has gained strength in urban discourse in recent years. It refers to the idea that all city inhabitants have the right to actively participate in shaping urban environments and benefit from the social, economic, and cultural resources a city can offer.

In recent decades, a powerful tool that has emerged to help people exercise their right to the city is tactical urbanism. An approach that allows for the transformation of urban spaces in innovative and dynamic ways through low-cost temporary interventions that can generate significant changes with low risks; a tactic that has promoted more inclusive and participatory forms of urban development and that challenges the traditional methodologies with which the evolution of a territory is contemplated.

One city that has extensively used tactical urbanism to reclaim its right to the city is Medellín, Colombia. Since 2015, following an important city event such as the Fourth World Bike Forum, Medellín experienced a massive boom in tactical actions led by citizen activist

groups. Framed within the issues discussed at the World Forum, such as air quality, reduction of greenhouse gases, and recovery of public space for pedestrians and cyclists, among others, these tactical urbanisms aimed not only to try to solve these problems but also to draw the attention of the municipal administration to provide solutions to these issues.

By 2016, the Mayor's Office of Medellín begins to employ tactical urbanism to obtain early victories in terms of execution. A tool generally known for being taught and used by the communities is then incorporated into the administrative structure of the municipality and to be executed by the public sector. A controversial decision widely criticized by a large industry of citizens, the city put tactical urbanism on everyone's lips, achieving interventions that were eventually applauded and others called failures.

It is then that the objective of this research is to explore and analyze in depth the differences and similarities in which the state/public sector and citizen activist groups/communities approach tactical urbanism and promote the right to the city in Medellín. Through analyzing eight tactical urbanism interventions in the territory, the aim is to examine the different factors that shape these initiatives by each actor. By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, this study seeks to contribute to understanding some of the dynamics of urban development, identify strategies to promote social justice and citizen participation, and how tactical urbanism entered the debate on how it can help evolve planning methodologies in the city.

### 1.1. **Key concepts**

To approach this study, it is, therefore, necessary to first address

the three most important concepts that provide the basis for the research.

#### 1.1.1. **Right to the city**

In 1967, Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991) introduced the essay "The Right to the City." He explains that urban dwellers, especially the working class, can create and produce the city (González & Valencia, 2020, p. 28). "It is defined as the right to decent and adequate housing; the right to urban land, health, education, but, above all, to be involved in the planning and control of public management; the right to use and enjoy the city at all times, to be owners of living the space that the city provides and that this quality is guaranteed" (González & Valencia, 2020, pp. 15,16).

Lefebvre states that space is a social and political construction produced by a triad of qualities: (i) physical practices, (ii) professional knowledge of space (i.e., formal institutions and planning professionals), and (iii) lived experiences in negotiating with space (Butler, 2009, as cited in Massingue & Oviedo, 2021, p.3). Urban space is not simply a physical environment but a construct shaped by power relations and social practices.

In summary, the core of this right places citizens at the center of participation and engagement in designing and planning the city. Inhabitants have a fundamental right to actively participate in shaping and transforming the urban environment in which they live and be involved in decision-making. A request that calls for more democratic and

participatory ways of approaching urban planning and development. A powerful idea that social movements and activist groups have appropriated, as well as academics in urban, social, and political studies.

2004 the United Nations established the World Charter for the Right to the City. "An instrument aimed at strengthening urban processes, demands, and struggles. It is called to become a platform capable of articulating the efforts of all those actors - public, social, and private - interested in giving full force and effectiveness to this new human right through its promotion, legal recognition, implementation, regulation, and enforcement" (González & Valencia, 2020, p. 29).

#### 1.1.2. **Social Urbanism**

"The Municipal Development Plan 2008-2011 defines Social Urbanism as one of the areas of management of the urban transformation of Medellín and is strategically proposed as a model of territorial intervention that simultaneously comprises physical transformation, social intervention, institutional management, and community participation. This model is implemented to promote territorial equity, prioritizing State action in the peripheral areas of the city with lower levels of human development and quality of life". (Montoya, 2014).

This concept is created in the city of Medellín. Although it is impossible to say precisely when the term appears when searching in documentary sources of the municipal

administration, it is during the period of Mayor Sergio Fajardo (2004-2007) that it took hold of the administrative discourse and became a State policy.

Social Urbanism is a model that seeks to reduce the gaps of segregation and socio-spatial inequality by bringing quality urban projects to territories where, historically, the State has accumulated social debts—sectors with structural backwardness in terms of transportation, public space, and facilities.

The social contribution of this model, as explained by González & Valencia (2020), is that it is characterized as a participatory planning process where all territory stakeholders are consulted and participate in decision-making. It is a model that combines technical knowledge and people's imagination of the city. "It is a way to generate social participation, social capital, and social inclusion." (Quinchía, 2013, p. 127).

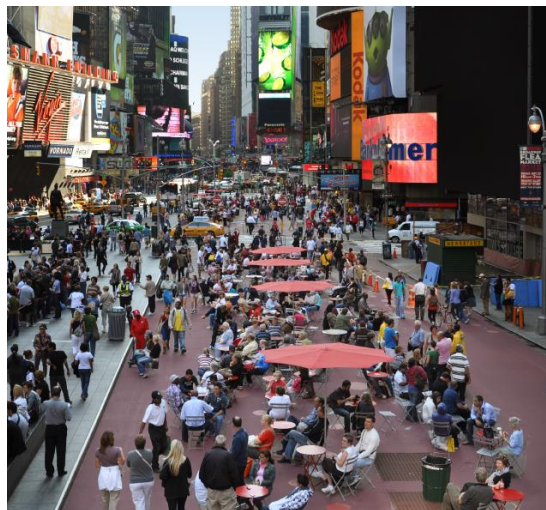
Social Urbanism establishes for the city of Medellín that the basis for urban projects is found in citizen and community participation processes. This is where the doubts, ideas, and expectations of the communities are collected regarding the urban projects in their territory and serve as a channel for the State to adjust its interventions to the needs of the people.



### 1.1.3. **Tactical Urbanism**

Tactical urbanism refers to small-scale temporary interventions in existing spaces (neighborhood, block, parking cell, street, etc.). They are characterized by low cost since their material is generally based on light and recycled elements such as tires, plastic cones, wood, paint, etc. In addition, another attribute that can be identified in this type of intervention is that activist initiatives and citizen groups organize them.

The American urban planner Mike Lydon created the term tactical urbanism in 2011. (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2018). Lydon himself recounts that the inspiration for this word was the famous pedestrianization of Times Square in 2010. (Figure 1); the promoters of this initiative referred to it as "tactical interventions," and this term, used for the first time in the context of the built environment, could also be applied to a large number of similar low-cost interventions that were spreading across the country (Lydon & Garcia, 2012).



*Figure 1. Tactical urbanism in Times Square. Source: Lydon & Garcia (2012).*

These tactical actions sometimes have permits to be implemented but are usually done without any authorization; this is why these interventions are also known as "guerrilla urbanism," "Pop-up urbanism," or "Do It Yourself (D.I.Y) urbanism."

Lydon defines tactical urbanism with the following characteristics:

- "Being an intentional and progressive approach to promoting change";
- "Offers local ideas for local planning challenges";
- "Short-term commitment and realistic expectations";
- "Low risk with potentially high reward"; and
- "Social capital development among citizens and organizational capacity building among public/private institutions, NGOs and civil society."

Many examples of tactical urbanism in the world have emerged from popular and citizen movements; by demonstrating the success of these actions, they have been able to transcend and become permanent interventions. This is evidence of the "Bottom-up" model of tactical urbanism, where citizens play the leading role in decision-making and later create the city with the authorities through collective interventions in public space. An example of this was the "Días de Playa (Beach Days)" project, led by the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater in the city of Medellín, together with various activist collectives; the objective of the intervention was to create and recover safe spaces and meeting places for people

on one of the most critical and historic road axes of the city center (Avenida La Playa). The success was such that, years later, the Mayor's Office of Medellín carried out the semi-pedestrianization of the corridor, adapting the public spaces for pedestrians and cyclists and reducing the margin for motorized vehicles. (Figure 2). "This is how short-term actions can create long-term change." (Lydon & Garcia, 2012).



*Figure 2. On the left: one of the streets during "Días de Playa (Beach Days)." Source: Grajales (2016). On the right: adequacy and improvement of the public space on Avenida La Playa. Source: Tamayo & Santamaria (2022).*

Lydon (2012) borrows the term "tactical" from military strategies; maneuvers are characterized by being quick, adaptable, and achieving specific objectives. However, in an interview with Juan Miguel Duran, creator of the COONVITE Architecture Cooperative (Apr. 2023), he points out that "what is tactical in tactical urbanism lies in the fact that it is capable of identifying small things, making everyday life the reflection of the common. The creative subtlety is what, in a way, gives it the tactical, and since it comes from a small scale, it makes it participatory. Tactical urbanism has such a subtlety in the small scale that it activates and reactivates the everyday [...] it is dismantled and replicated

or, if it stays static, you can give it maintenance."

Among the many tactics encompassed by this type of urbanism, some of the best known are (i) the temporary enclosure of streets as play spaces, (ii) the occupation of parking cells or "Parking Day," (iii) urban gardening or guerrilla gardening, and (iv) chair bombing (Figure 3).



Figure 3. (i) Car Free Street in Jackson Heights, (ii) "Parking Day," (iii) Guerilla gardening in New York, and (iv) Chair bombing in Brooklyn. Source: Lydon & Garcia (2012).

## 1.2. State of the art

The American urban planner Mike Lydon created the term tactical urbanism in 2012; this concept is relatively young more than ten years since its popularization. However, tactical interventions have occurred for over ten years or centuries. Lydon (2012) records the earliest

history of tactical urbanism, dating back to the 16th century with Les Bouquinistes (Figure 4), booksellers who gathered along the Seine River to sell their works. Initially resisted by the booksellers' guild, this action gradually gained strength and popularity to the point that, in 2007, UNESCO declared the area of Les Boquinistes a World Heritage Site. What is important to highlight is how an unauthorized action was eventually legitimized by the institutional framework (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2018).



*Figure 4. On the left: Les Bouquinistes. Credit: Charles Simond, La vie parisienne à travers le XIXe siècle, Paris, E. Plon, Nourrit et cie, 1900, p. 458. On the right: contemporary photography of Les Bouquinistes. Source: Lydon & Garcia (2012).*

When analyzing more recent times, the antecedents of tactical urbanism can be summarized as follows: the changes in the approach to urban planning during the 1960s, the implementation of recreational bicycle ways, and the diffusion of tactical urbanism strategies (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2018).

- In the sixties, urban planning revolved around a new perspective, where the importance of carrying out works by the reality of cities and their inhabitants was raised.

"The city was recognized as a work susceptible of intellectual study, of analysis that would allow a new interpretation of urban elements and a new definition of these" (Salazar, Mojica Ríos & Urrea Uyabán, 2015, p.15, as cited in Alcaldía de Medellín, 2018, p. 20). An interpretation of the city is made from the routes taken by man, valuing the every day and exploring unknown spaces. (Salazar F.C, 2012, in Alcaldía de Medellín, 2018, p. 20).

- Bicycle lanes are considered an antecedent of tactical urbanism since they were used for stretches of public roads, where the circulation of motorized vehicles was prohibited and was made available for people's recreational and sporting use. Its origins were established in 1965 when in the city of Seattle, United States, the "Bicycle Sundays" were launched. Then in New York, in 1966, periodic closures were made in Central Park to provide safe spaces for cyclists (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2018). In the case of Latin America, the reference is located in the city of Bogotá; on December 15, 1974, this initiative was promoted, and two years later, the municipal mayor's office designated exclusive

streets for pedestrian and bicycle use.



*Figure 5. Bikeway by Wisconsin the Drive. Source: Lydon & Garcia (2012).*

- To talk about how tactical urbanism strategies have spread, Lydon (2012) refers to the “Pattern Cities”; cities with urban development paradigms usually adopted by other cities. Most pattern cities are generally North American or European and are not necessarily large cities but localities that were the first to embrace ideas that echo; in the Internet era, their diffusion becomes simple and tactical urbanism is a pattern that begins to be adopted throughout the territories. (Lydon & Garcia, 2012). The culture of sharing experiences on the Internet has allowed tactical actions made in the US to be quickly blogged, tweeted, and promoted on Facebook in hundreds of countries.

The rise of tactical urbanism in North America is due to the following factors: the great recession that forced citizens, administrators, and developers to be more creative in implementing initiatives; demographic changes where more and more young people are in leadership positions; and the Internet as a tool for expansion. However,

in Latin America, tactical urbanism is related to solving problems regarding citizen participation, inequality, governance, and social debts.

The following timeline mentions relevant tactical urbanism actions internationally between 1914 and 2012 (Lydon & Garcia, 2012, p. 4).

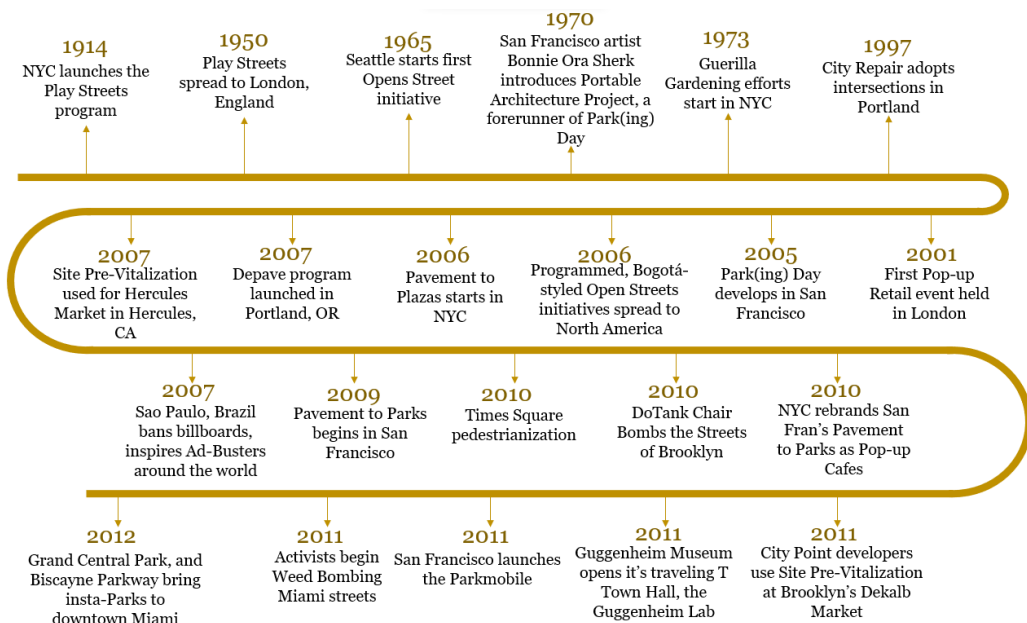


Figure 6. The tactical timeline between 1914-2012. Source: own elaboration, based on Lydon & Garcia (2012).

Cardoso et al. (2021) reviewed 52 tactical urbanisms reported in the scientific literature, technical reports, and institutional documents from 14 countries. Of these cases, all related to mobility issues, 44% are located in North America, another 44% in Latin America, 8% in Europe, and 4% in Asia. The exciting thing about these objects of study is that some originate in initiatives driven entirely by local governments, others from private studies or academia, and even interventions that come from joint strategies between municipal administrations and activist groups. While tactical urbanism commonly originates from the initiatives of citizen organizations, these



new origins demonstrate a renewed interest in revitalizing public spaces, especially in the Americas. (Cardoso, et al., 2021).

Table 1 lists the 52 tactical urbanisms Cardoso et al. (2021) analyzed. The name of the intervention, country, and city where they are located, their focus, type of urbanism, duration, year in which it was implemented, size or scale, and the institution that gave rise to the action are mentioned.

Table 1. Summary of tactical urbanisms: Source: Own elaboration based on Cardoso et al. (2021).

Name	Country	City	Focus	Type	Duration	Year	Scale	Institutions
Parklets in San Francisco	USA	San Francisco	Urban Furniture	PPP	P		Parking place	LG
Sunset Triangle Plaza	USA	Los Angeles	Pedestrian	PE	P	2012	Neighborhood	PS + LG
Zhengtong Avenue redesign	China	Shanghai	Street reshaping	B	P		Neighborhood	LG
Paseo Bandera	Chile	Santiago	Pedestrian	PE	P	2018	Neighborhood	LG + PS
Ocupa tu Calle	Peru	Lima	Pedestrian public space	PPP	P	2015	City	CO
Propuestas urbanas para Chile	Chile	Puerto Varas	Street reshaping	PE	P	2016	City	PS
Calle Rosa	Portugal	Lisbon	Pedestrian	PC	P	2011	Neighborhood	PS + LG
Participative planning in High Canada River	Canada	High River	Cyclists-Pedestrians	S	P	2016	Neighborhood	CO
Stone Way North	USA	Seattle	Street reshaping	B	P	2007	Neighborhood	LG + CO
Prospect Park West	USA	Brooklyn, NYC	Street reshaping	B	P	2010	Neighborhood	CO + LG
The Porch (La Galería)	USA	Philadelphia	Pedestrian	PPP	P	2011	Neighborhood	LG + PS
Crossings for cyclists	USA	Portland	Cyclists	PC	P	2016	City	LG
Urbanismo táctico en barrio Conquistadores	Colombia	Medellín	Urban furniture	C	P	2017	Intersection	LG
Supermanzanas en Barcelona	Spain	Barcelona	Street reshaping	PE	P	2008	Neighborhood	LG

Tactical Urbanism in Times Square	USA	New York	Pedestrian	PE	P	2009	Intersection	LG
Urbanismo táctico en barrio Conquistadores	Colombia	Medellín	Pedestrian	S	P	2017	Intersection	LG
Urbanismo táctico en Av. La Playa	Colombia	Medellín	Pedestrian	S	P	2017	Neighborhood	LG
Estación peatonal	Ecuador	Cuenca	Urban furniture	PPP	R	2017	City	LG
CicloRecreoVía	Chile	Santiago	Weekly road closure	B	R	2005	City	LG
Arica's bikeways	Chile	Arica	Cyclists	B	T	2015	Neighborhood	CO
The complete Street	Canada	Haliburton	Street reshaping	B	T	2015	Neighborhood	CO
Mini-parque en Valdivia	Chile	Valdivia	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2014	Parking place	PS
Nagpada crossing	India	Bombay	Urban furniture	C	T	2017	Intersection	LG
#5.80 x 2.15	Mexico	Mexico City	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2015	One parking place	PS
Micro parque Plaza del Mercado Restrepo	Colombia	Bogotá	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2017	One parking place	CO
Biscayne Green	USA	Miami	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2017	Neighborhood	LG

Parklets in Ibarra	Ecuador	Ibarra	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2016	Neighborhood	AI
Plaza Activa	Chile	Valdivia	Pedestrian	PE	T	2014	Neighborhood	PS
Areas de tránsito calmo en Brasil	Brazil	Fortaleza	Urban furniture	PE	T	2017	One block	LG
Peatonalización en Sao Paulo	Brazil	Sao Paulo	Pedestrian	S	T	2017	Neighborhood	LG
Urbanismo a escala Humana en Bogotá	Colombia	Bogotá	Pedestrian	PC	T	2016	Neighborhood	CO
Cebatón	Mexico	Puebla	Pedestrian	PC	T	2015	Neighborhood	PS
Manos a la Obrera	Mexico	Mexico City	Urban furniture	C	T	2016	Intersection	CO
Cognición Urbana	Mexico	Queretaro	Pedestrian	C	T	2016	Intersection	CO
Cyclists of Roma	Italy	Roma	Cyclists	B	T	2015	Neighborhood	CO
Urban Intervention in Riga	Latvia	Riga	Cyclists-Pedestrian	B	T	2017	Parking places	PS
Frida	Ecuador	Quito	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2016	Parking places	PS
BikeNWA	USA	Bentonville	Cyclists	B	T	2016	City	PS + CO
San Marcos Code	USA	San Marcos	Cyclists	B	T	2014	Neighborhood	PS + LG
Greenbelt Pilot Project	USA	San Francisco	Cyclists	B	T	2014	Neighborhood	PS + CO
Market Street Connection	USA	Poughkeepsie	Urban furniture	B	T	2016	Neighborhood	PS + LG
Complete streets demonstration	USA	Morgan Hill, CA	Street reshaping	B	T	2014	Parking Place	PS + CO
Communities for life	USA	Atlanta	Cyclists-Pedestrian	B	T		Neighborhood	PS + LG
Plan BTV Walk Bike	USA	Burlington	Cyclists	B	T	2017	City	PS

North Minneapolis Greenway	USA	Minneapolis	Cyclists	B	T		Neighborhood	PS
Lincoln hub	USA	Chicago	Street reshaping	C	T	2015	Intersection	LG
40th Street Parklet	USA	Oakland	Urban furniture	PPP	T	2012	Two parking places	PS
JC Walks Pedestrian Enhancement Plan	USA	Jersey	Street reshaping	S	T	2017	Intersection	PS
Demonstration in Islington Street, Portsmouth	USA	Portsmouth	Urban furniture	S	T	2016	Intersection	PS + LG
Tactical urbanism Workshop	Canada	Hamilton	Pedestrian	S	T	2013	City	PS
Mini ciclovía en Mexico	Mexico	Mexico City	Cyclists	B	T	2018	Neighborhood	CO
Urbanismo táctico en Quito	Ecuador	Quito	Street reshaping	S	T	2017	Intersection	CO

*Type: PPP=Pedestrian, plazas and parklets; PE=Pedestrianizations; B=Bikeways; PC=Pedestrian crossings; S=Sidewalk extension. Duration: P=Permanent; R=Recurrent; T=Temporary. Institutions: LG=Local government; PS=Private studio; CO=Citizen organization; AI=Academic institution.*

Figure 7 analyzes the particularities of the 52 tactical urbanisms in Table 1. Graph 1 shows what percentage of the different institutions were in charge of the tactical interventions; it is highlighted that 29% of these were led by local governments (LG) and 21% by community organizations (CO). In addition, counting joint work between institutions, local governments were involved in 48% of the cases. Graph 2 illustrates the temporality of the tactical urbanisms; as expected, due to their nature, most of the interventions (63%) were temporary (T), while 33% managed to remain in place for more extended periods.

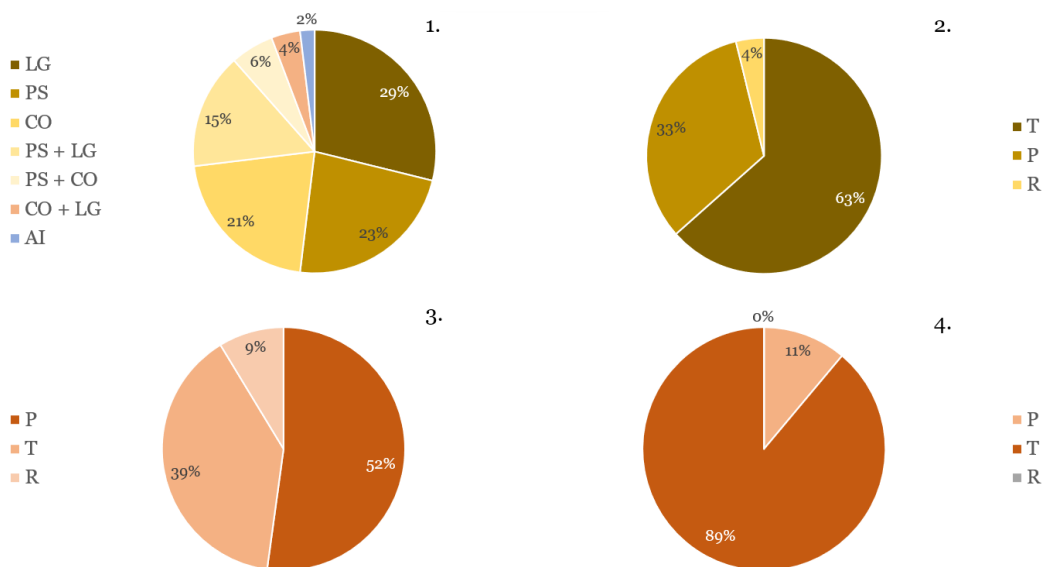


Figure 7. Graph 1: institution(s) in charge of tactical urbanism. Graph 2: temporality of the tactical urbanisms. Graph 3: temporality of the tactical urbanism where the local governments (LG) were involved. Graph 4: temporality of the tactical urbanisms where the local governments (LG) were not involved. Source: own elaboration based on Cardoso et al. (2021).

What is interesting when analyzing these 52 tactical urbanisms is illustrated in graphs 3 and 4. Graph 3 shows the temporality of the tactical urbanisms where local governments played a role, while number 4 shows the temporary nature of the cases where the public sector did not participate. When local governments were involved in

tactical urbanism projects, most (52%) achieved greater permanence, and 48% were only ephemeral actions in time. In contrast, tactical actions that did not have the support of public administrations were almost entirely (89%) temporary, and only 11% managed to remain.

As described above, the last decade has seen a trend towards active participation and even leadership roles for local governments in tactical urbanism actions. Gradually, public administrations have taken the initiative to enter into and implement new methodologies to develop and enhance public spaces in more participatory and versatile ways, building trust and fostering ownership with communities. The public sector has access to more material and financial resources in addition to the power of the political agenda. This is reflected in the long-term nature of state-led tactical urbanism, where the financial muscle to invest in long-lasting materials is crucial. However, the active participation of local governments and the quality of the materials leaves the door open that tactical urbanism, more than a tool for inclusion and promotion of the right to the city, is a way to obtain early and low-cost victories in terms of execution.

### 1.3. **Research question and objectives**

The right to the city and social urbanism intersect by placing citizen participation at the center of urban planning. This inclusion of communities is manifested in public space, and tactical urbanism is a tool to evidence the development of new participatory processes more easily and quickly.

In the last decade, it has become evident how local governments have begun to participate and even lead more actively in tactical urbanism actions, either to venture into new ways of planning and enhancing public spaces or to obtain early and economic victories regarding

physical execution.

Tactical urbanism is a form of public space intervention, characterized by having its origin in the ideas of grassroots organizations or activist collectives and also functioning as a tool to call the attention of the State to urban and social debts with communities. However, now that the State appears as a new actor leading and executing tactical actions, it is coherent to argue that two sides are in charge of implementing tactical urbanism: the local governments and the activist/grassroots organizations. Sometimes opposing ideas and interests and occasionally willing to work together; considering that activist organizations often function as a counterweight to the power of local governments, it is clear that both sides have their ways, ideas, methodologies, and resources to address tactical urbanism.

One city where the actions of these two sides have been very evident is the city of Medellin, Colombia. A place with a vast network of activist collectives and where many of its communities are firmly organized. Since 2015 there has been an explosion of tactical interventions in the city, to such an extent that even the Mayor's Office has appropriated this approach to urbanism.

With two forces performing tactical urbanism in the city, it is pertinent to ask: how do they do it, how different are these tactical actions from each other, and do they promote the right to the city similarly? Therefore, this research must answer the question How do the processes of tactical urbanism implement by the State and activism/grassroots organizations differ in building trust in



communities and promoting the right to the city in Medellín?



*Figure 8. On the left: Tactical urbanism made by activist organizations. Source: Luna & Ocampo, 2019. On the right: tactical urbanism made by the municipality of Medellín. Source: lasnoticiasenred (2017).*

To answer the research question, it is necessary to establish comparison criteria such as, to mention a few, citizen participation and engagement; financing and support to perform tactical actions; the different actors involved in the interventions; the design, technique, and materiality of the urbanisms; how they were implemented.

The main objective of this research is to compare and analyze the processes of tactical urbanism implemented by different public, private, or civil actors in Medellín and their approaches to promoting the right to the city and citizen engagement. To achieve this goal, four specific objectives are established:

- Diagnose the perception and appropriation of tactical actions after their implementation through a set of qualitative indicators.
- Create strategies to compare the reception of tactical urbanism actions in different communities and sectors

of Medellín.

- Identify the citizen participation processes during the tactical urbanisms implementation phase.
- Establish differentiating parameters for the actors involved in tactical urban planning.

Each approach to tactical urbanism indeed has noticeable and marked differences. However, regardless of the interests involved, the primary objective will always be to enhance, recover or redesign public space to offer communities environments that allow them to exercise their right to the city entirely. This research aims to contribute to analyzing how the State and activism/grassroots organizations have influenced the urban planning discourse and transformed the approach to urbanism in Medellín through tactical interventions.

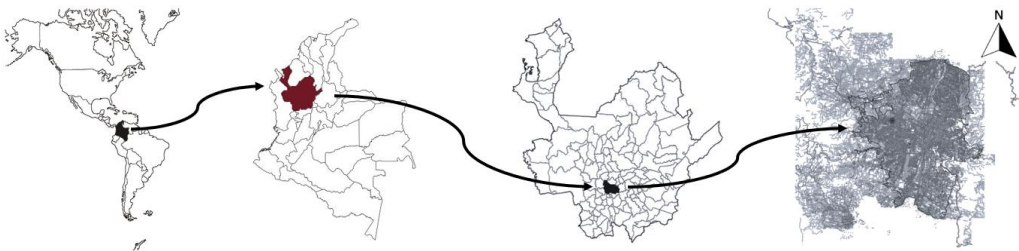


## 2. Case of study: Medellín City

Medellín is a compelling case study in urban transformation and the application of tactical urbanism. From the inception of the social urbanism concept to the integration of tactical interventions within the administrative structure, this city has harnessed the power of tactical urbanism to tackle mobility and public space challenges. To fully grasp the significance of these efforts, it is essential to delve into the context of Medellín, not only geographically but also in terms of how tactical urbanism has been embraced by civil society and the municipal administration. Both sides have found avenues within this urbanism to promote the right to the city, addressing longstanding issues and shaping a more inclusive urban fabric.

### 2.1. Location and general information

Medellín is located in Colombia, a territory in northern South America. This country is divided into 32 departments, and Medellín serves as the capital of the Department of Antioquia. It is an urban center within the Aburrá Valley, which encompasses ten cities and forms the Metropolitan Area of Medellín, the department's primary administrative and economic hub.



*Figure 9. Medellín city location. Source: own elaboration.*

Medellín is the second-largest and most populous city in Colombia. According to official figures from the National Administrative Department of Statistics (DANE for its acronym in Spanish), as of 2018, the city's population was 2,427,129 inhabitants.

Politically and administratively, Medellín is divided into 16 Comunas. For this research, the most relevant ones are Santa Cruz, Aranjuez, La Candelaria, Laureles-Estadio, Poblado, and Belén.

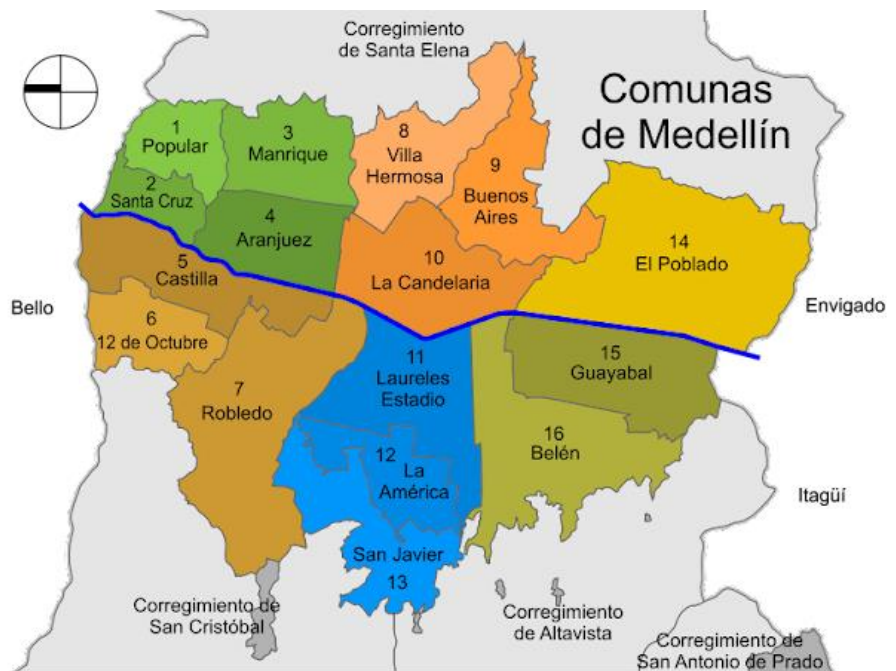


Figure 10. Map of Medellín Comunas. Source: <http://medellintespera.blogspot.com/p/mapa-de-medellin-con-barrios-y-comunas.html>

Steep topography, prominent high and medium-slope hills, and a low-slope zone near the Medellín River characterize the city's landscape. This geographical configuration has shaped the city's expansion patterns, with significant development occurring on the hillsides where high-rise constructions have become abundant in these areas. Moreover, the prevailing urban development model adopted by the city over the years has led to limited available land for future expansion.



*Figure 11. Panoramic view of Medellín. Source: Blu Radio (2021).*

## 2.2. **Public space issues**

Forced displacement is one of the leading causes of rural migration in the country. Colombia's history has been marked by several episodes of violence and armed conflict, intensified in rural areas. Fleeing the violence, people from the countryside migrated mainly to the capital cities. Medellín, the second most important city in the country, saw its urban development affected by this situation.

According to Córdoba et al. (2020), the pressure of the new rural inhabitants on the city caused urban planning to be dispersed or nonexistent in many areas of Medellín. The priority was to remedy the urgent problems in terms of public service provision and road connectivity that the new informal settlements implied. Thus, Medellín half-heartedly planned its peripheral areas with a model that prioritized vehicular connections over pedestrian traffic, resulting in problems of public space availability and safety problems.

Therefore, Medellín suffers from a deficit of public space. According to the World Health Organization, the optimal index of public space per inhabitant is 15m<sup>2</sup>, and according to the World Bank, the international

ideal is  $10\text{m}^2/\text{per inhabitant}$  (Valencia, 2013). For the case of Medellín, the public space index for 2018 is  $3.74\text{m}^2/\text{inhabitant}$  (Medellín cómovamos, 2019). Thus, there is a 75% imbalance concerning the optimal index of the WHO and 63% concerning the index proposed by the World Bank (Figure 12).

In 2001, the Mayor's Office of Medellín and Empresas Públicas de Medellín (the leading public service provider in the city) initiated a plan to conceive public space as an urban and social structuring element. A plan to endow public space and metropolitan facilities that reached its peak during the last decade (Córdoba, et al., 2020, p. 26). Although the strategies to endow and recover public spaces in the city have not been in vain, according to data collected by the 2006 and 2014 Land Use Plans, the public space index has hardly grown by  $0.1\text{m}^2/\text{inhabitant}/\text{year}$  (Figure 12).

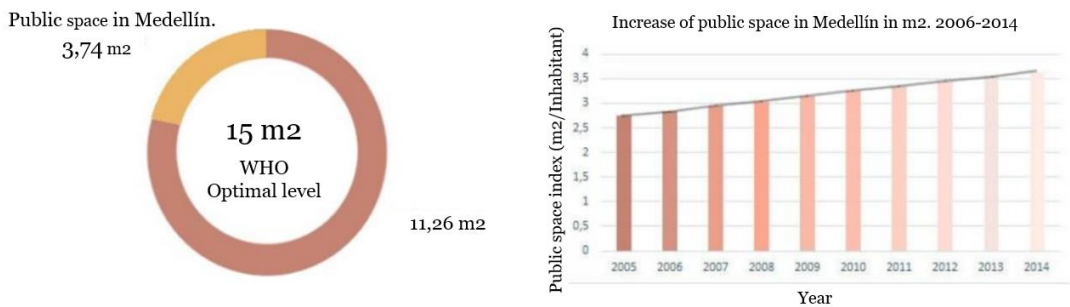


Figure 12. On the left: public space index comparison between the World Health Organization and Medellín. On the right: increased public space index in Medellín between 2006-2014. Source: Córdoba, et al. (2020).

Faced with this problem, tactical urbanism enters to occupy a place within the options to be considered to intervene in the public space. "Although this tool already existed in the city driven by the same urban actors, the first ones carried out by the mayor's office took place in 2016." (Córdoba, et al., 2020, p. 26).

### 2.3. Tactical Urbanism in Medellín

Córdoba et al. (2020) report that by mid-2010, the city's first tactical urban planning interventions appeared. They aimed to meet the need for more quality public space to ensure meeting and appropriation. These interventions included children's parks made with recycled materials (Figure 13).

It is worth noting that since years before 2010 and up to the present, a kind of spontaneous urbanism has been taking place in Medellín, whose main characteristic is the recurrence of its execution. These actions revolve around the Christmas season and can be framed within the concept of tactical urbanism; their main elements are the painting and closing of streets, in addition to being neighborhood appropriations that arise from the collective movement of different local actors (Córdoba, et al., 2020).



*Figure 13. (i)Playground made from recycled materials; (ii) painted streets for Christmas; (iii) street decorated and closed for the Christmas holidays. Source: Córdoba, et al. (2020).*





Figure 14. Logo of the 4th World Bicycle Forum, Medellín, 2015. Source: <https://investigacion.pucp.edu.pe/grupos/emuci/noticia-evento/4to-foro-mundial-de-la-bicicleta/>

The Fourth World Bicycle Forum was held in Medellín in 2015. A city event that placed issues such as air quality, road safety, and sustainable mobility on sight for debate. It was designed, organized, and maintained by citizens from several countries, including activist groups from Medellín. One of the forum's objectives was to bring citizens together to think about their city without

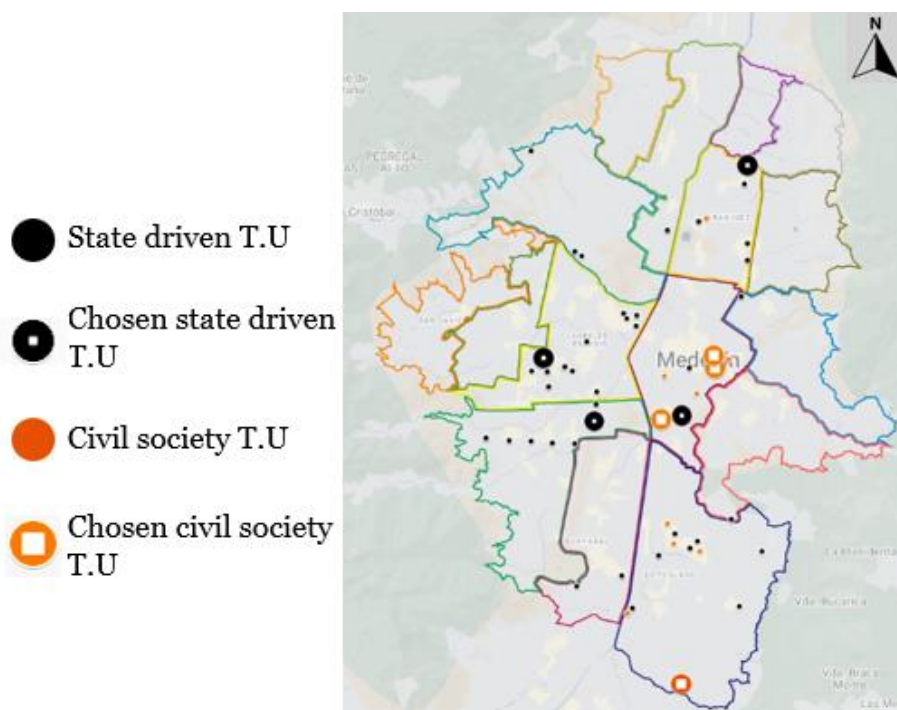
any political pressure and to act tangibly to focus the attention of the municipal administration on the topics of conversation.

One of the most important acts of the Fourth World Bicycle Forum that would change the course of tactical urbanism in Medellín is the creation of the Human Mobility Department. "Emerging from the modernization of the Mayor's Office, it was defined to encourage and promote clean transportation alternatives and generate citizen culture around mobility in the light of the Territorial Ordering Plan." (Loaiza, 2015).

In paying off debts in Medellín regarding public space, mobility, road safety, and environmental quality, a more humane approach to general space planning and mobility must become city policy. With these two premises as a basis, the Fourth World Bicycle Forum became the event that triggered the explosion of tactical actions that the city would experience starting in 2016. It coincided with the change of municipal administration and a political agenda that took tactical urbanism as a

tool for rapid interventions in public space.

Civil society, represented in community organizations and grass-roots activist collectives, was joined by the Mayor's Office of Medellín, the latter taking on promotion and leadership roles in tactical urbanism interventions. With two sides executing tactical actions in the city, it is necessary to investigate how each approached this type of urbanism.



*Figure 15. Tactical urbanism in the city of Medellín between 2010-2019. Source: own elaboration based on Zambrano (2020).*

### 2.3.1. Civil society

While actions such as road closures during festive seasons are led by community and neighborhood organizations, tactical urbanisms carried out by civil society have been shown mainly through activist collectives. The city of Medellín is home to multiple grassroots and citizen

organizations. These organizations mainly comprise multidisciplinary groups of friends who share city visions. They take action to bring political, urban, social, and cultural issues to the attention of the local government.

The spectrum of activist collectives in the city is quite broad. Those consulted for this research are mentioned below: La Ciudad Verde, Ciudad Creativa, Más Urbano, Tricilab, and Proyecto NN. In addition, together with these citizen organizations, different institutions have been part of the planning and execution of various tactical urbanisms; among these institutions are the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater, Metro de Medellín, the Bellas Artes University Foundation, and the Otraparte Corporation.

One of the initiatives resulting from the Fourth World Bicycle Forum was the Green Virus project (Figure 16), which involved the joint work of several activist groups. As Juliana Mesa (Feb. 2023), an architect and one of the founders of Ciudad Creativa, says, "The Fourth World Bicycle Forum served to connect with other collectives. From the Forum funds, a contest is held for people to propose ideas to improve air quality in the city. Four prizes are distributed, the money to carry out the winning proposals. Green Virus was also born to bring green back to the city center. They were finding green areas or abandoned or underutilized public spaces to revitalize them, looking for the community of these points to make them participate. The Green Virus approach was based on zero carbon, reusing elements, and making the most of resources. The three most important elements were green, community, and abandoned spaces."



*Figure 16. Some of the tactical interventions made by the Green Virus project. Source: Ciudad Creativa, 2016.*

The Green Virus project sought to increase public green areas in the city through creative, economical, and effective interventions. The collective construction of green parks made from recycled materials aimed to improve the city's environmental conditions and generate leisure and coexistence spaces for citizens.

The tactical actions performed by civil society in Medellín were characterized by being endowed with meaning. This means that the activation of these spaces was accompanied by cultural and artistic activities involving the surrounding communities. In the case of Green Virus, according to Arbey Gómez (Mar. 2023) of the Tricilab collective, "environmental workshops were held to bring people together and make them aware of what was happening in that public space, teaching them how to plant and talking to them about urban gardens. Artists and cultural managers also participated. In addition, there was an articulation with the Bellas Artes University Foundation for the art and painting of materials. Once the action was installed, talks were also held."

Green Virus was the city's first citizen initiative of tactical urbanism after the World Bike Forum. However, before this, in 2014, there was what is considered to date the largest

tactical urbanism project led by activist collectives and cultural institutions: *Días de Playa* (Beach Days) (Figure 17).

In 2014, a tactical urbanism proposal was carried out in the central area of Medellín to partially pedestrianize one of the city's most important road axes. La Playa Avenue, named after the creek that runs under it, was partially closed, and this space was decorated with beach furniture, sand, inflatable pools, and palm trees. Coordinated by the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater, La Ciudad Verde, and about 20 other citizen collectives, it had such an impact that some government institutions became involved in the project.

*Días de Playa* is important to highlight because an initiative of citizen organizations influenced the municipality, so it became a definitive intervention three years later.



*Figure 17. Días de Playa tactical interventions. Source: Córdoba, et al. (2020).*

Tactical urbanism has also been used as a protest tool by citizen collectives. While many of these actions don't modify public space, they involve symbolic appropriation. In the words of activist Daniel Suarez (Feb. 2023), "These actions from the technical and institutional point of view are considered tactical urbanisms, although at first they were called symbolic actions."

"Symbols" is an informal compilation of symbolic actions by activist collectives in the last decade. It highlights those interventions sought to reclaim quality public spaces for meetings and justice in the face of violence and corruption in Medellín.

Figure 18 shows three of the multiple symbolic actions registered by activist collectives. Image (i) shows a protest held in the main square of the Medellín City Hall to call attention to the rising homicide rates in the city; illustration (ii) shows a peaceful takeover of a city park as a form of criticism against the prohibition of alcoholic beverages consumption in public spaces; photograph (iii) corresponds to a claim for better air quality in the city, where famous sculptures were covered with black plague masks in one of the most important squares of Medellín.



*Figure 18. Symbolic actions carried out by different activist collectives in Medellín. Source: "Symbols"; pictures given by Sergio Restrepo, former director of the Pablo Tobón Theater.*

Although it has been shown that the tactical actions done by civil society in Medellín have begun as a way to call the attention of the municipality or to protest against it, there are also interventions where the objective is to support projects born from the institutional framework.

The intervention Palacé Para Todos (Palacé for Everyone) aimed to draw attention to the importance of the new bike path that the Metropolitan Area had planned to implement in the road corridor known as Palacé. An avenue in Medellín known for housing dealerships of significant motor vehicle brands and its vocation around the automotive industry. The construction of the bike lane was threatened due to the interests of powerful companies, arguing that their sales would be diminished if it were to be executed. Academics and social organizations then took to the sidewalks of Palacé to demonstrate the intentions of those who wanted to privatize the public space (Figure 19).



*Figure 19. Tactical urbanism on the Palacé Avenue sidewalks. Source: “Symbols”; pictures given by Sergio Restrepo, former director of the Pablo Tobón Theater.*

Grassroots organizations and activists in Medellín have used tactical urbanism. They employ it to claim, protest, and call attention to unpaid debts owed by the State. On other occasions, it has served as a bridge between civil society and institutions to work together. Regardless of the case, these actions have been characterized by a spontaneous, ephemeral approach, with a high and positive media impact, carried out with a rebellious spirit and an instigation for change, which have found their main validators and actors in the communities.

### 2.3.2. **Municipality of Medellín**

With the creation of the Human Mobility Department in 2016, the Mayor's Office of Medellín began to talk about tactical urbanism. Although the municipality had already had some participation in previous tactical actions (e.g., *Días de Playa*), for the first time, the institution took the reins to plan and execute tactical interventions in public space.

Since its conception after the Fourth World Bicycle Forum, this Department was intended to be a dependency of the Vice Mayor's Office of Medellín and coordinated pedestrian and cycling projects among the different secretariats of the municipality. However, it was consolidated as an office of the Mobility Secretariat. Although due to the nature of the execution of tactical urban planning, it would be thought that the Department should be attached to the Secretariat of Infrastructure, it was the basis of human and sustainable mobility that, in the end, placed it in the Mobility Secretariat.

In an interview with Juan Camilo Gómez (Mar. 2023), the Human Mobility Manager from 2016-2018, he explains how tactical urbanism became part of the Human Mobility Department's strategy and work methodology.

Metro de Medellín's mass transit projects have an urban planning component. This component consists of improving the surroundings of the public transportation system stations. However, these improvements are concentrated in



the blocks immediately surrounding the stations, leaving aside the urban planning of the following blocks. What happens then to the other mobility people use to get to the stations? If there is no good accessibility for people to reach the transport system, it can fail.

With the beginning of the Human Mobility Department, the first thing to think about was the opportunity to generate a walking network project as a public space intervention. A project aimed to connect the stations of the mass public transport system with landmarks and spaces of interest within a radius of 500 meters.

The challenge for this Department was the need for more resources. Since it was a new office, it needed to be provided with the appropriate funding. Money was necessary to run diagnostics, designs, and construction for these adaptations of public space. An engineering and architectural project that would have taken at least two years to complete. In this context, it began to study rapid interventions and to validate what kind of spontaneous actions would serve to intervene in the territory. This was when tactical urbanism appeared.

Using rapid interventions meant hacking the traditional model of doing civil works, of making interventions in favor of mobility and transportation in a territory. The Superkilen Park model in Denmark was studied as an excellent reference, an intervention of a deteriorated industrial public space that finally gave much connectivity to the city and offered places of permanence. Another reference was Wynwood in Miami, where public space was also intervened

but more oriented to art, where even the land uses were changed (Figure 20).



Figure 20. On the left: Superkilen Urban Park in Denmark. Source: *Arquitectura Viva* (2013). On the right: Wynwood District in Miami, USA. Source: *Laster* (2019).

The tactical urban planning model was presented to the mayor with the references studied, the limited resources available, and the need for rapid interventions. However, the first interventions did not correspond to the walking network project. To convince the mayor of the effectiveness of the tactical actions, the Department first proposed to recover in a record time of a maximum of six months two public spaces where mobility was not flowing and where there were multiple complaints from the community: The Carlos E. Restrepo neighborhood in Comuna 11 and the Lleras Park in Comuna 14 (Figure 21).



Figure 21. On the left: tactical urbanism in Lleras Park. On the right: tactical urbanism in the neighborhood Carlos E. Restrepo. Source: *Alcaldía de Medellín* (2018).

For these interventions, low-cost diagnoses, designs, and execution were made. Even so, it was possible to consolidate high-impact pedestrian urbanism. The Carlos E. neighborhood and Lleras Park became more sensitive and walkable. From there, the path was to start activating other networks and maturing the walkability model for the entire city, designing necessary kilometers of walking networks connected with bike paths. All this is under the pretext that the Human Mobility Department was designed to make sustainable mobility interventions.

The crucial point was to show quick results. Department's goal was to demonstrate to the administration, the community, and the Medellín council that the impact was powerful and favorable. To consolidate a sustainable mobility project of walking networks, tactical urbanism, and bicycle paths in the development plan. With a resource of 100 million Colombian pesos for each of the interventions mentioned above (approximately 32,000 US dollars), it was possible to execute the rapid interventions and obtain a positive concept from the communities.

This is how the Human Mobility Department obtained the mayor's approval and formalized the tactical urban planning model for Medellín. A model based on pilot interventions that are a function of the dreamed mobility. A model to consolidate a transportation system in macro and micro-mobility; to connect real walking networks to mass transit systems and bus stops. With the approved model, the Department's resources amount to 1.5 billion Colombian pesos (approximately 473,000 US dollars).

The tactical urbanism implemented through the Human Mobility Department was conceived from a transitory but durable materiality. That is to say, many tactical actions in the city had been carried out with wood and recycled elements; the Department proposed that concrete was the fundamental material and the paint should be an element oriented to the horizontal signaling that the Mobility Secretariat uses in its large projects: cold plastic, long-lasting paint. This material ensured that interventions would be performed to generate safe and connectivity zones.

The idea was that tactical urbanism would demonstrate the potential of the areas and that the administration, through the Secretariat of Infrastructure, could then carry out subsequent permanent interventions. Thus, the explosion of tactical interventions in Medellín resulted from intervening in city areas other than those near public transport stations. On La Playa Avenue, for example, the Department made a complete traffic calming intervention years after *Días de Playa*; it was the pretext for complementing the large-scale civil intervention shown in Figure 2. Interventions were then conducted in high-speed lanes, traffic calming zones, and parking cells to convert them into stay zones.



Figure 22. Some of the tactical interventions led by the Human Mobility Department: (i) Traffic calming on La Playa Avenue; (ii) Walking network in the neighborhood of Perpetuo Socorro, Comuna 10; (iii) Stay area in front of Unicentro mall, Comuna 11. Source: Alcaldía de Medellín (2018).

During 2016-2019, the Mayor's Office of Medellín, through the Human Mobility Department, implemented most tactical urbanisms. Figure 15 shows all tactical urbanisms for which there is a record between 2010 and 2019. Those led by the Mayor's Office are marked in black, and those promoted by civil society are marked in orange; those that will be the subject of study for this research are also highlighted. As can be seen, the number of black spots dramatically exceeds the number of orange ones. In summary, during these ten years, the municipality oversaw 84% of the tactical urbanisms, and the remaining 16% were citizen initiatives.

The tactical urbanisms implemented by the State cost approximately US\$290,000 in 2016-2019. Their maintenance required an investment of around US\$11,700 in those four years. According to Zambrano (2020), the implementation and maintenance costs represented one-tenth of what it would have cost to execute the permanent civil works.

The tactical interventions led by the Municipality of Medellín managed to transcend the realm of activism and grassroots organizations. A tool that managed to permeate the participatory and social methodologies of the Mayor's Office and became an element to be considered in plans and projects.

As evidenced in the Medellin 2020-2050 Climate Action Plan, its action "Improve and increase the areas of the public space system for recreation and meeting" has as a sub-action "Develop tactical urbanism initiatives to take advantage of potential areas and reduce traffic in residential areas." (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2021).



### 3. Methodology

Before describing in detail the methodology used in this study to answer the research question, it is necessary to explain why the analyses to be presented correspond to a qualitative approach.

According to Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza (2018, p. 4), research can be approached from Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed. The general characteristics of each are then described, considering that "the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research is relative, as there are various common elements that can be used in both approaches. In other words, the routes are intertwined and share certain issues; they are not completely independent paths." (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018).

It is convenient to take a quantitative route for research when the analyses require estimating or measuring magnitudes or occurrences of phenomena. A quantitative methodology is characterized by the initial formulation of a hypothesis, the constant evaluation of numerical data or statistical analysis, and the process of hypothesis testing is sequential, deductive, and evidential; that is, the phases established to obtain the results follow a rigorous order in which steps cannot be avoided (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018, p. 6).

On the other hand, the qualitative route for research allows understanding phenomena from the perspective of those who live them to identify patterns and differences in these experiences. In this approach, hypotheses are not tested at the outset. Instead, ideas are generated as the research progresses. In other words, there is no starting with a theory and then turning to the empirical world to demonstrate whether it is true; in parallel, facts and previous studies



are reviewed to generate an approach consistent with what is observed to occur. Therefore, the phases in qualitative research have a non-linear development, where it is possible to return or advance between stages as required by the study. Furthermore, in qualitative research, meanings are extracted from the data rather than reduced to numbers or statistics, although counting these can strengthen the analysis (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018, p. 10).

"The mixed research route intertwines the previous two and mixes them. Rather than the sum of the two, it implies their interaction and enhancement." (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018).

As described in section 1.3, this study aims to compare and analyze the processes behind implementing tactical urbanism in Medellín by its different actors; it does not have an evidentiary or demonstrative purpose. In addition, the specific objectives revolve around aspects such as perception, appropriation, and promotion of citizen participation; they are open to subjectivity. It also highlights the research question establishes procedural comparisons between the State and grassroots/activist organizations. Therefore, developing the analyses based on a qualitative route is pertinent.

For the above, Hernandez-Sampieri & Mendoza (2018) explain some fundamentals for data collection and analysis in a qualitative methodology:

- The sample data corresponds to a set of cases that reflect characteristics and attributes of the phenomenon or problem of interest.
- The information obtained is narrative. The data are symbolic and generate meanings, revealing experiences, points of view,

and qualities. Its purpose is to reconstruct the realities of individuals, groups, and communities.

- The purpose of analyzing qualitative data is to describe experiences, points of view, and facts. It is also to understand processes, events, and phenomena in their contexts.
- The analysis of the data is done progressively, variably, and thematically. It consists of describing information and developing categories.
- Data may be collected through verbal, visual, auditory, or audiovisual means.

Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza (2018, p. 524) elaborate the qualitative research design. That is, the general approach used in the study process. Thus, they define five ways to develop this route: 1) grounded theory, 2) ethnographic designs, 3) narrative designs, 4) phenomenological designs, and 5) action-research designs. Describing the relevant frameworks to address the present case study is pertinent—namely, grounded theory, narrative and phenomenological

frameworks (Table 2).

Design Characteristic	Grounded theory	Narrative	Phenomenological
Research question	Questions about processes and relationships between concepts that constitute a phenomenon.	Questions aimed at understanding a sequence of events through the stories or narratives of those who lived through them.	Questions about the essence of the experiences: What do various people experience in common concerning a phenomenon or process?
Information provided	A theory explaining the process or phenomenon (research problem).	Stories about processes, facts, events, and experiences are assembled into an overall narrative.	Familiar and different experiences. Categories that are frequently presented in the incidents.
Object of study	Process, action, or interaction between individuals.	One or more individuals and their stories. Several stories of an event.	Individuals who have shared the experience or phenomenon.
Data collection instruments	Interviews and focus groups.	Interviews and documents (written, audio, and video).	Observation, interviews, and focus groups.

*Table 2. Main characteristics of qualitative designs of interest. Source: own elaboration based on Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza (2018).*

It has been established then that the present research is performed within the parameters of a qualitative study. Likewise, the designs, data collection instruments, and information guide the study. Describing the methodology to answer the research question and help fulfill the

general and specific objectives is pertinent.

### 3.1. **Criteria for data collection**

To meet this research's general and specific objectives, it is necessary to establish the criteria for obtaining comparable information and data. Concepts that allow the identification of processes, methodologies, and characteristics of each force involved in generating tactical urbanism in Medellín: the municipality and the social organizations.

The criteria are various, and to generate a methodology that collects data in an orderly manner, it is necessary to group them into areas to be explored. These areas include sufficient concepts to analyze the process of tactical urbanism in the city. The importance of each area and its concepts are described below.

1. **Planning process:** this is the most crucial area to explore since it is from this that the others are defined. How the State or activism approaches tactical urbanism delimits the steps to be followed to conduct the interventions, as well as who the stakeholders involved in the process should be and their importance during the process. It is in planning where the most critical decisions are made so that the actions have an impact. The concepts that define this area are:

- Stakeholders.
- Decision-making.
- Implementation.
- Challenges.

2. **Resources:** the financing capacity limits how much can be invested in each intervention; it also conditions how big or

small the urban development will be, the quality of the materials used, and the staff that executes it. The concepts that fall into this area are:

- Financing.
  - Materials.
  - Staff.
3. Scale: establishing the scale of tactical urbanism makes it possible to identify patterns of action and impact on the part of the municipality and civil society about the community needs the intervention intends to meet. The scales defined for this research are as follows:
- Medium-large: a spatial range of 3 blocks or 450 square meters.
  - Medium: approximately 500 linear meters or space between 1 and 2 blocks.
  - Small: a space ranging from 1 to 4 parking cells for vehicles.

A large scale is not defined for this study since it is considered an intervention with a spatial reach equivalent to a complete neighborhood.

4. Goals and objectives: the way and priority with which civil society addresses problems often differ from the way the State does. Issues that may be of urgent attention in the world of activism are only sometimes on the current administrative agenda. This means that the objectives with which tactical urbanism is conducted vary depending on the organization or institution that develops it. The goals of these tactical

interventions are usually aimed at improving one or more of the following aspects in the area where they are implemented:

- Economic development.
- Public space generation/recovery.
- Traffic organization.
- Generation of community engagement.
- Air quality improvement.

5. Impact on communities: commonly, a tactical intervention is conceived with an initial objective, and after its implementation, other benefits appear on site, or its impact turns out to be different than expected. Knowing what type of impact was generated in the communities after the tactical urbanism was implemented permits the identification of procedural patterns in how the State and civil society approached it. These impacts on communities can be:

- Social.
- Economic.
- Cultural.
- Environmental.
- Road safety.

6. Location: each neighborhood in Medellín has its context and challenges. The needs and unpaid debts vary from Comuna to Comuna; likewise, each area's land uses can influence the reception and appropriation of tactical urbanism actions. The understanding of a contemporary topic as tactical urbanism can change based on a community's social stratum and location. Thus, the concepts and information to be collected in this area

are:

- Comuna.
- Neighborhood.
- Land use.
- Social stratum: the socioeconomic or social stratification is a unique classification system for Colombia. It provides a framework to determine the distribution of resources and services of housing and neighborhoods based on factors such as the state of infrastructure and facilities, provision of roads, and public services, among other socioeconomic factors (Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística, s.f.). This classification ranges from 1 to 6, with 1 being those sectors with lower resources and service endowment and 6 being areas with better socioeconomic and infrastructure indicators. To put the social stratum in context, other examples of a socioeconomic classification system in the world are the Brazilian Economic Classification (Classificação Econômica Brasil), which uses a scale from A to E based on household income, education level, and asset ownership (InfoMoney, 2022); also, the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) is used in the United Kingdom to measure and analyze inequality and social mobility on a range of 1 to 8, ranking occupations based on skill level, education needed, and income (Office for National Statistics, 2021).

Table 2 defines the most appropriate instruments for collecting information under the qualitative designs that frame this research and

the areas described above. The methods to be used that fit the study are:

- In-depth interviews: interviews with the different stakeholders and sectors involved in tactical urbanism projects in Medellín. The purpose is to record their participation, perceptions, and reflections on this intervention. Activist leaders, public sector employees, and community leaders are highlighted for interviews.
- Observations/Field Visits: visits to the different sites intervened with tactical actions. The objective is to record whether urbanism remains in place, its current state, the patterns of use and appropriation present, and the opinions of passersby.
- Documentary analysis: search, compilation, and analysis of digital and printed records available on the different tactical urbanism projects in Medellín.

With the areas, criteria, and methods in place, the data to be acquired can resolve into analyses around issues such as social connectedness and cohesion, community needs and preferences, spatial characteristics, long-term sustainability, usage patterns, community participation and engagement, perceived barriers, safety, and citizen feedback.

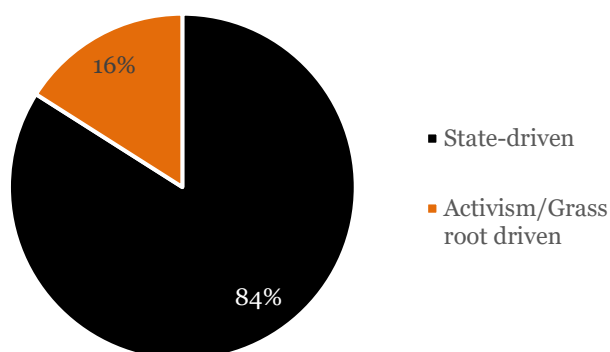
### **3.2. Cases of study**

The orderly application of the methods established for data collection requires the definition of an adequate number of case studies. To obtain sufficient information to analyze and compare the characteristics of state and activist tactical urbanism, it is necessary to



scan the total number of tactical actions performed in Medellín.

As explained in section 2.3.2, Figure 15 shows the total number of tactical urbanisms executed in Medellín between 2010 and 2019. A total of 74 interventions. This number of actions corresponds to 12 urbanisms led by civil society and 62 directed by the municipality (Figure 23).



*Figure 23. Percentage distribution of the execution of tactical urbanism in Medellín. Source: own elaboration.*

Certain limitations inherent to this research must be considered when choosing the number of cases to analyze. An in-depth study of a large group of samples is time-consuming and time-intensive and faces constraints such as the availability of expertise and resources. Also, the number selected should allow for a concentrated and manageable study within the abovementioned limits. Consequently, eight case studies are defined as the appropriate number.

Selecting eight cases of 74 provides a reasonable representation of the data, allowing the capture of a wide range of perspectives, approaches, and results without making managing the information tedious. It is possible to divide this number into four tactical urbanism projects from

civil society and four led by the Mayor's Office of Medellín. A balanced comparative analysis is conducted to explore similarities, differences, patterns, and challenges by selecting an equal number of samples from both sides.

If the eight case studies are well distributed throughout the city, they can cover various contexts and environments. Similarly, defining the samples based on their scale enriches the data by providing characteristic inputs for each project size.

Therefore, based on the areas described in the previous section, the criteria for selecting the tactical urbanisms to be analyzed are location (Comuna, neighborhood, land use, and social stratum) and scale (medium-large, medium, and small).

The number of interviews to be conducted should also be considered. Driving numerous dialogues may result in information saturation; that is, it may reach a point where the data collected provide few new or different perspectives and results. In addition, similar to the choice of the number of case studies, the limitations of the research, such as the availability of time and resources, must be considered. 12 is established as the number of interviews to be conducted.

To ensure a representative sample of participants who have been directly involved in the eight case studies under analysis, a total of 12 interviews were conducted. It is essential to emphasize the role of activist leaders and human mobility managers in determining the appropriate number of interviews. In the public sector, tactical urbanism processes in the city were led by three managers between 2016 and 2019. These managers retained a consistent work team that was involved in the design and execution of all municipal tactical urbanism projects. Therefore, interviewing many public officials is

unnecessary to obtain valuable information on municipal interventions. On the other hand, within the realm of activism in Medellin, although numerous citizen collectives exist, approximately 15 individuals have gained recognition as social leaders in urban planning matters. Together with their collective members, these leaders have spearheaded most tactical actions from civil society. As a result, interviewing a select group of these leaders is deemed sufficient to gather pertinent data regarding the projects initiated by popular organizations.

*Table 3. Summary of methods to be used in the research. Source: own elaboration.*

Method	State-led	Activism-led	Total
Observations/Field visits	4	4	8
Interviews	3	9	12
Documentation	All digital and printed documentation available		

### 3.3. Selected cases of study and methodology application

Using the criteria of location, scale, and the information in Table 3, the case studies should be located throughout the city in the north, center, south, east, and west. These cases should also cover the three defined scales and be found in neighborhoods of diverse social stratum and land uses.

Based on the documentation and information available for the 74 tactical urbanisms conducted in Medellín, obtaining the first input data is possible. The name of the tactical urbanism, the Comuna in which it is located, the neighborhood, the present land use, and the precise

address of the location. Also, the neighborhood's social stratum, the intervention's scale, the organization responsible for its planning, and an image of each urbanism to show the context. Table 4 shows the eight case studies selected for analysis in this research, and Figure 15 shows their location on the map of Medellín.




With the data obtained from the field visits, the interviews with the stakeholders involved in each tactical urbanism, and the review of the available documentation, the following information will be obtained for each project:

- Objective: main goal for which the tactical action is performed and the need to be met.
- Description: physical detail of the intervention and its characteristics.
- Stakeholders: actors involved during the different stages of the project. For this research, they are grouped into actors from the public sector, institutions, social-political-civil society, cultural, informal, and private sectors.
- Process: how tactical urbanism is executed and its steps.
- Spatial reach: space occupied by the intervention.
- Temporality: duration of tactical intervention.
- Maintenance: maintenance of tactical urban planning (if any) and those responsible for it


- Resources: source of funding, materials, and labor force to conduct the tactical action.
- Participatory methods: strategies used to involve the community in the project's planning in all its stages.
- Community engagement methods: strategies to create and promote community ownership of tactical urbanism and designed space.
- Challenges: difficulties to be faced, specific to each project and sector, during the different stages of tactical urbanism.
- Impact: the different areas in which the tactical intervention generated changes and improvements in the action area and its community.

All the information described will be processed and compared to find characteristics, differences, similarities, and action patterns of the tactical urbanisms led by the State and the social/activist organizations.

Table 4. Selected case studies. Source: own elaboration.

Name of Tactical Urbanism	Comuna	Neighborhood	Address	Land use	Social stratum	Scale	Responsible	Picture
Walking network Aranjuez	2 and 4	Moscú N°1, Villa Niza, Villa del Scorro and Aranjuez	Cra. 49 between Str. 94-98a	Areas and corridors of mixed-use and residential activity	3	Medium	Municipality of Medellín	
Walking network Fatima	16	Fatima	Cra. 66B between Str. 30c-31	Sports facilities and residential area	4	Small	Municipality of Medellín	
Consolata	11	Lorena	Trv. 39B between Str. 79A - 42	Areas and corridors of mixed-use and residential activity	5	Medium-large	Municipality of Medellín	

San Diego	10	San Diego	Trv. 39 x Cra. 43	City center/ Commercial use	5	Small	Municipality of Medellín	
Días de playa (Beach days)	10	Boston	Str. 51 between Cra. 46- 40	Traditional center/ Educational, cultural, and health services	4	Medium- large	Pablo Tobón Theater/Proyecto NN/Distrito Candelaria/Otraparte/La Ciudad Verde	
Palacé para todos (Palacé for everyone)	10	Colón	Cra. 50 between Str.32- 44	Industrial/ Administrative	4	Medium	La Ciudad Verde	
Rey peatón (King pedestrian)	14	La Abadia	Str. 20S between Cra.27- 34	Residential area/Corridors of mixed-use	6	Small	La Ciudad Verde	

Ayacucho's tram	10	Bomboná N.1	Pabellón del agua Metro tram station	Traditional center/ Educational, cultural, and health services/ Public transport facilities	4	Small	Ciudad Creativa/Medellín Metro/La Ciudad Verde/Tricilab/José María Cordoba Militar School	
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## 4. Data Processing and Analysis

The institutions responsible for planning and executing the case studies are shown in Table 4. Based on this information, the organizations chosen to interview their members are:

- Human Mobility Department, attached to the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín.
- Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater.
- Citizen collective Proyecto NN.
- Citizen collective La Ciudad Verde.
- Citizen collective Ciudad Creativa.
- Citizen collective Tricilab.
- Citizen collective Más Urbano.
- Fernando Gonzáles-Otraparte Corporation.

Following the interviews conducted, the documentation compiled, and the field visits made, the analysis of each case study is presented next.

#### 4.1. Walking network Aranjuez



*Figure 24. Location on the map of Medellín and preview of the tactical urbanism Walking Network Aranjuez. Source: own elaboration.*

**Objective:** improve pedestrian mobility and accessibility in the Moscú N°1, Villa Niza, Villa del Socorro, and Aranjuez neighborhoods through the generation of walkable space. Enhance pedestrian connectivity with the Aranjuez Metroplús station.

**Description:** The Walking Networks project is a collaborative effort between the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín and the public mass transit company, Metroplús. Its primary goal is to enhance connectivity, accessibility, and walkability in the vicinity of the BRT public mass transit system stations within a 500-meter radius. The project aims to establish seamless connections between the stations and noteworthy landmarks or sites of interest in Medellín. For the case of Aranjuez station and surrounding areas, due to the lack of continuity in the sidewalks and their poor condition, a 1.20-meter-wide strip was generated. This space is segregated from the vehicular roadway with

plastic elements and horizontal signage/cold plastic paint.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Mobility Secretariat, Metroplús.
- Institutions: Fidel Antonio Saldarriaga School, E.I. Villa del Socorro, E.I. Ciro Medina, Arzobispo García School.
- Social-Politic-Civil society: Local Action Boards (Juntas de Acción Local, JAL) Comunas 2 and 4, Community Action Boards (Juntas de Acción Comunal, JAC) Villa del Socorro, Moscú No1, San Nicolás, Justice house Villa del Socorro, Inhabitants of the sector.
- Cultural: Popular music school, Telecentro.
- Informal: informal transport drivers and street vendors.
- Private sector: concrete furniture suppliers.

Process:

1. Characterization of the site/field visit.
2. Preliminary design workshop.
3. Survey of properties in the area of influence.
4. Preparation of blueprints for the pilot test, registration, and approval of the Traffic Management Plan.

5. Socialization of the project and the pilot test to the community.
6. Execution of the pilot test and joint design workshop with the community.
7. Preparation of the final design.
8. Field verification of the final design.
9. Designs final adjustments.
10. Implementation.
11. Cultural and pedagogical activation of the project/pedagogical tours with focus groups.
12. Post-intervention follow-up/satisfaction and feedback surveys.

Spatial reach: 450 linear meters of pedestrian space generated in the roadway on Carrera 49 between Streets 94-98a, crossing the Moscú No1, Villa Niza, Villa del Socorro, and Aranjuez neighborhoods in Communes 2 and 4. Connection between the Aranjuez Metroplús station and the Nuestra Señora de la Asunción church.

Temporality: short-medium term. Currently four years since its implementation.

Maintenance: maintenance during the first year of implementation. Since the change of administration, no more work has been done on its

conservation.

Resources:

- Financing: budget of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín.
- Materials: traffic cones, tape, plastic studs for segregation, cold plastic paint, concrete planters, and reflective horizontal signage.
- Labor force: contractors from the Medellín Mayor's Office.

Participatory methods:

- Socialization workshops.
- Social diagnosis tours with community leaders.
- Reception of problems and general complaints from the community.
- Joint design workshops with the community during the pilot tests.

Community engagement methods:

- Weekly progress socialization meetings with residents and sector leaders.
- Participation of senior citizens during educational tours.

- Collection and application of community feedback on pilot tests and final designs.
- Green Godparents program/planting workshops in areas surrounding the intervention.

#### Challenges:

- Coordination with other internal offices of the Mobility Secretariat and its projects.
- Manage and land the expectations of the community.
- Natural skepticism of public officials and their work by the community.
- Promote pedestrian and sustainable mobility in a city where motorized vehicles predominate.
- Generate changes and congestion in vehicular flows.
- Solution and management of irregular parking problems.
- Prevent generated spaces from becoming garbage accumulation points.

#### Impacts:

- Creation of safe crosswalks.
- With the new pedestrian space, the habits of the community

created new informal bus stops.

- Safe and continuous transit is guaranteed, especially for the older population.
- Reorganization of vehicular flows.
- Reduction of pedestrian accidents.

Figure 25 shows the before and after of the tactical urbanism implemented on the corridor. Due to the length of the road, only two zones are shown as examples.

Since no official images of the area before the tactical intervention were available, Google Maps was used to obtain photos of the scenery before implementation.



*Figure 25. On the left: intervention area before tactical urbanism. Source: Google Maps. Right: intervention area after tactical urbanism. Source: files of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín, 2019.*



#### 4.2. Walking network Fatima



*Figure 26. Location on the map of Medellín and preview of the tactical urbanism Walking Network Fatima. Source: own elaboration.*

**Objective:** improve pedestrian mobility, safety, and accessibility in the Fatima neighborhood by generating a safe crossing. Enhance pedestrian connectivity with the Fatima Metroplús station and the INDER sports facility.

**Description:** The Walking Networks project is a collaborative effort between the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín and the public mass transit company, Metroplús. Its primary goal is to enhance connectivity, accessibility, and walkability in the vicinity of the BRT public mass transit system stations within a 500-meter radius. The project aims to establish seamless connections between the stations and noteworthy landmarks or sites of interest in Medellín. In the case of Fatima station and its surrounding areas, addressing the absence of a secure crosswalk that connects the Fatima neighborhood with the INDER sports facility and complements the route to the Metroplús Fatima station involves the creation of a central waiting space or island

on the considerably wide roadway (10 meters wide). This waiting space is accompanied by horizontal signage and segregation elements to calm vehicular traffic. Additionally, the process includes establishing designated spaces for taxicabs, which reorganizes and formalizes the cab collection center while enhancing the existing pedestrian waiting areas.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Mobility Secretariat, Metroplús, Institute of Sports and Recreation of Medellín (INDER).
- Institutions: Integrar Foundation.
- Social-Politic-Civil society: Local Action Boards (Junta de Acción Local, JAL) Comuna 16, Community Action Boards (Junta de Acción Comunal, JAC) Fatima, Inhabitants of the sector.
- Cultural: founding residents of the neighborhood.
- Informal: street vendors.
- Private sector: concrete furniture suppliers, taxi companies.

Process:

1. Characterization of the site/field visit.
2. Preliminary design workshop.

3. Survey of properties in the area of influence.
4. Preparation of blueprints for the pilot test, registration, and approval of the Traffic Management Plan.
5. Socialization of the project and the pilot test to the community.
6. Execution of the pilot test and joint design workshop with the community.
7. Preparation of the final design.
8. Field verification of the final design.
9. Designs final adjustments.
10. Implementation.
11. Cultural and pedagogical activation of the project/pedagogical tours with focus groups.
12. Post-intervention follow-up/satisfaction and feedback surveys.

Spatial reach: the intervention covers the intersection of Carrera 66B and 32 Street. The tactical intervention and its segregation correspond to a waiting space or island of approximately 1.20m wide x 5m long. The other crossing is intervened with horizontal signage, such as zebras.

Temporality: short-medium term. Currently four years since its

implementation.

Maintenance: maintenance during the first year of implementation. Since the change of administration, no more work has been done on its conservation.

Resources:

- Financing: budget of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín.
- Materials: traffic cones, tape, plastic studs for segregation, cold plastic paint, concrete planters, and reflective horizontal signage.
- Labor force: contractors from the Medellín Mayor's Office.

Participatory methods:

- Socialization workshops.
- Social diagnosis tours with community leaders and INDER administrative staff.
- Reception of problems and general complaints from the community.
- Joint design workshops with the community during the pilot tests.

### Community engagement methods:

- Weekly progress socialization meetings with residents, sector leaders, and INDER administrative staff.
- Collection and application of community feedback on pilot tests and final designs.
- Collection and application of community feedback on pilot tests and final designs.

### Challenges:

- Coordination with the Infrastructure Secretariat, Metropolitan Area, and its joint cycling infrastructure projects.
- Convince cab drivers of the priority of pedestrian mobility over vehicular mobility.
- Natural skepticism of public officials and their work by the community.
- Promote pedestrian and sustainable mobility in a city where motorized vehicles predominate.
- Solution and management of irregular parking problems.
- Prevent generated spaces from becoming garbage accumulation points.

### Impacts:

- Creation of safe crosswalks.
- Formalization of the collection point for taxicabs.
- Safe and continuous transit is guaranteed, especially for the older population.
- Reorganization of vehicular flows.
- Reduction of pedestrian accidents.
- The intervention facilitated pedestrian passage through the neighborhood and connected with the sector's bicycle infrastructure, promoting intermodality at the site.

Since no official images of the area before the tactical intervention were available, Google Maps was used to obtain photos of the scenery before implementation.



*Figure 27. On the left: intervention area before tactical urbanism. Source: Google Maps. Right: intervention area after tactical urbanism. Source: files of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín, 2019.*

### 4.3. Consolata



*Figure 28. Location on the map of Medellín and preview of the tactical urbanism Consolata. Source: own elaboration.*

**Objective:** improve road safety in the area and generate pedestrian connectivity in the Lorena neighborhood.

**Description:** The Medellín Mobility Secretariat actively participated in the Evonik Road Safety Award 2017. This award acknowledges and honors the efforts made by public authorities worldwide in promoting road safety. The award carries a prize of €10,000 in the form of a sponsored road marking application, a donation of traffic safety-related items, or a contribution to a non-profit organization dedicated to road safety initiatives (Fundación Orbis, 2017). The Consolata sector in the Lorena neighborhood was the municipal administration's chosen location to claim the prize money. The intervention consisted of demarcating zones through drawings and installing mats in the spaces where the pedestrian passage was foreseen. It was taken into account that they could be comfortably avoided by users of orthopedic aids

without affecting the main objective: to prevent the passage of motorized vehicles between them. The benches and other furniture elements were placed in such a way that they could be used by all citizens comfortably and autonomously.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Mobility Secretariat.
- Institutions: Orbis Foundation, E.I. Lucrecio Jaramillo Velez.
- Social-Politic-Civil society: Local Action Boards (Junta de Acción Local, JAL) Comuna 11, Community Action Boards (Junta de Acción Comunal, JAC) Lorena, Inhabitants of the sector.
- Cultural: Nuestra Señora de la Consolata Church.
- Informal: neighborhood recyclers.
- Private sector: concrete furniture suppliers, Pintuco (Painting company), Evonik Industries, taxicab drivers.

Process:

1. Characterization of the site/field visit.
2. Preliminary design workshop.
3. Preparation of blueprints for the pilot test, registration, and approval of the Traffic Management Plan.



4. Socialization of the project and the pilot test to the community.
5. Execution of the pilot test and joint design workshop with the community.
6. Preparation of the final design.
7. Field verification of the final design.
8. Designs final adjustments.
9. Implementation.
10. Cultural and pedagogical activation of the project/pedagogical tours with focus groups.
11. Post-intervention follow-up/satisfaction and feedback surveys.

Spatial reach: 501 square meters of paint covered the intersection of Transversal 39B (Nutibara Avenue) with Street 42 and Carrera 79A. The primary intervention corresponded to creating a central separator in the center of the intersection, and its complementary living spaces were in front of the Nuestra Señora de la Consolata church and an adjacent shopping mall.

Temporality: large-medium term. Currently six years since its implementation.

Maintenance: constant maintenance between 2017 and 2019. Since the change of administration, no more work has been done on its

conservation.

Resources:

- Financing: budget of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín, budget of Pintuco, €10.000 from Evonik Industries.
- Materials: traffic cones, tape, plastic studs for segregation, cold plastic paint, concrete planters, and furniture.
- Labor force: Orbis Foundation, Pintuco.

Participatory methods:

- Socialization workshops.
- Social diagnosis tours with community leaders and members of the elderly clubs.
- Reception of problems and general complaints from the community.
- Joint design workshops with the community during the pilot tests.

Community engagement methods:

- Five workshops were held with the community to socialize the intervention.
- Three educational tours with population groups (senior

citizens, children, and collectives).

- 11 nighttime visits to the public space generated for social gatherings and discussions.
- 34 home visits.
- Gardening workshop for the sector's inhabitants.
- 221 post-intervention perception surveys.

Challenges:

- Coordination with the internal offices of the Mobility Secretariat.
- Convince cab drivers of the priority of pedestrian mobility over vehicular mobility.
- Natural skepticism of public officials and their work by the community.
- Promote pedestrian and sustainable mobility in a city where motorized vehicles predominate.
- In the beginning, several vehicles crashed into the concrete planters.
- Prevent generated spaces from becoming garbage accumulation points.

- The community of people with reduced mobility was the biggest detractor of the project.

Impacts:

- Creation of safe crosswalks.
- Formalization of the collection point for taxicabs.
- Safe and continuous transit is guaranteed, especially for the older and young populations.
- Reorganization of vehicular flows.
- Reduction of pedestrian accidents.
- Increased trust in the public sector by the community.
- The public space generated was converted into new areas for workshops for the elderly community.
- Waiting areas have functioned as bus stops.
- The intervention won the Evonik Road Safety Award, giving media visibility to the project and increasing the credibility of tactical urbanism as an intervention tool.
- It was the beginning of the Safe Crossings plan for Medellín.



*Figure 29. Intervention area before and after tactical urbanism. Source: files of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín, 2017.*

#### 4.4. San Diego



*Figure 30. Location on the map of Medellín and preview of the tactical urbanism of San Diego. Source: own elaboration.*

**Objective:** provide safety and meeting spaces for pedestrians who frequent the San Diego shopping center. Regulate the parking of cabs on the pedestrian walkway, as it was a habit to pick up passengers, obstructing the crossing of people.

**Description:** The formal gathering of cabs from the mall was spreading to places that blocked the free flow of people. The San Diego shopping center contacted the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín to help solve the problem. With tactical urbanism, the space previously occupied by vehicles was delimited and populated with concrete furniture and planters, creating a space for pedestrians to stay and shelter. The

intervention clears and demarcates the area for a safe crosswalk.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Mobility Secretariat.
- Informal: street vendors.
- Private sector: concrete furniture suppliers, San Diego shopping center, taxicab drivers, shopping center surveillance agency.

Process:

1. Meeting with the shopping center management.
2. Characterization of the site/field visit.
3. Preliminary design workshop.
4. Preparation of blueprints for the pilot test, registration, and approval of the Traffic Management Plan.
5. Socialization of the project and the pilot test to cab drivers and businesses near the mall.
6. Execution of the pilot test and joint design workshop with the shopping center management and the taxicab drivers.
7. Preparation of the final design.

8. Field verification of the final design.
9. Designs final adjustments.
10. Implementation.
11. Pedagogical activation of the project.
12. Post-intervention follow-up/satisfaction and feedback surveys.

Spatial reach: space equivalent to 4 parking cells in front of the main entrance of the San Diego shopping center.

Temporality: large-medium term. Currently three years since its implementation.

Maintenance: constant maintenance since its implementation. The San Diego shopping center adopted and appropriated the care and surveillance of the intervention.

Resources:

- Financing: budget of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín.
- Materials: traffic cones, tape, plastic studs for segregation,



cold plastic paint, concrete planters, and furniture.

- Labor force: contractors from the Medellín Mayor's Office.

#### Participatory methods:

- Socialization workshops.
- Social diagnosis tours with the shopping center management.
- Reception of problems and general complaints from the taxicab drivers, near businesses, visitors, and mall management.
- Joint design workshops with the taxicab drivers and the mall management during the pilot tests.

#### Community engagement methods:

- Collection and application of passers-by, shopping mall staff, and cab drivers' feedback on pilot tests and final designs.
- Post-intervention perception surveys.

#### Challenges:

- Natural skepticism of public officials and their work by the community.
- Prevent generated spaces from becoming garbage accumulation points.

### Impacts:

- Creation of safe crosswalks.
- Re-organization of parking spaces for cab drivers.
- Safe and continuous transit is guaranteed for the visitors to the mall.
- Reorganization of vehicular flows.
- Reduction of pedestrian accidents.
- Increased trust in the public sector by the Taxicab drivers.
- Appropriation of the space as people constantly use the furniture installed in the intervention.
- Tactical urbanism became a reference point in the commercial center.



*Figure 31. Intervention area before and after tactical urbanism. Source: files of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín, 2020.*

#### 4.5. **Días de Playa (Beach Days)**



*Figure 32. Location on the map of Medellín and a preview of the tactical urbanism Días de Playa (Beach Days). Source: own elaboration.*

#### Objectives:

- Inform, sensitize, and consult the citizens about what has historically been La Playa Avenue, about its transformation possibilities.
- To collectively enjoy the diverse opportunities of La Playa from a cultural and artistic point of view, thus recovering the use of the space and establishing relationships with diverse audiences.
- Promote the transformation of public space as a meeting place for people.
- Collect inputs in the participatory processes for possible urban

design interventions.

- Promote Días de Playa (Beach Days) activities as spaces for Co-Creation.

Description: Días de Playa is a pilot urban laboratory for the collaborative construction of the city that seeks to influence the forms of planning and the urban design of the plans. By implementing artistic and cultural activities on La Playa Avenue in a collaborative and coordinated manner, diverse and fun ways of using public space ethically and aesthetically were evidenced. The various activations of Días de Playa become inputs for constructing an urban intervention proposal that allows for more human space. Helping to generate more friendly, welcoming, safe, and attractive areas for all types of public, Días de Playa as a laboratory seeks to explore collective possibilities of intervention in public space from participatory urbanism and urban acupuncture (Teatro Pablo Tobón, 2015). The physical intervention consisted of giving value to the avenue's name and transforming it into a space similar to a beach, covering the streets with sand, and installing furniture such as umbrellas, pool chairs, and elements for beach games.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Mayor's Office of Medellín.
- Institutions: Educational Institutions, NGOs.
- Social-Politic-Civil society: La Ciudad Verde, Proyecto NN, Buena Nota Foundation, Ciudad Creativa, and around 25 other citizen civic groups, resident neighbors, independent

citizens, and social and community organizations.

- Cultural: Teatro Pablo Tobón Uribe, Performing arts groups, representatives, and cultural managers of the city.
- Private sector: local business.

Process:

1. Planning: 7 months of brainstorming; weaving allies; fundraising; participatory design with collectives; creation of an organizational chart; definition of cultural and artistic activities; establishment of a methodological route; creation of a communications strategy. All activities were done in parallel.
2. Physical execution: installation, assembly, and intervention setting.
3. Activation: participative, educational, cultural, and artistic activities.
4. Parallel activities during execution: permanent communication and promotion through different media, constant feedback collection.

Spatial reach: interventions near the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater and Avenida La Playa between Carreras 40 and 43 (Girardot). Occupying only the central roadway of the three that the Avenue has.

Temporality: short term. 28 days.

Maintenance: during its duration, maintenance was constant, and was

in charge of the organizations and collectives that led the project.

Resources:

- **Financing:** the majority of the resources were provided by the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater, followed by the budget of the Mayor's Office of Medellín, fundraising, and self-management.
- **Materials:** sand, paint, wooden furniture, lighting, paper, traffic cones, and elements of beach ambiance.
- **Labor force:** collectives and civic organizations of Medellín, contractors from the Medellín Mayor's Office, and neighboring residents.

Participatory methods:

- **Digital platforms (mimedellin.org):** The platform made it possible to create a panel of citizen proposals.
- **City Conversations** in the public space.
- **Workshop** on imaginaries and expressions on La Playa Avenue.
- **Drawings** of proposals on the street.
- **Forums** in nearby cafes.
- **Nine participatory activations** that brought together 118,054 citizens.

### Community engagement methods:

- Digital platforms.
- Days to paint and decorate spaces with citizen volunteers.
- Symbolic cultural activities.
- Yoga classes.
- Forestry tours.
- Gardening workshops.
- Reading clubs.
- Bicycle tours.
- Ecological walks.
- Concerts and movie screenings.
- A total of 348,751 people appropriated the space through the 48 artistic and cultural activations.

### Challenges:

- State slowness.
- Confrontation against the antiquated urban planning vision of



some public officials.

- Insufficient budget to cover the entire La Playa Avenue.
- Create a methodology from scratch.
- Being absorbed by the state bureaucracy.
- Generate changes and congestion in vehicular flows.

Impacts:

- Create other forms of civic participation beyond the imaginary workshops.
- Promote a sense of ownership of public spaces.
- Increase the sense of security in the city center.
- Place the renovation of Avenida La Playa on the public agenda.
- Generate inputs for future urban planning projects in the city center.
- Activation of the surrounding economy.
- Serve as a gateway to the Fourth World Bicycle Forum.
- Awaken in citizens the desire to repeat similar activities and events.

- The significant impact placed the public political agenda in favor of the event.
- Joint work between civil society and the public sector.



Figure 33. Intervention area before and after tactical urbanism. Source: (i) Telemedellín, 2018; (ii) Caracol Radio, 2016; (iii) and (iv) Tamayo & Santamaria, 2022.

#### 4.6. **Rey Peatón (King Pedestrian)**



*Figure 34. Location on the map of Medellín and a preview of the tactical urbanism Rey Peatón (King Pedestrian). Source: own elaboration.*

Objective: raise awareness among pedestrians and drivers of the dangers to which pedestrians are exposed when crossing the street. Put pedestrian issues on the public agenda.

Description: to alert and sensitize people about the difficulty of crossing the road in front of the San Lucas Mall, Medellín, a crosswalk was marked with horizontal signage to reduce the speed of vehicular traffic.

Stakeholders:

- Social-Politic-Civil Society: La Ciudad Verde, passers-by, and

drivers in the sector

- Private sector: San Lucas Mall.

Process: spontaneous, fast, and without much planning.

Spatial reach: crossing in front of the San Lucas Mall on South 20th Street.

Temporality: short term.

Maintenance: not required.

Resources:

- Financing: self-management and own resources.
- Materials: plastic stencils and paint.
- Labor force: members of La Ciudad Verde.

Participatory methods: none

Community engagement methods: Digital platforms.

Challenges:

- Dealing with the high speeds and traffic conditions of the sector.
- Raise awareness in a city designed for cars about the

importance of pedestrian mobility and road safety.

Impacts:

- Generate media impact.
- Attract the attention of the Mobility Secretariat.
- Low investment for an extensive media reach.
- The impact of the strategy was replicated in other cities in Colombia.
- Reduction of pedestrian accidents.
- The small intervention transcended and became a traffic-light crosswalk.



*Figure 35. Intervention area before, during, and after tactical urbanism. Source: Cadena-Gaitán, 2023.*

#### 4.7. Ayacucho's Tram



*Figure 36. Location on the map of Medellín and a preview of the tactical urbanism of Ayacucho's tram. Source: own elaboration.*

Objective: increase the levels of green areas in Medellín by constructing green parks made with recycled materials, improving environmental conditions, and generating spaces for leisure and citizen coexistence.

Description: The Green Virus project was born to seek, through a set of creative, economical, and effective interventions, to increase the levels of public green areas in the city of Medellín through the collective construction of green parks made with recycled and reused materials, which will improve the environmental conditions of the city and generate leisure and coexistence spaces for citizens (Ciudad Creativa, 2016). The intervention consists of the elaboration of a public garden made with recycled materials for the elaboration of planters, furniture, and living areas to promote leisure and meeting areas in the vicinity of the Pabellón del Agua (Water Pavilion) station of the Medellín Tramway; implementation of art to capture the attention of passersby and increase the sense of ownership of this space; finding green areas

or abandoned/underutilized public spaces to revitalize them, looking for the community of those spots to involve them.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Medellín's Metro.
- Institutions: José María Cordoba Military school.
- Social-Politic-Civil society: La Ciudad Verde, Tricilab, Ciudad Creativa, Inhabitants of the sector.
- Cultural: Bellas Artes University Foundation.
- Private sector: local business.

Process:

1. Search for streets, underutilized or residual spaces within the detected critical areas.
2. Identify a community, company, or institution interested in working collaboratively to improve their habitat (a co-creation and self-management project).
3. Design and collective construction of the green park.
4. Cultural activation of the space.

Spatial reach: small public space near the Pabellón del Agua (Water



Pavilion) station of the Medellín Tramway in the Comuna 10.

Temporality: mid-term. 2 years approximately.

Maintenance: during its duration, local businesses, students, and passersby took ownership of the space and required no supervision.

Resources:

- Financing: funds of the 4th World Bicycle Forum/Cities for All Contest, Metro de Medellín.
- Materials: metal/plastic planters, paint, furniture, and living room elements made from recycled wood.
- Labor force: collectives and civic organizations of the city of Medellín.

Participatory methods:

- Digital platforms.
- Cities for All Contest: different citizen proposals to create and revitalize green spaces in the city participated.

Community engagement methods: Planting workshops and

conversations with the community and passers-by

Challenges:

- Street dwellers in the center may steal the installed furniture.
- Clashes with the municipal public space authorities due to actions performed.

Impacts:

- Strengthening the social fabric by creating a space for students to spend time together.
- Increased security perception in the sector.
- Background activation of the local economy.
- Contribute to the improvement of air quality in the city center.
- Create an active waiting area for the Tramway.

It was impossible to find official or Google Maps images of the site

before tactical urbanism.



*Figure 37. Intervention area after tactical urbanism. Source: Ciudad Creativa, 2016.*

#### 4.8. Palacé para todos (Palacé for everyone)



*Figure 38. Location on the map of Medellín and a preview of the tactical urbanism Palacé para todos (Palacé for everyone). Source: own elaboration.*

Objective: support and promote the new bicycle infrastructure project the Metropolitan Area proposed on Palacé Avenue. Draw attention to the opposition that the automotive industry sector was exerting on the progress of the cycling project and to the misuse and occupation that industries were taking of public pedestrian space.

Description: guerrilla urbanism was implemented to draw attention to the opposition that the commercial/automotive sector was exerting to halt the progress of the cycling infrastructure project on Avenida Palacé and alert about the wrong occupation of pedestrian space that car parking was generating and spontaneously occupying, from very early in the morning and without permission, the sidewalks in front of the car dealerships. Before the stores opened, took over the spaces in front of the dealerships with synthetic grass, chairs, planters, and umbrellas to conduct activities inviting passersby and the community to retake the pedestrian spaces. The space corresponding to the future bike path

is also painted and delimited.

Stakeholders:

- Public sector: Metropolitan Area.
- Social-Politic-Civil society: La Ciudad Verde, LAIN Party.
- Cultural: Pablo Tobón Theater.
- Private sector: local automobile dealerships.

Process: spontaneous, without permission, and informal. On-site planning of the intervention design. Take over from 5 a.m. the sidewalks in front of the car dealerships. Create activities that involve passers-by and people interested in appropriating the sidewalks. Remain on the site until the closing time of the commercial establishments.

Spatial reach: space equivalent to 2 or 3 cars. The intervention could be relocated and moved along three blocks on Palacé Avenue. The temporary bike path was extended along the same three blocks.

Temporality: short-term. 3 to 4 weeks.

Maintenance: no maintenance was required.

Resources:

- Financing: funds from the 4<sup>th</sup> World Bicycle Forum, contributions from the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater, and own

resources/self-financing.

- Materials: synthetic grass, chairs, wooden furniture, paint, and traffic cones.
- Labor force: collectives and civic organizations of the city of Medellín.

#### Participatory methods:

- Digital platforms.
- Creative Cities Call for Proposals.

#### Community engagement methods:

- Yoga classes.
- Board games.
- Beach games.
- Reading spaces.
- Conversation sessions.

#### Challenges:

- Make a call for urban change from the symbolic.
- Communicate to the media and the people, generally, a

guerrilla or disruptive action without it being seen as transgressing the law.

- Sustain the action in time and the loss of the initial enthusiasm.
- Go against the tremendous economic power and influence that the big automotive brands have in the area and over some politicians.

Impacts:

- Reinforcement of the relationship between the Citizen's Collective and the Municipal Administration.
- Place the issue of cycle infrastructure on the media agenda.
- Show the media the great power that spontaneous or guerrilla actions can achieve.
- The intervention transcended to a bike path with quality design and infrastructure.



Figure 39. Intervention area before, during, and after tactical urbanism. Source: (i) and (ii) La Ciudad Verde, 2015; (iii) Imagine Colombia, 2015; (iv) own elaboration.



#### 4.9. **Outcomes**

The comparative analysis of the information obtained for the 8 cases developed above is shown in Table 5. It shows the generalities and patterns of each side of the spectrum of tactical urbanism in Medellín.

Figure 40 shows the universe of stakeholders involved, activism, and State. Both coincide in that civil society is at the highest level of importance in the processes of tactical urbanism as veto players that can accompany or stop interventions depending on whether their interests are represented in these or not; however, in the world of activism, civil society is manifested in residents and civic/citizen organizations, while the municipality must have contact with legally constituted community organizations since the actions of the mayor's office must always be structured and justified within the regulatory frameworks. The city of Medellín has no margin for improvisation.

A noteworthy aspect of the stakeholder analysis is the relevance of concrete furniture suppliers in the tactical actions implemented by the municipality. Since these interventions have a semi-permanent character, the choice of materials is crucial to their durability. This constitutes a differentiating and determining factor between activist and state urbanism. To avoid acts of vandalism and to comply with the regulations and signs established by the Medellín mayor's office, concrete has been selected as the component that provides physical and legal protection to the projects. Heavy concrete elements like planters become barriers that delimit and preserve the newly created spaces. In this sense, the manufacturers of this type of furniture play a fundamental role as key players since, without their participation, it is likely that the mayor's tactical urbanism initiatives would not have

been able to achieve their objectives.

The city's cab drivers are essential stakeholders in the municipality. In addition to being a large and influential group in the city, tactical urbanism actions on the roads directly affect their circulation. This community was often the first opponent to the interventions, and its participation and feedback are relevant. The opposite is true for activism; having the capacity to perform actions on sidewalks and pedestrian public spaces, there are often no clashes with this group. In those cases where urban planning was done on the vehicular roadway, communication with cab drivers is optional, thanks to the spontaneous nature of civil society actions.

The informal sector is another crucial distinction between the stakeholders involved in civil society and the public sector. Given its social character and objective, it is the responsibility of the municipality to incorporate all those who reside in the areas subject to intervention, including street vendors and informal recyclers. This is because the new spaces created have been taken advantage of and appropriated by casual food stalls, contributing to bringing the interventions to life. Likewise, as reflected in the challenges presented in Table 5, preventing tactical urbanisms from becoming points of garbage accumulation at the neighborhood level requires establishing communication with the local community of waste pickers. They are also affected or benefited by the projects, and their participation is relevant, especially in maintenance.

Surprisingly, the activists did not establish contacts with the informal sector, which might be expected from civic groups concerned with the community's welfare. However, according to interviews with various citizen collectives, this was not due to bad intentions or lack of knowledge but to the spontaneous nature of the tactical actions, most

of which had to be executed quickly and with little planning.

In general, there is a marked variation in the universe of stakeholders involved between activism and the State due to the regulatory framework in which they operate. In the municipality's case, all actions must be justified and in compliance with the law since they are financed with public resources. Consequently, it is necessary to involve as many relevant actors as possible to ensure control and generate confidence in the execution of tactical urbanism. In contrast, activist collectives are not as bound by the same regulations. While their actions must also be within legal boundaries, their acting is more disruptive and often defies the limits set by the rules. Due to the rebellious nature of tactical civil society urbanisms, it is not necessary to consider many stakeholders to implement interventions.

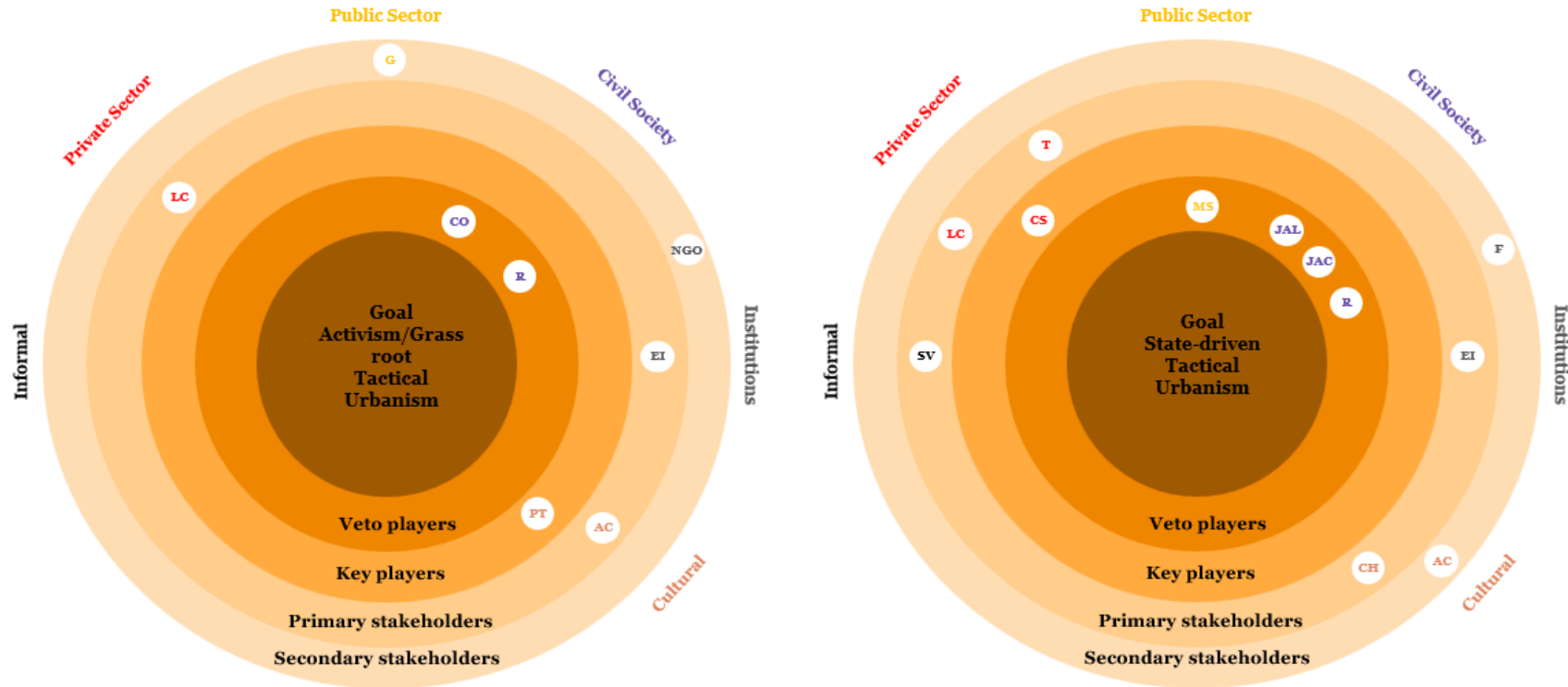


Figure 40. Stakeholders' diagram. Right: State-driven Tactical Urbanism. Left: Activism/Grass root Tactical urbanism. Source: own elaboration. MS: Mobility Secretariat; G: Government Entities; EI: Educational Institutions; F: Foundations; NGO: Non-profit Organization; CO: Civic/Citizen Organization; JAL: Local Action Board; JAC: Community Action Board; R: Residents; CH: Churches; AC: Art Centers; PT: Pablo Tobón Theater; SV: Street Vendors; CS: Concrete furniture Suppliers; LC: Local Businesses; T: Taxicab Drivers.

<b>Responsible</b> <b>Aspect</b>	<b>Activism/Grass root</b>	<b>State</b>
<b>Objectives/Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote transformations of public space to be used by people.</li> <li>• Promote pedestrians and cyclists as the main actors of mobility.</li> <li>• Place issues such as urban mobility and air quality on the public agenda.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pedestrian mobility and safety.</li> <li>• Reorganize vehicular flows.</li> <li>• Promote pedestrian connectivity with attraction centers and public transportation.</li> </ul>
<b>Process</b>	<p><u>Interventions are generally spontaneous and improvised.</u> There is no standardized methodology; ideas are born and executed through iterative site designs. If the intervention transcends to a city event, they require a degree of structure and planning.</p>	<p><u>It is standardized and rigorous—establishing a technical, social, and communicational script.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Characterization of the site/field visit.</li> <li>2. Preliminary design workshop.</li> <li>3. Survey of properties in the area of influence.</li> <li>4. Preparation of blueprints for the pilot test, registration, and approval of the Traffic Management Plan.</li> <li>5. Socialization of the project and the pilot test to the community.</li> <li>6. Execution of the pilot test and joint design workshop with the community.</li> <li>7. Preparation of the final design.</li> <li>8. Field verification of the final design.</li> <li>9. Designs final adjustments.</li> </ol>

		<p>10. Implementation.</p> <p>11. Cultural and pedagogical activation of the project/pedagogical tours with focus groups.</p> <p>12. Post-intervention follow-up/satisfaction and feedback surveys.</p>
<b>Spatial reach</b>	Most actions are performed in a space equivalent to 2 or 3 parking cells or minor intersections.	Most actions are performed in a space equivalent to 2 or 3 parking cells or minor intersections.
<b>Temporality</b>	Short-term. Generally, its duration is one month at maximum.	Medium-term. Although the ideal is that the interventions would have a duration between 2 and 4 years, the change of municipal administration meant that their implementation in significant construction works was off the current agenda.
<b>Maintenance</b>	Since their temporality is ephemeral, the interventions' materiality makes maintenance unnecessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interventions received constant maintenance during their first two years of operation. With the change of municipal administration, its conservation was not on the agenda.</li> <li>• Its constant maintenance is crucial to ensure and promote citizen ownership; the lack of it makes the community understand that it is not essential for the municipal administration, helping to lose citizen enthusiasm.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing: mostly own resources/collections/self-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing: budget of the Mobility Secretariat of Medellín.</li> </ul>

	<p>management. Contributions from the Pablo Tobón Uribe Theater. Funds from the Fourth World Bicycle Forum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: furniture made from recycled materials, paint, and plastic/metal planters.</li> <li>• Labor force: citizen collectives of Medellín.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Materials: traffic cones, tape, plastic studs for segregation, <u>cold plastic paint, concrete planters, and reflective horizontal signage.</u></li> <li>• Labor force: contractors from the Medellín Mayor's Office.</li> </ul>
<b>Participatory methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital platforms.</li> <li>• Creative ideas contests.</li> <li>• Forums and discussions.</li> <li>• <u>The more minor the action size, the less use of participatory methods.</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socialization workshops.</li> <li>• Social diagnosis tours with community leaders.</li> <li>• Reception of problems and general complaints from the community.</li> <li>• Joint design workshops with the community during the pilot tests.</li> </ul>
<b>Community engagement methods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital platforms.</li> <li>• Cultural and symbolic activities.</li> <li>• Conversations.</li> <li>• Planting days.</li> <li>• Artistic workshops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress socialization meetings with residents and sector leaders.</li> <li>• Collection and application of community feedback on pilot tests and final designs.</li> <li>• Pedagogical tours with population groups.</li> <li>• Cultural and gardening workshops.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustain the actions over time with the same enthusiasm.</li> <li>• Limited material and financial resources.</li> <li>• Raise awareness of sustainability issues in a car-centric city.</li> <li>• Make calls for urban development from the symbolic.</li> <li>• Work on the edge of the norm and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with internal offices of the Mobility Secretariat and other governmental agencies.</li> <li>• Change the paradigm and the traditional way technicians, and public officials conceive urban planning and project execution.</li> <li>• Manage and land the expectations of the community.</li> </ul>

	<p>regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confrontations with the municipal authority and other political powers in the city.</li> <li>• Coordinate with the slow way of working of the State.</li> <li>• Clash with the antiquated urban vision of some public officials.</li> <li>• Colombia is the most dangerous country for activists and social causes (Buil, 2021).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural skepticism of public officials and their work by the community.</li> <li>• Promote pedestrian and sustainable mobility in a city where motorized vehicles predominate.</li> <li>• Building a civic culture regarding waste management in the new spaces created.</li> <li>• Several vehicles crashed into the concrete planters.</li> <li>• The interventions were limited to being executed on the roads, never on the sidewalks or squares.</li> </ul>
<b>Impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the massive reach of social networks as tools for participation, engagement, and awareness.</li> <li>• Background cultural and social significance that is the basis for its realization.</li> <li>• Cultural and artistic activations are more eye-catching than those performed by the State.</li> <li>• Citizens have a greater sense of belonging to actions executed by other citizens or social organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generation of safe crossings.</li> <li>• Promoting more fluid pedestrian traffic and connecting to centers of interest.</li> <li>• Reorganization of vehicular flows.</li> <li>• Reduction of pedestrian accidents.</li> <li>• It demonstrates to the people that they can decide on their neighborhood spaces.</li> <li>• Strengthening of public sector-civil society relationships.</li> </ul>

*Table 5. Documentary table of the tactical urbanism process in Medellín. Source: own elaboration*



#### **4.10. Implications of Tactical Urbanism in the urban planning**

In addition to the general comparisons, characteristics, and patterns of actions between the tactical urbanism of civil society and the State, it is relevant to analyze both approaches' implications and incidence on the city's urban planning. It is crucial to understand how these interventions have influenced the development and configuration of the urban environment, as well as long-term planning decisions.

##### **4.10.1. Implications of the Activism/Grass root-led Tactical Urbanism in Medellín**

- With the introduction of tactical urbanism to the city, citizen collectives brought new forms of citizen participation and co-creation. Previously, Medellín's government institutions only resorted to city imaginary workshops as a tool for consultation with communities. "The Imaginary Workshops, a civic-pedagogical urbanism strategy, are participatory and consultative spaces that allow the collection of the collective imaginary of the population and the articulation of professional technical knowledge with social knowledge and the community's experience of its territory. This activity generates feelings of rootedness, belonging, commitment, and co-responsibility with municipal works." (Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano de Medellín, 2016). In realizing their urbanisms, the activists showed that symbolic and cultural actions can engage citizens in

more dynamic and novel ways.



*Figure 41. Workshop on city imaginaries. Source: Alcaldía de Medellín (2014).*

- In the same, grassroots organizations demonstrated that digital media are valuable and powerful tools for modern urban planning. Thanks to the enormous reach of cyber platforms, even people or groups outside the city can have a say in how public spaces are conceived. By holding competitions and awarding prizes, open to participation from any field of knowledge, it is possible to broaden the input for designing more inclusive cities.
- In Medellín, urban planning has typically been conceived by architects and engineers whose mentality is based on the idea that concrete and heavy infrastructure are synonymous with development. With the incursion of social organizations into tactical urbanism, a paradigm shift began in the city concerning this way of approaching urbanism and more contemporary ideas. Understanding that temporary

interventions are valid for collecting data before a larger project.

- Between 2010 and 2020, issues such as mobility and air quality were central to urban debates in Medellín. By their nature and way of acting using the media, activist collectives, through their tactical interventions, could position such issues as urgent matters to be solved by the public agenda. This means that civil society had the disposition to exert pressure and make the municipal administration consider public space, sustainable mobility, and the reduction of noxious gases as part of its agenda.
- Activism enhanced the collective memory exercises in the communities. By exploring collective memory, communities can identify neglected or underutilized spaces that hold significance to their identity. They can then initiate small actions, such as transforming vacant lots into community gardens, creating vibrant street art, or establishing temporary public spaces to reclaim and revitalize these areas. These actions are physical transformations, intellectual tools, and symbolic expressions that communities can use to manifest pride, resilience, and ownership.

#### **4.10.2. Implications of the State-led Tactical Urbanism in Medellín**

- Usar el urbanismo táctico como herramienta de intervención del espacio público abrió una hoja de ruta para pensar en nuevas actuaciones desde el urbanismo,

en la relación entre el espacio público y la movilidad, además de dar inicio al reconocimiento del peatón como actor vulnerable de la movilidad en Medellín. Dio paso a debatir la visión de cero muertes en las vías como política entre la movilidad y el espacio urbano.

- By implementing tactical urbanism, the Mayor's Office of Medellín opened the door to experimentation and urban laboratories as tools the public sector can use to gather information, analyze behaviors and conceive pre-designs before committing resources to long-term projects. Pilot actions help to gain the community's trust and involve them in issues such as design, schedule development, or even the choice of materials.
- Standardizing the processes for executing temporary or semi-permanent interventions led the Mobility Secretariat to create the Tactical Urbanism Guide for Medellín. A document that forges the basis for implementing a social, technical, and communicational script for small-scale interventions and future tactical urbanisms. The real value of the tactical urbanism that came out of the State is the creation of a social, communicational, and technical methodology.
- Enhancing State-Civil Society relations: The active engagement of neighborhood leaders and organizations, coupled with establishing direct communication channels, facilitated the development of robust connections with the communities. This inclusive approach not only improved the perception of public officials' actions but also brought about a

paradigm shift within the public sector.

- As Medellín was the first city to implement tactical urbanism from the municipal institutional framework, this tool could cross borders and be used in other cities in Colombia. In 2021 the National Road Safety Agency (ANSV for its acronym in Spanish) initiated the development of its tactical urbanism national guide, as well as incorporating tactical actions in the update of the national road safety manual (Agencia Nacional de Seguridad Vial, 2023).

## 5. Conclusions

- Tactical urbanism is valuable in the methodology with which it is implemented. Although it does not constitute a project in itself, it plays a vital role in a broader vision of the city. It is a social process and a powerful tool for participation, which, in the case of Medellín, focuses on issues of public space, mobility, and air quality. Still, it cannot encompass all topics in a complex urban environment.
- The tactical nature of urbanism lies in its spontaneity and the ability to identify small things and turn them into reflections of everyday life. It highlights an attitude that not only claims rights but also activates responsibilities. However, when processes are regulated and standardized, state-led interventions lose the characteristic of being tactical and enter into a more normative realm. Then, the tactical urbanism led by the municipality of Medellín is genuinely experimental, while grassroots collectives and popular organizations operate within the tactical domain.
- Tactical urbanism led by activists and citizen organizations differs from the State-led approach due to its meaning and culturally, artistically, and historically grounded proposals at each intervention stage. These tactical actions, infused with symbolic content, create spaces for conversation and confrontation that engage communities. In contrast, experimental interventions initiated by the municipality lack this symbolic proposition and potential vitality. In contrast, the main difference between the experimental urbanism led by the city of Medellín compared social organizations was the

standardization and regulation of a methodology and the creation of an action script. Although the municipality distorted the abstract and spontaneous nature of these tactical actions, it was able to provide a normative and legal framework for these interventions and validate their use as a form of urban and participatory laboratory. Within this standardization, materiality played a crucial role; concrete and cold plastic paint were the elements that contained the state's experimental actions within the legal framework of the execution of the public sector and the mobility department.

- State-led experimental urbanism can serve as a tool for experimentation and analysis before large-scale urban interventions. However, these laboratories must consider community participation and knowledge and be linked to solid long-term decisions. Otherwise, this urbanism becomes reduced to mere aesthetic intervention and a media spectacle. Furthermore, the use of experimental urbanism by the municipal administration aims to promote a more contemporary vision of urban planning among its officials, gradually updating their perception regarding city development that is not limited to large infrastructure projects. It seeks to foster more inclusive and participatory approaches to urban transformation.
- The continuity of processes is essential to ensure the survival and success of tactical or experimental urbanism. Maintaining a consistent team is crucial to closing the urbanism cycle and achieving its consolidation as physical infrastructure. However, changes in administration and political agendas pose a threat as they can disrupt the work done and jeopardize the

maintenance of intervened spaces.

- Tactical urbanism, regardless of its origin, has placed the issue of urban planning on the agenda. In Medellín, activists and the mayor's office were driven to work around issues such as environmental quality and mobility imaginaries because of urbanism and the historical moment. Tactical urbanism came to the city with the intention of challenging authority, and both citizen collectives and officers had to take legal steps to ensure that tactical actions stayed within the bounds of the law to achieve their goals. Activism and the State must work together and establish links. The municipality's participation, with its information and resources, is crucial, as is the activists' close knowledge of the territory. Medellín, with its tactical urbanism approach coming from both sides, stands out as an essential example. It is not a matter of taking sides but of understanding that the city is the result of the imperfection of everything and that harmony is achieved through coexistence, even if it is not perfect.
- Chantal Mouffe proposes agonistic or pluralistic discussion, in which the aim is not to agree but to build real consensus from disagreement. This approach values the diversity of opinions and seeks to capture the best of each perspective (Becerra & Enghel, 2021). Tactical urbanism is an example of the application of this methodology since it involves the community, collectives, the public sector, and academia, generating a high value by capturing the best of each actor in the decision-making process.
- Tactical urbanism in Medellín still has a place in the city. Still, how it is conceived has already completed its cycle because of



the current administration's lack of interest in transcending tactical interventions to heavy infrastructure and the change of conversation and topics of interest in the city. That activism that grew out of urban discussions about public space, mobility, and air quality failed to create a school that would transcend its knowledge to future generations of activists. What will the next cycle of tactical urbanism in Medellín look like? How will the coming generations act in a city that can no longer expand? What kind of activism will come out of this? The stage is set for the growth of a new generation of activists and the rise of more dynamic forms of citizen engagement, participation, and promotion of the right to the city.

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# مستخلص

## الحق للمدينة والتخطيط العمراني التكتيكي في مدينة ميدلين :نموذج المدعوم من الدولة مقابل نموذج المنظمات المحلية

جوستافو أدولفو ريفيرا إتشافاريا

في السنوات الأخيرة، ظهر التحضر التكتيكي كحل مذهل ومؤثر من قبل المجتمعات لمشاكل واحتياجات التنقل والأماكن العامة والبيئة والثقافة. من خلال التدخلات منخفضة التكلفة والتنفيذ السريع والأهمية المادية الناعمة، يستخدم المواطنون التمدن التكتيكي كاستراتيجية مؤقتة للفت انتباه الحكومات المحلية والمطالبة بحقهم في المدينة والمشاركة في التخطيط الإقليمي والحصول على نتائج ممتازة بمخاطر منخفضة. استراتيجية فعالة للغاية في نموذجها التصاعدي حتى أن الإدارات البلدية نفسها بدأت في تنفيذ التحضر التكتيكي كعنصر يجب مراعاته في تنفيذ المشاريع الدائمة.

ستحل هذه الدراسة حالة ازدهار التحضر التكتيكي في مدينة ميدلين ، كولومبيا ، وهي أول مدينة تسجل كيف تمكنت الإجراءات التكتيكية من اختراق الهيكل الإداري العام ، ومنذ عام 2016 ، كان هناك لاعبان رئيسيان يتعايشان أو أحيانا يتنافسان في بناء حلول ناعمة وبراقة ومنخفضة التكلفة ؛ مكتب رئيس بلدية ميدلين (القطاع العام) والنشاط / المبادرات الشعبية (المجتمع المدني).

سوف يسجل هذا البحث ويوثق ويشرح بعمق، من خلال تحليل ثماني مناطق عمرانية تكتيكية، الاختلافات الموجودة من حيث التصميم والتخطيط والتمويل ومشاركة المواطنين والتخصيص، من بين أمور أخرى، على إجراءات التحضر التكتيكية التي تنشأ من كل جانب من الطيف ، والإجابة على الأسئلة كيف يفعلون ذلك؟ وكيف يروجون للحق في المدينة؟

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** النشاط ، المجتمع المدني ، المشاركة المجتمعية ، التجريبية ، الحركة الشعبية ، المشاركة ، الاختبار التجريبي ، الحق في المدينة ، الدولة ، التمدن التكتيكي.





## إقرار

هذه الرسالة مقدمة في جامعة عين شمس وجامعة شوتجارت للحصول على درجة العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام. إن العمل الذي تحويه هذه الرسالة قد تم إنجازه بمعرفة الباحث سنة 2023.

هذا ويقر الباحث أن العمل المقدم هو خالصة بحثه الشخصي وأنه قد اتبع الإسلوب العلمي السليم في الإشارة إلى المواد المؤخوذه من المراجع العلمية كل في مكانه في مختلف أجزاء الرسالة..

وهذا إقرار مني بذلك،،،



التوقيع:.

الباحث: جوستافو أدولفو ريفيرا إتشافاريا:

التاريخ: 2023 / 24 / 07



# الحق للمدينة والتخطيط العمراني التكتيكي في مدينة ميدلين :نموذج المدعوم من الدولة مقابل نموذج المنظمات المحلية

مقدمة للحصول على درجة الماجستير في العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام

أعداد: جوستافو أدولفو ريفيرا إتشافاريا

لجنة أشراف

د. كارلوس كاديئا جايتان

ي لا أستريد .

يحيى محمد سراج ا.د.

أ استاذ مساعد

أ استاذ التخطيط والتصميم العمراني

أستاذ التخطيط الحضري والإقليمي

جامعة EAFIT

جامعة شتوتجارت

جامعة عين شمس

التوقيع

لجنة الحكم أ.د.  
المتنحن الخارجي

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جامعة.....

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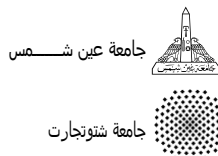
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تاريخ المناقشة:.....

الدراسات العليا

أجيزت الرسالة بتاريخ:.....  
موافقة مجلس الجامعة .../.../...

ختم الإجازة  
موافقة مجلس الكلية .../.../...



07/24/2023





# الحق للمدينة والتخطيط العمراني التكتيكي في مدينة ميدلين نموذج المدعوم من الدولة مقابل نموذج المنظمات المحلية

رسالة مقدمة للحصول على درجة الماجستير في العمران المتكامل والتصميم المستدام

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جامعة عين شمس

يوليو 24 2023