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OCCUPYING LISBON: THE PATHS AND PLACES OF POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS [\[2\]](#)

Abstract - The Portuguese population is portrayed often as quiet and obedient, accepting adversities without public protest. However, this picture does not correspond to the reality. When we examine the pathway of socio-political movements in Portugal, and particularly on the beginning of the 20th century (Republican movements), the Revolution of the 25th April 1974 and the present protests, we find another perspective of events. That apparent order is surrounded by force, coercion or imposition of fear. But even so, the contestation and the protest (institutionalized or not) earn their space and make it feel a bit all over the urban spaces. Currently, resistance and protests are made to hear again. In Lisbon, some of the spaces appropriated by major events at the end of the 19th century in the past seem to regain meaning with the latest protests against austerity policies. Does the symbolic power of urban spaces remain during long periods even if they were significantly transformed in physical terms? Or today's most important contesting spaces are others and/or more dispersed? Political demonstrations follow the same routes or open new paths associated to new symbolic meanings?

This paper - part of a research project on urban conflicts and socio-territorial innovation - aims to analyse the routes and places of the recent protests in Lisbon (after May 5, 2011) and to comprehend how much past spatial patterns survive in the present. The analysis is based on documentary sources in order to mapping the routes and places of the demonstrations.

Multilayer cartography will be produced to compare the critical contesting spaces of the different historical periods.

Keywords: Reappropriation of spaces, Protests, Lisbon

1. Introduction – Over the past two years there has been, throughout the Western world, a series of protests and disputes. The social and economic crisis is the reason given. The worsening levels of poverty, inequalities and social exclusion are just some of the reasons for the protests. But also the artificial means of survival of the people, the extension of working hours, the isolation and fragmentation of society, credit and over-indebtedness, the housing bubble, the increase of inequalities, the concentration of wealth and power are problems claimed by people on the streets and that Noam Chomsky concerns in one of his latest books, "If this situation continues, the historic setback that started in the 70 years of the last century can become irreversible. Is this scenario that we are gradually moving "(Chomsky, 2013: 33).

Rather resulting from movements in Spain, the outraged, in May 2011, Lisbon attended the 'camping' Rossio. Although as a result of a spontaneous organization of activists with diverse political and social origins, this event turned out to make emerge the movement of 'outraged' in Portugal. This international movement "seeks to rescue the debate and the political decision to daily life through the occupation of public spaces. Skeptics with the inevitability of immoral austerity imposed by the crisis, and not feeling represented by policy makers, the outrage was outraged and resistance quickly became a world anti-apatia movement gathered in more than 706 public squares "(CASTRO, 2012: 124).

The cities are very restless and very indignant citizens vis-à-vis the growing inequalities and social injustices that neoliberalism has generated and that the recent economic crisis has been increasing. The protest was diffuse, assuming shapes quite spontaneous and setting off typical institutions of representative democracy but has been gaining more consistency and the forms of resistance have deployed in space. Cross-border claims converged on its causes and the

need for public policies of universal scope that guarantee the rights of citizens and to reduce inequalities, suppressing some privileges (BORJA, 2011).

In Portugal, the memorandum of understanding with the 'Troika' (European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund) was signed on May 5, 2011. It is from this date that begin to focus on the time the claims street. For the city of Lisbon were called more than 140 protests between May 2011 and June 2013.

2. THE PROTESTS: INDIGNADOS, OCCUPY AND THEIR MULTIPLICATION - The 15M (May 15, 2011) – or the outraged as were dubbed-social challenges began in Spain. In Madrid, the encamped of Puertas del Sol became a real utopia and concentrated on the street about half a million people for several days. Spread quickly to other Spanish cities emblematic squares: Plaza del Ayuntamiento in Santander, the Praça de Santa Eugénia in Girona, the Plaza de Pontevedra in Coruña, Corredera in Cordoba, Plaza Colón in Valladolid, the Plaza de Catalunya, the Puerta del Sol in Vigo or the Plaza de la Constitucion in Malaga. Many thousands of people complained real democracy YA!. The 15M movement gained a transnational character and many others have been appearing for several European cities and North America.

In September 2011, the protest begins to make itself heard in New York with the 'Occupy Wall Street'. The movement reaches, as well, the world center of capitalism, at least in symbolic terms, and says that 'the revolution continues worldwide' (see <http://occupywallst.org/> accessed on July 28, 2012). For Chomsky Occupy movement is "a very exciting event. It is in fact something spectacular and unprecedented", which could turn out to be a support material in an attempt to divert something that is, after all, a dagger pointed at the heart "(Chomsky, 2013: 30). In this context, the importance of the collective and solidarity point out: "the movement Occupy is the first major popular reaction that can prevent this situation", being one of its main achievements "creating communities of mutual assistance in full operation, democratic solidarity and interchange" (ibid: 69). It was with significant police repression that Wall Street was unoccupied. But the wave of contestation has expanded considerably both in intensity and in extension, spreading through the media and the internet: "in a world where reigns the globalization of capital, financial markets, the economy, the political organization, the solutions will need to occur on a global level" (PEREIRA, 2011: 24).

In this sense, was launched a global call for October 15, 2011. Thousands of people protested peacefully in the main squares of their cities and "the street became global" (SASSEN, 2011). The numbers were ranging from city to city but its size has always exceeded the threshold of square or the garden views. The anger at the fallout from the austerity does increase the number of protests and people on the street. BORJA (2011) says that "a simple visit to the squares in their moments of maximum concentration allows you to see that there are many people without militancy in anything or political experience of any order. They are there by feel ' outraged ' against the existing economic and political powers. What moves them is not only their situation, and in many cases also, perhaps even more so, the outrage comes from the inequalities and privileges. And this indignation is divided by each other. " For all the squares echoed slogans: "accuse us of being against the system but it is he who is against us", "the revolution is here and needs you", "we can change", "this system is unfair", "I'm more than fed up and do not want to continue to support it" and, more recently, "resignation, already".

Portugal is a reflection of what is happening all over Europe. The financial and economic crisis is getting worsens every day, destroying the main pillars (health, education, social security, housing and transport) of the welfare state, while heading for their privatization. The answer to these austerity policies, too, has been given in the streets. This response has been driven by classical movements of workers, associated with unions and the parties of the left, but also the movements that have grown outside these structures. The involvement and the presence of workers from several sectors (with a past old trade union) in addition to the recent street movements have opened new challenges and possibilities: the alliance between classical structures and the latest movements have become a constant in the protests of recent years, accentuating, often, the success of the mobilizations.

Until the present moment, the dominant ideology and repression had succeeded in individualize people and atomize the behaviors due to fear (the repression, the fear of losing their jobs, the home, the right to retirement, savings, ...). Currently, the extent of the crisis and the fact that this has reached a critical mass of people caused many to leave the isolation in which they found, mostly with the idea that there wasn't much to lose (Toussaint, 2012: 36). But if there was a change in the ' type ' of protesters occupied sites have a long past.

3. LISBON AND THE CONTESTED SPACES - In the recent past, the protest actions and dispute radicalized themselves on places of work and study. The occupations of factories and universities were some of the ways found to deal with situations more serious political,

economic and social – the great university centers of Lisbon, for example, were of great importance in making collective awareness of younger generations "(Machado, 2012: 649). Currently, the forms of protest no longer spend so much by occupations, even though many defend, like Naom Chomsky, for example, and it became evident the need to reclaim the public space: "the desire to occupy the public square is clearly related to the meeting, will join force to make a show of strength against a power that is completely deaf to the needs and requests of the majority of citizens" (Toussaint, 2012: 35). This brings us to the Greek imagery of public space where this was considered the preferred meeting place of social gathering and collective.

At the moment, the public space is a direct testimony of how economic power is oppressing the political power. The privatization of public space has gained prominence. The global commodification and the insurance control of these spaces by dominant groups are each time more evidence. The growing depoliticization of the people follows alongside to this increasing privatization of public sphere, tells us Sennett (1974), so it is not surprising the removal policy and collective interests. However, the return to public space, the occupation of squares and streets, as a sign of resistance and criticism of these models also evidenced some contemporary transformation in behaviour and societal practices.

The squares and the streets are spaces of, usually, instrumentalization by the power, where it is possible to control and homogenize behaviors. However, these spaces appear, once again, as a battleground between powers and opposition forces. The strength of the protests and resistance is still marked on the street.

In Lisbon, there are spaces that are configured and that appear in the memory of the places of the policy actions. Are "often in the same spaces, as if a certain political determinism delineate urban and, almost always, the territories of possible combat in the capital" (Rosas, 2010: 16). In this sense, put to us some questions: does the symbolic power of space remains in the same places? Or, at present, are other spaces of contestation or more dispersed? The outrage is expressed in the same places and follows the same route? Or there are other pathways associated with new symbolic meanings?

After an extensive collection of information (on the websites of unions and social movements) centered on the locations of the demonstrations and concentrations, which took place between May 2011 and June 2013, it was possible to build a database with more than 140 entries. This database was compiled the information relative to the location of the concentration or route taken in demonstrations. The main sites identified are: the Assembly of the Republic, the official residence of the Prime Minister, the Praça Luís de Camões – where is the Ministry of Economy, the Town Hall Square, the headquarters of the ' Troika ' in Portugal, the Ministries of Finance

and Health, the door of the headquarters of some companies (Portugal trains or administration of Empordef- shipyards de Viana do Castelo, for example) and Praça D. Pedro IV (Rossio). A very usual route is done between the Praça do Marquês de Pombal and Praça dos Restauradores and Rossio. However, the route that stands out over the last two years is between the Praça Luís de Camões (where is the Ministry of Economy) and the Assembly of the Republic in São Bento.

In these concentrations and demonstrations include the preference for locations that are or that are somehow related to the employment sectors that have been most affected by austerity measures - the ministries of economy, finance, health, education and land transport companies headquarters, marine and rail.

The Avenida da Liberdade stands out as a symbol of many types of claims, celebrations, festivities and shows of force power. In recent years, this avenue has been converted into a place harassed by economic power, being located in many of its buildings the multinationals, the hotels and the luxury shops of the best-known global world. At the same time, this avenue is often used by the demonstrations that have been held in recent years, bringing many thousands of people to this place. It is also the avenue used in popular celebrations of the revolution of April 25. Is a place full of symbolism and of criticism. The same symbolic logic succeeding in the spaces next to the Assembly of the Republic. While space of power and legislative body, the Assembly of the Republic is a place loaded of symbolism. This space has been intensely political penchant suitable for all movements that have been on the streets.

4. SOME FINAL NOTES – In this period of crisis, demonstrations have intensified and the street has acquired a very important role. The public space is to refocus attention. Despite the change of the character of the demonstrations, which deviate increasingly from the traditional ‘protest marches’□□, the sites chosen are the same. The nearby places of power symbols (Assembly of the Republic, ministries) continue to be the most used sites.

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