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## **Bogotá: case study: research 2009-2010**

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# Bogotá: case study

Research 2009-2010



*Bogotá – Tercer Milenio Park*

By

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# **Bogotá: case study**

**Research 2009-2010**

## **Abstract**

Since 1999, the city of Bogotá, capital of Colombia, has won nearly a dozen international awards for innovative urban planning, including the prestigious San Marco Golden Lion award, given at the 10th Venice Biennale. For a city once plagued by social disorder and crime, this represents a remarkable comeback. But how have Bogotá's urban interventions performed for residents? This research proposal is based on qualitative methods from CRESSON laboratory (Sound Space and Urban Environment Research Centre at Grenoble's National Superior School of Architecture). Our methodology crosses large scale and small scale. With a team of Colombian colleagues and a set of equipment, as historical and critical drafting tools, in situ methodology or multi-media urban transects, this research seeks to experience and describe Bogotá's prizewinning park, a public library area, and a main central avenue from the perspective of the people who use them daily. The result provides not only a critique of what has been done but also insights for future planners and architects tasked with reshaping the world's growing cities.





# **Bogotá: case study**

**Research 2009-2010**

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# Bogotá: case study

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# I - Introduction

At the 2006 Venice Biennale, the jury awarded the “Golden Lion Award to cities” to Bogotá, the capital city of Colombia. The city of Bogotá was competing with 16 other international cities, including Barcelona, Berlin, Caracas, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Shanghai, and New York, for the award, which honors communities for their efforts to improve resident’s quality of life. All of these cities presented various solutions to the growing challenges facing their communities. Bogotá was honored with the award based on the city’s successful recovery of public space, its network of cultural equipments, and its advanced public transportation system. The jury compellingly wrote that the Colombian capital might serve as a model for other communities and as an example of ideal consistency between urban space and society. According to Richard Burdett, director of the Biennale, the prize was given to “the most intelligent city, a city which thoughtfully considers its future in a developing country affected by poverty and criminality, thanks to a few inspired politicians, manages to look forward.”

In addition to the developments in public infrastructure the city has shown important progress in aspects that include poverty reduction, security, education, service provision and social inclusion. Although the city still faces serious challenges, these changes had a significant impact on the city’s social dynamic. Recently the most visible projects developed in the city have gained substantial media attention, and due to these transformations the Colombian capital has become an international model in the circles of urban planning and an example of good governance and development. Therefore it is essential to examine the ongoing processes taking place in this large South American metropolis. The city of Bogotá today is a perfect illustration of changes in the urban environment which reflect deep and complex political, social, and cultural processes. During the last two decades the Colombian capital has been object of great transformations that are rooted in the early nineteen nineties when important socio political changes took place and engaged administrations decided to take responsibility for problems of the city that had been neglected for years.

A process of urban development reaching such important levels of transformation makes one question about a great number of issues regarding the origin of the entire process, the discourses that have directed the development plans, the policies proposed by the city authorities, the scope of these policies, and the consequences and changes that the process has generated. In addition, in our case, it is of particular interest to observe whether the results of the work done and its implications on the every day life confirm the hypothesis announced by the experts’ discourses on the city.

This research proposal is based on researches, methods and notions from CRESSON laboratory (Sound Space and Urban Environment Research Centre). The laboratory is part of the French National Scientific Research Institute (CNRS) and is

located at the Graduate School of Architecture in Grenoble. Our activities focus on interdisciplinary studies of perceptible environment and architectural and urban atmospheres. Our researches advocate a qualitative approach able to support and influence design strategies and processes. These notions concern directly the case study on Bogotá as our main goal is the description of the complex articulation among urban, political and experienced project; an approach that it implies a sensible and sensual relation to the physical world, that does not refer to a specific spatial scale, and that places the inhabitant at the center of the urban configuration.

## **Two Approaches: The Global and the Local**

In order to observe the process of transformation of Bogotá we carried out interdisciplinary research that aimed to understand the complexity of the city's development and its implications for the urban phenomena on different scales. We focused on the study of two main aspects: the first part of the research concerns the global aspects and events that made the changes possible. The second part deals with the impact of paradigmatic projects in particular places of the city. Concerning the large scale, we studied and analyzed the most important socio political issues behind the transformation process. For the localized approach we observed the impact of urban interventions in three particular zones of the city that were object of important physic transformations.

### **Large scale: Global Approach**

The first goal of the global approach was to build from the general context a cognitive tool that should allow us to examine the problematic of the city before and after the interventions at the metropolitan scale. The work consisted of the research and analysis of a selected bibliography (geography, history, economy, politics, and town planning) regarding the socio political dimensions of the process lived in Bogotá. This tool has proved to be useful to understand the objective causes of the changes of Bogotá, to identify the discourses, hypothesis and principles that have directed the city development, to recognize the development strategies (political, economic, urbanistic) carried out by the administrations, and to make a critical analysis of recent town planning strategies in Bogotá and of the discourses of the experts on the city.

To comprehend the situation of the city today it was indispensable to take into account two aspects that have shaped the development and status of Bogotá. There are, on the one hand, the concrete causes that boosted the transformations in the city. On the other hand there are the expert's discourses on the city, which, along with the media's representations of Bogotá, present the city as an outstanding example of urban development. In this work we present the noteworthy facts that have contributed to Bogotá's change confronted with the images of the city produced by the discourses of the media, of the experts and of the circles of urban planning.

### **Small scale: Localized Approaches**

Three zones of study were selected to test *in situ* in the Bogotá context research methods at the meeting point between human and social science, between architecture and engineering science. The chosen paradigmatic examples of typical

urban interventions concern the set in place of new transport Infrastructure, the renovation of public space and the construction of public infrastructure. The urban projects in question are the *Jimenez de Quesada Avenue* (urban project dealing with the construction of a public transport line on a strategic axe of the city's downtown, its integration into a context of historical heritage, and the recovery of public space), the *Tercer Milenio Park* (a very polemical project where a large district of the historical centre was destroyed to give place to a large metropolitan park), and the renovation of the *Tintal zone* (emerging urban and architectural projects that generate a new urban configuration in a sector of the city formerly lacking of public services and cultural equipments). These three interventions have had in each case significant consequences for diverse aspects of the urban dynamic that include mobility and the physical connections from the district up to the city scale, the transformation and revaluation of social and built heritage, the restoration of public spaces and the emergence of new conceptions of the urban sphere, as well as changes on the inhabitants' mental representations and perceptions face to changes in the urban space. In some cases are also identified a beginning of a gentrification processes and situations of displacement of population.

To fully understand how those three chosen sites are experienced and perceived after the profound recent urban transformations, we have displayed, besides the classical cartographical and typo-morphological analysis, a set of methods and field tools to get as close as possible to the urban "ambiances" on one hand, and to the inhabitants and users words on the other hand.

- observation and note-book
- sound, photographic and videographic recordings
- commented walks with users and professionals
- brief interviews all along the field work

The whole work is synthesized on the original form of multimedia transects, taking you as well through the city as through the corpus of this research work.

The entire research work comprises this written document<sup>1</sup>, a DVD with 50 sound sequences, a DVD with 55 videographic sequences and a CD-ROM to navigate through the urban transects.

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<sup>1</sup> The full transcription of the commented walks and interviews is available by request in a 123 pages document.





## II - Large scale : critical analysis





## **1 - The objective causes of change and the mystification of the discourses on the city**

Today, cities are a like metaphor of the theatre; they present new ways of living that are renewed and reinvented everyday. They both concentrate and create tension. Though each metropolis develops uniquely, common patterns can be identified. The changes generated by industrialization, demographic explosion, globalization and new technologies have fashioned unique transformations of urban space. The city has been replaced by the metropolis. The network substitutes the *locus*. Urbanism attempts to deconstruct and rationalize situations of extreme complexity. The *hausmanien surgery* or *tabula rasa*, typical operations of modernist thought, are no longer valid principles in today's contemporary world. While cities like Los Angeles, due to their more recent development, managed to test the expansion principles of *network cities* (principles inherited from the construction of Rome), they remain exceptions among the majority of large cities. Rather than anticipating future growth, most metropolises today face uncontrolled development. The proper use of urban space and the challenge of sustainable development are limited in older cities as well as newer ones, which face high speed growth and constant need of openings.

Bogotá, like many metropolises that have seen a demographic explosion between 1950 and the present time, did not anticipate its development and thus presents many complex questions for consideration. Traffic congestion, violence, and pollution were critical issues in the capital in addition to poor governance, poverty and economic inequality. In recent years the city has suffered important transformations, and after Enrique Peñalosa's administration, the city was qualified as a "model of conviviality and urban renewal. (World Urban Forum, 2006).

Bogotá's urban project has sparked considerable political debate and has been the subject of several publications and exhibitions. Just a few years ago studies regarding the city presented the problematic of Bogotá as representative of the urban problematic today (Torres, 2000). The city was described as the setting for "the expression of the most acute conflicts in the economic, social, political and spatial order, and even of ideological and cultural order." (Torres, 2000). What makes the case of Bogotá remarkable is that in a rather short period of time the city managed to find solutions for some of its most challenging problems. However, other critical issues, including the provision of shelter, poverty and inequality remain unresolved.

The recent advancements in security, public transport, mobility, education, service provision, and public infrastructure have had a tremendous impact on the city's dynamics. Some of the most visible projects developed in the city that have gained considerable media attention include the civic culture campaigns, the Rapid Bus Transport system, and the network of bicycle paths. The network of libraries, the renovation of public space, the construction of educational infrastructure and the more

recent social programs have also been an essential part of the city's development. As we mentioned in the introduction these transformations have made the Colombian capital an international model and inspiration for other cities. When we talk about Bogotá today we no longer describe a city in crisis, but instead an example of good governance and development.

In order to understand the complexity of the city today, it is essential to examine two aspects that have shaped Bogotá's image in recent years. On the one hand there are objective causes that determined these changes. On the other hand there are the political discourses about the city, along with the media's representations of Bogotá, both of which present the capital as a model. The aim of this work is to analyze the remarkable factors that have contributed to Bogotá's change. The analysis of the most important facts of Bogotá's transformation<sup>2</sup> will be confronted with the image of the city created by the mystified discourses of the media, the political speeches and the circles of urban planning.

## **2 - The facts of change**

Most publications and exhibitions that describe Bogotá's urban transformation focus on the most visible results of the city's policies and projects. Certainly there are some original and successful initiatives that merit debate and media coverage, but generally, the urban planning policies of Bogotá and the developed urban projects are not particularly innovative (even though many of them represent high quality efforts). The city's urban planning is highly influenced by the Barcelona model, the discourses about the city emanating from urban sociology, and in a general way of the universal objectives of the urbanized world (i.e. Istanbul declaration, Habitat II). Thus, what is really remarkable is the fact that Bogotá is one of the few middle-income cities that has shown exceptional advancements in terms of governance and consequently, development. Good governance in the city has notably increased, and the city has clearly shifted to better political practices, including increased transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. However, when analyzing the influence of good governance on the transformations of the city one must tread carefully. Neoliberal discourse assumes that good governance is a necessary product of democratization and decentralization. However, in Latin America, where democracy has emerged as the most common political system in recent years and governments have stimulated decentralization, very few cities have experienced improvements in governance. In Bogotá we observe advancements that can't be simply explained by democratization or neoliberal reforms; rather, the city's case represents a more complex panorama.

In order to understand the recent transformations of the city beyond the political discourse it is necessary to recognize that there was not a single turning point. Contrary to our first hypothesis that a change in the urbanistic culture (and the

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<sup>2</sup> The data was collected through a bibliographic research and interviews with experts and researchers.

formulation of a new urban plan POT<sup>3</sup>) triggered the process of development, we observe that the creation of the plan was indeed the product of many other political and cultural transformations. Further, Bogotá's urban change cannot be explained as a mere consequence of the city's urban plan. The changes that made Bogotá an admired example were the result of a series of political and social changes, deep transformations in the city's urban planning policies and engaged local administrations. None of these factors independently could have sparked the conditions for critical change. The case of the transformation of Bogotá must be understood as a historical process that began in the late eighties and represents ongoing efforts that are not free of contradictions, controversies, and social tensions. These transformations are not merely the product of a few inspired politicians, a singular vision of the city, or the recommendations of multilateral credit organizations; in order to understand the complexity of these transformations, one must consider the sociopolitical and economic aspects of the process of change, as well as the changes in urban planning.

Alan Gilbert (2008) proposes five concrete causes of Bogotá's transformation:

- Good mayors
- End of clientelism
- Technocracy
- Continuity
- Increased economic resources

According to Gilbert (2008), Bogotá's development offers many lessons that are encompassed by the aforementioned factors. He argues that the quality of the city administration can be improved rapidly, that the recommendations of development banks can only be promising if they go hand in hand with a number of other policies, and that the changes imply both increased taxes and increased spending. He also writes that a certain level of technocratic management is essential and that it is important to have mayors prepared to take unpopular measures.

These five points proposed by Gilbert are the most visible consequences of a series of deeper sociopolitical transformations that made them possible. Gilbert's conclusion corresponds, in a broader sense, to four factors that are identified as the most significant for the city's change:

- The 1991 constitutional reform
- Democratization, decentralization and privatization
- POT. (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial)
- City Administrations

## **2.1 - The 1991 constitutional reform**

The eighties are remembered as the darkest period in Colombia's recent history. The country was overwhelmed by unceasing violence, a product of an ongoing war against drug trafficking and lingering sociopolitical conflicts (financed heavily by the enormous

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<sup>3</sup> POT is the Spanish abbreviation for Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial (Plan of territorial development).

profits of the drug trade) involving right wing militias and leftist guerrillas. While the conflict in Colombia has mostly been concentrated in rural areas, in part because it is strongly connected to territorial control and land property, cities were not spared this great wave of violence. Colombian cities saw its urban violence levels increase dramatically during this decade. Although Bogotá did not experience the extreme degree of violence seen in Medellín and Cali, by the early nineties it was considered one of the most violent capitals in Latin America. By the mid-nineties Colombia presented a “rupture of the legal order, caused with varying intensity by the violence of (government) institutions that only protect the establishment and also, with even greater impact, by those who are excluded from the establishment and fight to enter it or defeat it illegally (Diaz, 1993).

Faced with this critical moment, an important national civic association called for a movement towards reconciliation that was very well received by the establishment and the media and ended in a national referendum. The group proposed a constitutional reform that would respond to the crisis produced by several factors:

- Twenty years of systematic exercise of counter-insurgency without eliminating the causes of unrest in the rural areas and the effects of massive urbanization of the main cities.
- Decay of political parties and exercise of power as a bureaucratic pact between the two ruling parties.
- Crisis of the structuralist development model. Dismantling protectionism and support of external investment.
- Intensification of marginalization
- Speculation and financial crisis.

In terms of the political organization of the state, the new Colombian constitution promotes the leading principles of a democratic and participatory state. There are two main aspects that define the new political constitution; the first is neoliberalism. The entire modernization process of the Colombian state is inseparable from neoliberal principles, and the constitutional reform was not an exception. For example, there are references in the constitution to the internationalization of the economy and the institutionalization of the national bank as a decentralized entity. . Yet, within the constitution, explicit references to neoliberal policies are few and quite subtle. Many more constitutional articles address the creation of a welfare state, including references to interventionism and forms of mutual property; analysts interpreted these policies as a form of populist discourse. In reality the government adopted a neoliberal economic model before and during the constitutional reform period that undermined the populist rhetoric. Therefore, whatever populist reforms were declared in the constitution, were compromised by the approved economic measures.

Though neoliberalism is not very evident, populism is plentiful in the new constitution. If we admit that neoliberalism represents the establishment’s agenda it must also be said, following Eduardo Galeano (as cited in Tafur, 1993), that “neoliberalism can’t be introduced in Latin America without an important dose of populism.” The reason, explains Galeano, is that it is not possible to apply neoliberalism in its purest form in Latin America “because it contradicts the interests of its own promoters.” (Ibid), One of the remarkable shifts in Colombian politics during the period of constitutional reform

was the emergence of the M-19<sup>4</sup> as the third political force of the country. The crisis of traditional political parties in Colombia allowed for the rise of leaders who did not have political backgrounds within the establishment. Such leaders, says Tafur (1993) “create the illusion of having the answer to urgent problems or of vindicating accumulated frustrations.” In practice the result of the new constitution is “a dichotomy between the social speech and the classist fact. A reluctant ideological definition and an adaptation to the neoliberal model with *social sense*.” (Tafur, 1993). Accordingly, the author defines the new constitution’s ideological framing as *neoliberal populism*.

In terms of the political structure of the state the constitutional reform represents a radical change in the administration of urban development in Colombia. On the one hand, as we will see later, the neoliberal ideology implied critical changes for the municipal administration, especially in the public services sector. On the other hand there is a transformation in the set of policies, mechanisms, and operation methods of the state to orient urban development. Some of the structural changes in the constitution that strongly influenced Bogotá’s transformation include the process of decentralization (the state’s structure changed by declaring municipalities the principal political and administrative entities giving them greater autonomy), and the responsibility of each municipality in planning its own development and urban policy. Another important political transformation prior to the constitutional reform was the institution of the democratic election of mayors<sup>5</sup>.

By the early nineties the excess of centralism was seen as an institutional problem, while decentralization was already being advocated by multilateral credit organizations, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. At the same time local political elites throughout Colombia hoped for increased funding from the national budget, and the central government, faced with its own incapacity to respond to problems in the public service sector, preferred to reassign these responsibilities to municipalities. It is in this context that local autonomy was promoted. Three consequences of this increase in local autonomy influenced the future of urban transformations in Bogotá:

- Fiscal sovereignty and budget transfers
- Territorial legislation
- New role of the city council

## **2.2 - Fiscal sovereignty and budget transfers**

The approval of a law known as “Estatuto organico de Bogotá,” in 1993, is recognized as laying the foundation for the success of the next municipal administrations. Designed by former mayor Jaime Castro, who held office between 1992 and 1994, the law determined the functioning of the city according to the decentralization that was advanced in the new political constitution. Thanks to the structural transformations of the city government, the administration could begin a significant reorganization of public finances. The municipality was allowed to increase the income received from

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<sup>4</sup> M-19 was an insurgent army that signed a peace treaty in 1990 which played an important role in the 1991 constitutional reform.

<sup>5</sup> The democratic election of mayors was instituted in the city since 1988, a first step in the decentralization process that was confirmed by the constitutional reform.



local taxes, improve the procedures used to determine property values and to apply an additional tax on gasoline. Further reforms, some of them promoted by Antanas Mockus, permitted the city to close corrupt and ineffective institutions, thereby reducing useless public expenditures, to install an efficient tax collection system, and to increase the city's income by encouraging citizens, with great success, to pay their taxes.

In 1992 the city was practically bankrupt; "when the city tried to get an external loan the national government refused to support the loan." (Gilbert, 2008). By 2004 "the income of the city had increased from less than the 2% of the GDP to more than 4%." (Ibid). In the same way public spending augmented, according to Gilbert's study (2008), from 3.800 million Colombian pesos in 1990 to 15.900 million in 1999. In 2005 the total spent sum was 14.000 million. Of the total spent the majority was used in public investments. These numbers are proof that good economic performance is fundamental to promote development. That is why one of the first and perhaps one of the most determinant political transformations in Bogotá focused on the city's autonomy and efficiency in terms of fiscal management. Competent economic management has been absolutely essential for the city's successful investment in important infrastructure projects. For the same reason the future economic perspectives are a matter of concern.

The city has also benefited from financial transfers due to the constitutional decree that requires the central government to distribute part of the national budget to local municipalities. However, the impact of these transfers on the city's finances is relative because significant portions of national taxes are collected in Bogotá.

### **2.3 - Territorial legislation**

A second aspect of the constitutional reform that implies a fundamental change in the municipal administration is the responsibility of every local government to administer its own territory. In the context of Colombia in the mid nineties', urban planning was finally recognized as a legal requirement and as a condition for development. The previous experiences of urban planning in Bogotá were, with some exceptions, rather calamitous. Urban researchers Juan Carlos Del Castillo and Jose Salazar (2003) explain how the 1960-2000 period represents for Bogotá a crisis of the development model. During this period the public sector demonstrated its incapacity to formulate serious policies regarding territorial management, the use of land, and urban development. Simultaneously the private sector enjoyed conditions of great economic liberalism. The urban planning strategies of this period were characterized by speculative patterns in the management of urban land use, a lack of a deliberate territorial policy, a lack of clarity in the role of urban planning entities, and resistance to the formation of strategies that would lead urban planning towards defined objectives. The government institutions responsible for urban policies promoted an approach based on residential development that neglected important aspects of urban planning including transport, land use, public services and facilities, economic activity and territorial organization.

In this context, by the mid-nineties the fragility of Colombian urban planning culture and its apparatus were recognized. Furthermore, the lack of cooperation between academic institutions and the government regarding research and diffusion of urban

problems, as well as the weakness of social space to support urbanistic actions were all seen as an obstacle. Therefore, it was seen as necessary to radically transform the urban planning exercise in Colombia and to give to local administrations the appropriate tools to direct urban development. (Del Castillo & Salazar, 2003)

Since then urban planning in Bogotá and the rest of the country has seen progress. By constitutional mandate every municipality in Colombia is responsible for producing an urban plan (POT)<sup>6</sup> and putting it into action. The law 388, passed in 1997, describes the principles and norms that control territorial and urban development and establishes “the mechanisms that allow the municipalities to promote autonomously the management of the territory, the equal and rational use of land, the defense of the ecological and cultural patrimony located in its territory, and the disasters’ prevention in high risk settlements as well as the execution of efficient urbanistic actions.” (Ley 388 de 1997).

In the case of Bogotá, the production of the new urban plan coincided with the administration of former Mayor Enrique Peñalosa. Once elected, Peñalosa hired a group of experts close to him who shared his perspective on urban development for the urban planning section; many of them had been working together for years as consultants and researchers in the urban sphere. Their views on the city, clearly influenced by Catalan urbanism and urban sociology, produced a plan of urban projects and urban pieces.<sup>7</sup>

Even though municipal autonomy permitted the city to plan its own development, such autonomy has represented an obstacle to the advancement of regional planning. The Peñalosa administration (which considered the consolidation of a regional area a precondition for the development and competitiveness of the city and the surrounding territories) made great efforts to create a metropolitan area that would include all the municipalities neighboring Bogotá. Yet, their efforts to connect Bogotá with the region were in vain. According to the Department of National Planning, “From an institutional point of view the region, as the basis for the implantation of a territorial model, presents a very adverse situation that establishes strong limits to the process of regional planning.” (Barco & Cortés, 2000) Since the political constitution enormously favors municipal autonomy, the conception of a metropolitan area still presents many problems. While the poor contiguous municipalities would be glad to obtain the financial benefits of being annexed by Bogotá, the governments of the wealthier nearby cities fear losing power and worry that Bogotá will begin to export its poverty. Presently, Bogotá’s administration and the regional government believe in the

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<sup>6</sup> The “model of the city” proposed by the POT will be analyzed in later detail taking into account the urban models and references, previously done studies, the urban planning teams, and the subsequent revisions in 2004 and 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Indeed Peñalosa’s administration’s efforts were particularly focused on the construction of public infrastructure that included the recuperation and rehabilitation of public spaces, the construction of a bus rapid transport (BRT) system, a bicycle path system, a network of libraries, and the consolidation of a bank of land for the city. Many of the most important urban projects described in the first urban plan (POT) were finished or under construction by 2001 when the urban plan was in process of being approved.

importance of creating mechanisms to improve relations between the capital and its metropolitan region and there have been important advances in the political definition of a metropolitan area.

### **New roles of the city council**

In the past one of the biggest governance challenges facing the city government were the relations between the mayor and the city council. Mayors were often compelled to co-administer with the council. Therefore essential decisions for the city had to be negotiated with a group that was historically known for corrupt and clientelist practices. This relationship has changed due to the already mentioned “Estatuto organico” which substantially transformed the structure of the city’s administration. Presently, the mayor has greater autonomy to make decisions while the council’s influence has been diminished.

Paul Bromberg<sup>8</sup> (as cited in Gilbert, 2008) argues that “Bogotá changed because it has been governed by technocratic elites.” He, along with many others, contends that one of the fundamental reasons for the city’s change was the efficient management of the city irrespective of political or ideological considerations. Such a position is, to a certain extent, arguable. We have already seen that it is hard to separate the recent political transformations from ideological neoliberal thought. However, it is accurate to say that in recent years the city has been managed in the absence of clientelist political maneuverings and that the degree of transparency seems to have augmented. One important aspect of that change is precisely linked to the new functions of the city council. Formerly, the council had great influence in the management of public enterprises and city councilors were allowed to allocate a part of the budget to individuals, organizations or enterprises. Such functions promoted corrupt and clientelist practices. Today the councilors no longer have these powers. Consequently, the public sector companies’ boards are more independent of the councilors’ influence, and the directors are directly appointed by the mayor; indeed, recent directors have been chosen based on strictly technical criteria (Gilbert, 2008) and the public companies’ performance has reflected that. In that sense, it can be said that technocratic management benefits the city.

We mentioned that transparency levels appear to have increased. However, it is hard to measure the reality of such an affirmation. Urban researcher Thierry Lulle (2005), for example, concludes in a study on civic participation that the success of decentralization is not exempt from the effects of clientelism, political clans and influence networks. The city council still seems to have enough influence in the different districts’ administration.<sup>9</sup> Such influence of councilors represents a problem for the administration of the city. The contradictory tendency of the voters to elect good mayors but to keep electing corrupt traditional politicians as councilors, precisely due to their influence in the local plan, implies a serious problem for the advancement of democracy in the city. In fact, while the municipality benefits from political

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<sup>8</sup> Former mayor of Bogotá who replaced Antanas Mockus after he stepped down in 1995 to run for presidency.

<sup>9</sup> Bogotá is politically divided in twenty districts. Each district has a local mayor (alcalde menor) named directly by the city’s mayor (alcalde mayor).

decentralization, the city mayors end up concentrating a lot of power. This represents a complex contradiction. Recent administrations have been the first to promote participation, some more honestly than others, but at the same time the figure of the city mayor has become that of a kind of omnipotent leader. Recently mayors have been compelled to govern in opposition to the city council (Mockus especially though Peñalosa, in less dramatic fashion, as well), and local mayors have had a very limited power of decision: mayors have deliberately reduced the local mayors' powers due to the fear of seeing corruption cases appear in the adjudication of contracts. Peñalosa was well known for this practice, and in 2005 Garzón lay off almost all the local mayors and named 19 women instead. At the same time he was criticized for negotiating certain policies with the council.

## **2.4 - Democratization, Decentralization, Privatization**

Globalization as we know it is ideological: it spreads neoliberal thought. In contemporary societies wealthy countries generally aim to replace the welfare state, while in the developing world "the possibilities of achieving their own development are undermined by forms of dependency, a difficult adaptation to the new conditions of capitalistic accumulation, and weaker states which can't resolve problems of poverty and exclusion." (Brand, 2003). In Colombia, the political reforms and efforts to increase governance, and more generally the whole modernization process of the state, has taken place in the context of a very liberal management of the economy. The process has been marked by free trade, the increased flexibility of markets and the deregulation of production, cash flow, financial information and capital, and labor relations. (Ibid) It is thus clear that the political reforms have been influenced by the recommendations of multilateral credit organizations and neoliberal thought. In that sense, democratization and decentralization have been the logical consequences of the Colombian modernization process. In addition to political changes, public-private partnerships and privatization have become the common rule in the public services' sector of Bogotá as a result of decentralization. "The progressive sense of modernization has been adopted by an ideological movement that sees the State as a heavy and inefficient apparatus that restrains the social dynamics and represents an obstacle for development." (Ibid) Brand suggests that it is in this context that local planning in Colombia must be analyzed.

Neoliberal thought promotes the improvement of governance as a precondition for achieving development. The literature says that increased democracy, decentralization, and privatization imply good governance. In addition, the literature maintains that a natural consequence of good governance is a decrease in poverty. In a general way the Latin American experience refutes these claims. Bogotá is a particular case because the city has indeed markedly increased its governance levels, poverty levels have diminished<sup>10</sup>, and the city has become an international example of good practices. However, many of the texts that discuss the benefits of democratization, decentralization and privatization are of an ideological nature. Indeed, an important public relations' crusade has also been created to market this

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<sup>10</sup> Bogotá presents some advances in terms of poverty reduction that can be the consequence of good economic performance and more public investment in social issues. Social indicators show a reduction from 46,5% of the population living under the line of poverty in 2000 to 28,5% in 2007. However the situation may be less promising than what the indicators show.

ideology and the successful cases are used as evidence. It is essential to understand Bogotá's process of transformation independently of these ideological positions.

Bogotá has certainly succeeded in certain cases, due to the reinforcement of democracy and decentralization, but none of these aspects can independently explain the city's recent success. In addition, Bogotá's democracy presents serious challenges, while privatization, one of the main aspects of decentralization, remains a polemical subject. On the other hand the reduction of poverty may be not as promising as the indicators show. We aim to explain the influence and impact of these practices on the political structure of the city, the participation process, and the provision of public services.

## **Democratization**

There have been two fundamental consequences of democratization in Bogotá's political structure: the popular election of the city's mayor and the creation of an important number of participatory mechanisms. In the first case, Colombia's capital contradicts the impact of the proclaimed benefits of democratization in Latin America. The literature says that elected mayors respond better to local needs. Yet democracy itself has not proved to be a cause of change. In general terms, after twenty years of democratic local governments, poverty and inequality have not diminished in Latin America and very few cities have increased their governance levels. In Bogotá, however, there are advancements in the reduction of poverty although inequality remains an important problem of the city. In other aspects the city has shown significant advancements: in terms of access to social services<sup>11</sup> recreation, health care, education, mobility and security. All of these aspects make Bogotá today a more democratic city for the greater part of the community.

In terms of participation the progress is incipient, and it is important to take into account the myths and realities of civic participation in the city. Even though spaces for participation have been created and boosted by the administration, there are doubts about the quality of participation promoted, and the levels of engagement remain very low.

## **Popular election of mayors**

Bogotá has had the fortune, (or the political maturity), of electing effective mayors in the last two decades, and it has certainly been one important aspect of the city's transformation. During the last four administrations, Antanas Mockus, Enrique Peñalosa and Luis Eduardo Garzón have promoted ambitious development plans.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In an upcoming analysis of the consequences of decentralization in the public service sector we will observe how the increase in access to social services does not represent advancements in terms of equality.

<sup>12</sup> Although the municipal governments have recently made of competitiveness one of the central points of the development plans and of the local public policies of Bogotá, the impact of the projects promoted by the last administrations has been positive for the city in general terms. The case of Bogotá is in many ways an exception among the experiences of contemporary urban planning (directed as well by the narrative of competitive cities) in Latin America.

The objectives of these plans were in part accomplished thanks to an improvement in governance levels and a growing interest in public affairs during that period. If the popular election of mayors is a consequence of democratization, it must also be said that the elected mayors have enormously contributed to the improvement of democratization in Bogotá. Even though the last three mayors belong to diverse, even antagonist, political sectors, and their views on urban phenomena are very different, they shared a common concern about the importance of strengthening the public sphere and making the city more democratic. The last three mayors also recognized the importance of continuing successful policies that have produced strong results. In each case the administration gave emphasis to different priorities and different objectives. The first Mockus administration aimed to substantially reinforce civic participation. Although they did not manage to significantly reshape the city's political culture, they promoted a project of "civil culture" that successfully transformed interactions between the city's inhabitants and local authorities. During the Peñalosa administration, the city focused greatly on investing in the construction and redevelopment of urban infrastructure with a large emphasis on the creation of a pacified public space. Most of the city's emblematic projects were completed or contracted during his administration. Finally, the Garzón administration presented a development plan that gave special emphasis to social issues like health care and education that would benefit the poorest social sectors. Overall, nearly all of Bogotá's citizens have benefited from these different policies; despite the differing visions, the particular political interests of the last administrations and the emphasis made on competitiveness, they have all stressed essential issues that affect the city as a whole. Unfortunately, and this is an issue that merits further consideration, the poorest and most vulnerable social sectors obtain the fewest benefits as their most urgent needs remain unresolved.

### **Civic Participation**

Civic participation and accountability are recognized by multilateral organizations as crucial factors for improved urban governance. Efforts that allow the poorest social sectors to interact with the government and take part in decisions that directly affect them are especially important. The Latin American experience, however, shows that participation has been traditionally weak and has been limited to an advisory role. Bogotá has also seen important developments in the creation of participatory mechanisms in recent administrations, and the public discussion of local development plans has had a significant impact. Nevertheless, the reality is that participation remains very low, especially among the city's poorest sectors.

The quality of participation has been shaped by each administration's vision of the challenges facing the city. Urbanism in Bogotá has oscillated between two opposing tendencies. The Peñalosa administration was clearly identified with a top-down urbanistic approach while the Mockus and Garzón administrations supported approaches closer to a bottom-up strategy. Thus some important advances in the consolidation of a participatory society that started during the first Mockus administration were slowed down during Peñalosa's rule (which was extremely centralized and hierarchical in decision-making). The second Mockus administration and the Garzón administration redirected their efforts towards increased participation.

During the first Mockus administration very few visible urban projects were undertaken. Most initiatives focused on transforming aspects of social space. The “civic culture” program was very important in that sense. Some critics give little credit to the “civic culture” programs because they represent the failure of a much more ambitious political vision that aimed to dramatically change the civic participation and social control mechanisms of the city. However, according to researcher Maria Teresa Garcés, the civic culture programs have helped to make Bogotá “the city of Colombia where civic participation is most developed”. (Garcés, 2008). Garcés also argues that “civic culture” might have had a positive influence on governance, the identification of inhabitants with the city, and a growing interest in public affairs. We stated earlier that “civic culture” programs may have influenced the improvement of governance in Bogotá. Yet, these programs were ultimately more successful in promoting a respect for the law than in improving civic participation. In that sense, as it is suggested by urban researcher Fernando Viviescas (2001), civic culture can even have some negative effects in the sense that it forms obedient, unquestioning citizens rather than critically engaged actors.

It has been said that important progress in the development of participatory mechanisms has occurred in Bogotá; however, these efforts have not had the expected impact on civic participation. In her essay “Desarrollo de la participación ciudadana y el control social,” Maria Teresa Garcés (2008) analyzes some of the causes of the low participation levels in Bogotá. Distrust seems to be an important aspect. There seems to be a general sense of skepticism in the potential for real change and people thus find it useless to become involved in politics. There is also a deep distrust of institutions and politicians and a feeling that “many public decisions are taken under clientelist criteria or due to economic globalization with conditions imposed by international organizations, and not always consulting the specificity of the community and its interests.” (Garcés, 2008). Other aspects mentioned by the author that explain Bogotá’s low participation include a lack of commitment due to the lack of remuneration in civic associations, a correlation between satisfaction and participation in which increased satisfaction leads to decreased participation, and the persistence of clientelist practices that represent an obstacle for the formation of an active citizenship.

Despite these weaknesses, advancements in the consolidation of a participatory society are reflected in the creation of an important number of participatory mechanisms:

- Participation and accountability in urban planning
- Councils of local planning and citizen’s conventions
- Public accountability of the mayor, the city government and private contractors
- Civic advisory committees
- Social control over the execution of development plans
- Local councils of social policy planning
- Neighborhood coalitions and watch groups
- Development committees
- Social control of domestic public services
- Local councils of youth
- Local councils of culture
- Tutelary council of children’s’ rights

- Social control of the parks committee
- Advisory council of women

Although the number of citizens who are involved in these participatory initiatives is small, the creation of these programs represents an advancement in the political culture of the city. It is certainly a slow process that relies greatly on the capacity of a society to create strong social organizations (for this, the increase of the education levels seems to be a necessary condition), and a radical change in the political exercise. To improve participation it will be necessary to preserve the political will to support these social movements, to augment communication between politicians and the social groups they represent, and to increase transparency levels as accountability depends enormously on the quality of information that citizens receive. In Bogotá we observe advancements in both the growing interest and knowledge of public affairs, as well as the electoral independence shown in recent years (Garcés, 2008).

### **Decentralization**

The consequences of decentralization are reflected in political changes including the popular election of mayors, the new territorial legislation, and the new roles assumed by social organizations. On the other hand, the privatization of domestic public services and the growing number of public-private partnerships represent the tendency to diminish the state's presence in Bogotá's public affairs. However, as we will see, the public service sector still has strategic influence on both social and urban policies. (Coing, 2005)

Decentralization theories argue for the creation of autonomous public service enterprises or the delegation of the services to the private sector. According to the Inter-American Development Bank, the depoliticization of enterprises should help to limit both corruption and mismanagement. According to some academics, the process of privatization in Colombia is shaped by the desire to incorporate the public service sector into the global market. This merchandization of domestic public services would imply, on the one hand, the exclusion of important social sectors, and on the other, the creation of new forms of resistance. It would also affect notions of solidarity and commitment by reducing the responsibility of the state and producing new forms of spatial and social segregation. This merchandization process would also symbolize the rupture of the personification of the state as representative of the collective welfare. (Brand, 2001). The reality of the reforms made in the public services sector can corroborate to some extent some of these arguments, while undermining others. Indeed, the enacted reforms have created a new and complicated reality of public service provision in Bogotá.

The reorganization of the public service sector in Colombia was determined by the 1991 constitutional reform and the enactment of the Law 142 of 1994. Both legal acts emphasize the responsibility of the state to supply public services, while introducing two new changes at the same time. The first change was that competition must be favored over monopolies and the second was an ultimate aim for the financial independence of public service enterprises. Once again we find an example of a combination of populism and liberalism in Colombian legislation. Social geographer Henri Coing (2005) explains that the public service reform implies four changes: elimination of monopolies, opening to the private sector, changes in the economic



regime and the creation of regulatory mechanisms: All the public service enterprises, with exception of water management which represents a special case<sup>13</sup>, were subject to different forms of privatization:

- Waste management was initially contracted to private enterprises in 60% of the city. Soon afterwards the public enterprise was removed, and the service was contracted to Venezuelan, French and Argentinean companies. Through concessions the service became 100% financially independent.
- The electric services were subject to a process of capitalization where 49% of the enterprise was sold. The service was divided among three different enterprises, while other private companies also entered to compete in the service provision.
- Two national companies, Ecopetrol and EEB, previous controlled gas service. Ecopetrol sold its participation to Gas Natural, a Spanish company, while EEB maintained 28% of its participation.
- In the telecommunications sector the public enterprise competes with other companies in the provision of services including internet and local, international, and mobile telephony.
- Water management services remain controlled by the public enterprise despite certain increased efforts to privatize the service.
- The public transportation system has historically been in the hands of private sectors due to the failure of public projects. Transmilenio, the successful RBT system, is a public-private initiative with a very inequitable financial and economic structure. According to former mayor Jaime Castro (as cited in Escovar et al, 2007) 85% of the total costs of the system are financed by the public sector. This represents the cost of the system's entire infrastructure. The remaining 15%, which represents the cost of the vehicles, is financed by the private sector. Of the total income gained by the system, only 4%, which is then invested in the system's operation, goes to the public sector and the remaining 94% goes to private investors.

In theory the reform was expected to reduce inequality in the provision of services, inequality that reinforces both social and spatial segregation. It was generally anticipated that market mechanisms would assure the universal coverage of public services. Coing (2005) wonders if such a combination is sustainable, and what the impact of such reforms is in terms of social and territorial solidarity. As we will see the reforms guaranteed the financial stability of the enterprises, but the cost in terms of social equality was high. The principle of competition, in theory, assures the universal coverage of public services. In practice the question becomes, how can total coverage be assured taking into account that the poorest sectors are the least profitable, and that private enterprises prefer to keep their most profitable clients? According to the

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<sup>13</sup> Water management is an exceptional case in Bogotá and the rest of the country. A study shows that in 123 municipalities only one in ten has privatized the service and no one has broken this monopoly of water provision. In addition, the water supply remains the public service that is most frequently provided directly by municipalities, and it is a key factor of the government's social policies. Bogotá, like many other municipalities has not privatized the service despite a World Bank initiative to do so. There has been considerable political opposition to such initiative and, in addition, since water management does not provide great commercial profit, it simply seems to be unattractive to the private sector.

law, the city must directly provide a public service if after a bidding process there is no offer from any other enterprise to do it, or if it is proven that the costs of providing the service would be lower if they are provided directly by the city. So far this has never happened in Bogotá. What has really ensured the expansion of public service networks and what makes these services accessible for the poor are government subsidies and contributions from richest users. In Bogotá, as well as the rest of the country, public services for the poor have historically been highly financed in part by the state along with supplementary payments from the wealthiest customers. Therefore the system's balance depends on users' payments as well as these subsidies. This system, which has helped to finance the poorest sectors, does however have many weaknesses. First of all, subsidies are distributed based on the socio-economic classification of the city's districts<sup>14</sup>, which therefore help to reinforce spatial segregation. In addition the system presents challenges because a families' income level does not necessarily correspond with their district's socio-economic classification. Therefore, there are families that do not receive proper subsidies because they are not correctly categorized, as well as others who receive subsidies but do not really need the financial support (Coing, 2005).

Another problem is that the recent reforms, which promote competition and the financial autonomy of public services, put the system itself in danger. On the one hand, competition diminishes the price paid by the largest consumers and therefore their contributions. On the other, the policies that promote the financial autonomy of these enterprises have also imposed a limit to the amount of supplementary contributions paid by the wealthiest users (Coing, 2005). The reduction of subsidies has had an important social impact; since the reforms were enacted, the spending on public services has dramatically increased for the poorest sectors. While the poorest families spend 11% of their monthly budget on public services, the richest sectors only pay approximately 5% (CID, 2004). Reforms have been useful to ensure the financial stability of these enterprises, but today the inequality of public service provision is alarming. Although the indicators show that the city's coverage of public services is very good, these indicators do not say anything about the quality, the price, the continuity of the service and the political implications of service provision. The quality and continuity of the service does seem to be rather homogeneous for all users independently of social factors. This is not the case regarding cost of services, which is indeed inseparable from politics. Social geographer Vincent Goueset (2005) says (regarding the water management service, though his statements may apply to public services in general) that service provision implies social and political challenges, and that the problem is no longer just a political problem but a political-economic problem, in that the notion of governance is connected to economic liberalism.

A 2006 study of the CID<sup>15</sup> finds that, "In the design of any pricing system it is inevitable that there is a tension between efficiency and equality. And there is not any technical process that provides for the calculation of a better alternative. The definition of the price is, therefore, a political decision." (CID, 2004). In the same study the center argues, in accordance with the thesis of George, Hotelling and Vickrey, that

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<sup>14</sup> Neighborhoods are ranked in a 1 to 6 scale in which the poorest districts are classed as 1 and the richest as 6.

<sup>15</sup> CID is the Spanish abbreviation for the Centro de investigaciones para el desarrollo (Research Center for Development).

“equality demands an engagement that must represent a redistribution of the wealth of the city” (Ibid). Therefore, equality in the financial support of public services should not be a product of subsidies but a product of the prosperity of the city.

We mentioned earlier that certain critics of decentralization theory argue that the public service reforms reinforce exclusion and new forms of social segregation. These reforms also represent the rupture of an image of the state as representative of collective interests. Despite the improvements in terms of coverage, new forms of exclusion and segregation have indeed appeared. It is harder, however, to support the thesis which asserts that the process represents an end to the social obligations of the state. Beyond the debate about the convenience or inconvenience of privatization<sup>16</sup>, it is clear that public services in Colombia are still highly regulated by the national government. Despite decentralization and economic liberalism, the system still works in a very centralist fashion. (Goueset, 2005). The experience of Bogotá shows that public services have an important social impact which generate social stress and, therefore, continue to represent a political issue that demands a political response.

## **2.5 - The Territorial Planning (POT, Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial)**

Bogotá's recent territorial planning, represented by the POT, is the result of a process that began with the passage of Law 388 of 1997. This law forced Colombian municipalities to consider their development for the next ten years and to create a document outlining the reforms that would order and organize the territorial planning (POT). The initiative required cities to assume responsibility for their development in light of their newly gained political autonomy, established in the 1991 constitutional reform, and aimed to reduce inconsistent and inefficient territorial growth. The law established new relations between the private and public sectors and provided new management tools that allowed municipalities to increase and improve services for citizens. The law is also part of a larger process of democratization in Colombia that reflected the political and social aspirations of the 1990s.

### **The POT's Contents**

Law 388 of 1997 represented a necessity as well as an opportunity for Bogotá. It was a necessary measure to address the prolonged absence of planning in the city and the consequent damage in terms of territorial unbalance. It also provided a means to anticipating the upcoming city development. Compared to other international capital cities, Bogotá had to make up for its extended neglect of the challenges of contemporary urban development. The POT presented an opportunity to adopt a new city model inspired by contemporary preoccupations. It was an occasion to examine recent cultural and technological transformations in society and to conceive of an urban plan that would engage with these changes. The urban models proposed for Bogotá are based on the experience and the territorial management of other international metropolises in the late twentieth century. Although the values and challenges which shape urban planning at the metropolitan level are often shared,

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<sup>16</sup> It must be said, however, that so far the reforms have had the greatest impact on the poorest sector, which contradicts the assumption that the reforms would reduce inequality in the provision of services.

local administrations must design and implement planning within the context of its own inherited territorial, social, and political legacy. The POT proposals were needed in order to address the needs of an already constructed city of 6 million inhabitants; a comprehensive government report on the city thus had to be made. Universities, chambers of commerce, independent and public institutions and research centers had already established territorial reports based on years of studies, conferences, and diagnostic evaluations and had already developed tools for global understanding of the city. Inspired by these studies, the POT document proposed the application of a new territorial model defined by three elements: nature, society, and human activity (De Castillo, 2004). This model was conceived of as a dynamic system that would spark economic and social growth, would allow the formation of different paths for development, would be flexible, and would consider both short and long-term interests. The commitment of several economic, social, and political actors to the conception of the POT also provided the foundation for collaborative urban planning. One of the POT's central aims was that the writing of the plan be a collective process and that the final document represents a social contract. According to Law 388, public consultation and involvement was required in the POT writing process, shared concerns had to be addressed, and democratic participation promoted. This process aimed to translate citizens' reflections and ideas into a more technical evaluation, and to write diagnostic report. The ultimate objective was to create an effective participatory framework that would allow citizens to see their concerns reflected in the final POT document. This emphasis on citizen participation as an essential aspect of urban planning that came from the reemerging ideas of participatory democracy in the 1990s. Politicians largely adopted the discourse of democratization during the 1990s when several administrations focused on civic engagement in political campaigns and urban management.

A city such as Bogotá faces intensified demographic growth, as the capital must contend with standard population growth along with the influx of residents due in part to economic and political instability and the specific case of displaced people in Colombia. The highest population growth in the capital took place during the 1950s and 1960s, when a 6% average growth rate by year occurred (DANE in Martin, 2004). The population of Bogotá continues to grow, but at a much slower pace; according to the National Department of Statistics (DANE in Martin, 2004) growth in 2000 reached 2.2%, and the city is still in need of more areas for future urban development. In this perspective the POT conceptualized Bogotá both as a capital city and as a city-region, promoting urban development at the local and regional scale. Therefore the plan divided the territory into zones and identified the structural components of the urban forms to be consolidated (including the metropolitan center and zonal centers), while addressing the lack of public establishments and infrastructure. The aim was to develop a large-scale network of transportation, public infrastructure and social housing projects. The creation of a coherent urban plan was also seen as a way to consolidate economic development and attract new investments. According to the POT, economic activities should be well positioned according to the specific conditions of the particular environment. The idea was to use the potential of each area, developing for example, well connected industrial areas, mostly on the west of the city, that were outside of the traditional center. Following the model of other international capitals, Bogotá's historical center was to become the commercial face of the city by attracting and concentrating national and international business headquarters, as well as administrative activities and services in a high-density scheme. At the same time each district would represent a

secondary center with public spaces, road networks, and basic infrastructure that would consolidate the identity of the area and provide services for local residents. The ultimate aim of the plan was that citizens might enjoy what former Mayor Enrique Peñalosa termed a “balanced, efficient and fair territory” (Martin, 2004).

An evaluation of the city’s political, social, economic, and territorial state was a necessary step to start the planning process. By the end of the 1990s Bogotá was the most dynamic district at the national level. This reflects the significant population growth that has occurred in the capital; in the beginning of the 1990s Bogotá and its region represented a bit less than 10% of the national population, but by the end of the decade the region represented 15% of the Colombian population. Today the region’s economy is still the most important and stable. Bogotá is the principal urban center of the country, and it represents the most significant concentrations of national GDP, foreign investments, political institutions and media groups. Taking into account all these advantages, the POT found that Bogotá was not harnessing its potential; due to the absence of management at the regional level and the lack of coordination between municipalities, development in the city was both limited and concentrated in certain areas. The POT also concluded that the emerging service sector had to be strengthened in order to provide real possibilities for growth.

The environmental impact of urban development in Bogotá and the surrounding region is an important focus of the POT. The diagnostic evaluation of the city’s environmental conditions paints a troubling picture. The global degradation of the environment, caused in part by intensified agricultural, mining, and industrial activities, has been linked to increasing rates of air, water and soil pollution. Urban development in Bogotá threatens the local ecosystems which make up the region’s savanna due to the environmental pressure caused by urbanization, resource use, and soil consumption. For example, as of 2000 the marsh areas in the region had been reduced by 6 times in the previous 40 years (POT). Inside the city, widespread traffic congestion, an aging automobile fleet, and increasing industrial production have led to worrisome rates of air and noise pollution. The significant/critical lack of green space in the city (particularly in the south) and the low quality of public parks in general (a lack of maintenance along with security challenges) reflect the poor state of the city’s environment. The absence of water treatment and the proximity of landfills and industrial activities to the Bogotá River spread pollution as far as the Magdalena River and the Caribbean coast. To address Bogotá’s environmental challenges, the POT recommends the immediate development of an extensive transportation system that would help to reduce both noise and air pollution and the significant traffic congestion in the city. It is also proposed the maintenance of green and public spaces in the city in order to help to restore a sense of collective good among citizens and to reinforce the presence of nature in everyday urban life. Strict controls on industrial activities were proposed as the first steps toward decreasing the pollution of the Bogotá River. The measures included improvements in waste management control as well as the redefinition of the suitability of certain zones to particular activities. Industrial production was pushed out of the city center and out of environmentally fragile areas including swamps and river ways, and residential settlements were no longer allowed in environmentally high-risk areas. Illegal settlements in high-risk and non-urbanized areas cause tremendous damage to the environment. The negative effects of these settlements have historically shaped development in the area and remain a challenge as the city continues to expand its limits. Although the negative effects of this development are not a recent trend in

Bogotá, the city continues to expand on its limits. Pirate districts threaten the environment as well as their own inhabitants' well being as natural disasters are a permanent risk in these areas.

One of Bogotá's major failings in recent years has been the neglect of thousands of poor immigrants who arrive in the city every year; this migration has contributed significantly to the expansion of the city into high-risk areas. Because many of these newcomers are economically vulnerable, they are compelled to settle in informal districts marked by poor living conditions. These districts are usually located in dangerous zones threatened by floods, mudslides, and earthquakes. According to the POT, a large part of the city is located in these high-risk areas, which threatens the lives of thousands of families. The POT report proposes that the citizens living in these areas should be evacuated; however, the availability of formal housing in Bogotá is still insufficient and inadequate to provide for the poorest sectors. Although the expansion of informal neighborhoods into high-risk areas of the city continues to represent a major problem, there is still no serious social policy that addresses housing for the poorest urban inhabitants and the continued growth of informal districts in Bogotá.

When the POT report was written there was a critical shortage of electricity and water supply in the peripheral areas of the city. These shortages were especially acute in districts of illegal origin, which according to the POT represented 50% of Bogotá's districts in 2000. The status report makes clear that legalizing pirate districts-- that is to say to, providing basic infrastructure and social services to neighborhoods located in high-risk areas-- is a very expensive operation for the city administration, and is in fact more complicated than urban planning and development started from the beginning. Therefore the POT promoted the expansion of residential construction that would improve the quality of life for urban inhabitants with a special emphasis on the development of social housing projects. According to the POT the lack of land available for development would encourage the future densification of the city and a better balance in terms of social repartition. Taking advantage of newly created public private partnerships, the POT initiated the *Metrovivienda* program, an initiative that was meant to address a lack of social housing that could compete more effectively with illegal urbanization.

After years of unmanaged urban development, territorial instability was significant with an important social and spatial segregation between the southern and northern parts of the city. There was a critical absence of infrastructure and public space in the southern and western parts of the city, the areas of Bogotá where the majority of the population is concentrated. Meanwhile, the greatest concentration of cultural and economic activities in Bogotá remained in the city center. The territory was unbalanced due to the poor quality of roads and public infrastructure and the absence of an extensive transportation system. The city faced problems of spatial fragmentation and a lack of articulation between the local and metropolitan road networks. Nevertheless, this network was one of the only urban elements that gave some coherence to the territory. Until the beginning of the 1990s, in the absence of strong legislation, urban growth was extensive and inefficient. The POT recommended the creation of defined city limits in order to control expansion and form a compact and dense urban network. The creation of several sub-centralities in the urban network would generate opportunities to develop local health centers and schools, while providing social services and promoting economic development, thus promoting a more fairly balanced territory. In addition, a new collective transportation

system would allow easier access to the diverse parts of the city. In identifying the potential of peripheral areas, the urban plan underscored the importance of the Bogotá River, which represents one of the territory's most significant structural elements and had the potential to become an axis of future green space development.

Another major problem in Bogotá in the 1990s was mobility. Traveling in Bogotá was extremely difficult due to the bad quality of roads and sidewalks, daily traffic jams, and the absence of well-planned collective transport. According to the status report of the POT, by the end of the 1990s only 30% of homes owned a car; nevertheless, the city was faced with permanent congestion, considerable air pollution, a lack of parking spaces, systematic infringement of traffic rules, and a shortage of space for pedestrians and alternative transport systems. The poor maintenance and lack of sidewalks was noticeable in many districts; pedestrian ways were regularly overtaken and converted into parking zones. The city planning did not help mobility either; in many cases road networks were interrupted by military camps, prisons or cemeteries still located in the middle of the city. The concentration of activities in the city center and the lack of infrastructure in the peripheries forced the migration of many people to the center, which had important consequences on mobility. The POT proposed the Transmilenio, an efficient bus rapid transport (BRT) system that addressed the mobility challenges facing city residents. Decentralizing the city was part of an effort made to improve the accessibility of services and reduce travel times but ultimately, it remained insufficient. Compared to the city of Medellín (which had three million inhabitants in 2000), where a BRT system was constructed during the 1980s, the capital city of Colombia did not offer a massive transport system at the end of 1990s. Although Bogotá's administrations started planning extensive subway projects in the 1980s, none of them were realized because of the operation's high costs. The POT chose to support a project of collective transport drafted at the end of 1990s that was efficient, relatively inexpensive, and much easier to construct than a subway. Already implemented in the city of Curitiba, the BRT system represents a fast construction option if it is built using pre-existing highways, as was the case in Bogotá. Though the Transmilenio has been largely effective, it needs to be synchronized with other means of transport and has to be connected to multimodal transportation platforms in order to produce better results. In addition to the BRT system a network of cycling paths has been largely developed in the city and its peripheries, their construction and rehabilitation a priority of recent administrations. Future development of Bogotá's transport system must be done in consideration of regional needs and future necessities. A regional transport system must be conceived in collaboration with other district municipalities in order to support the future development of the city and its region.

The POT reflects a particular attachment to the consolidation of the public sphere. In opposition to the precedent set by Bogotá's previous administrations, the POT emphasized the particular importance of strengthening the public interest. The urban plan encourages the recognition and management of cultural heritage and public space as collective goods. According to the POT, public goods should effectively inspire and strengthen feelings of citizenship. For many years the particular interests of local officials dominated the public administration of the city; writers of the POT issued a strong criticism of this kind of management. The model proposed by the POT puts an end to an ineffective tradition of public management in Bogotá by proposing collectively conceived town planning that would allow private investments

according to common social interests. Through the construction and rehabilitation of public space, administrations attempted to create a new image of Bogotá as a contemporary city, inspired by the development of cities like Barcelona and Boston. The Enterprise for Urban Renovation (ERU), a semi-public institution, was formed in 1999 by the Peñalosa administration in order to coordinate different urban projects proposed by the POT concerning public space. Their work has focused on the identification, recuperation, and renovation of spaces of public interest.

## **The Planners / Influences of the POT**

The POT was written by a multidisciplinary team with experience in different aspects of urban planning. Most of the members of the team were authors of previous studies on Bogotá and its region<sup>17</sup> and had been working together since the late 1980s as part of the Research Center on Economic Development (CEDE) linked to the University of Los Andes. Among them was the economist Carolina Barco, along with town planners Jose Salazar and Rodrigo Cortés. Many researchers on the planning team completed their postgraduate studies in Europe and the United States. Their vision of the city was not only influenced by Bogotá's recent history, but also by their experiences abroad. The influence of international trends on Bogotá's town planning is not a recent development. Indeed town planning in Bogotá in the twentieth century was highly marked by the influence of international professionals. Among the foreign experts who worked for the city of Bogotá was German town planner Karl Brunner in the 1930s, the Swiss architect Le Corbusier in the late 1940s, as well as Town Planning Associates formed by Paul Lester Wiener, Paul Schulz and Joseph Luis Sert in the 1950s. They all brought modernist ideas to Colombia that shaped the city's expansion. While Le Corbusier's plans were only partially developed, Brunner, who stayed in Colombia for an extended period, contributed notably to the culture of town planning in Colombia. Important urban projects developed by Brunner reflect his involvement in the consolidation of rationalist urban planning in Bogotá<sup>18</sup>.

During the 1960's<sup>19</sup> two administrations, those of Jorge Gaitan Cortés (1961-1966) and Virgilio Barco (1966-1969), emphasized the importance of city planning in Bogotá. During his administration Barco focused on the restoration of the city through the creation and improvement of public space, the provision of housing, and the institutionalization of urban management. During his administration civic participation was also reinforced through the creation of local committees. Largely influenced by European and American experiences (twentieth century modernism, city garden initiatives, and post-modern civic participation), Barco emerged as a champion for the public interest and was recognized for his will to rationalize Bogotá's chaos. Although Bogotá still faced significant urban challenges by the end of the 1990s, thanks to the

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<sup>17</sup> A study called Phase II is the clearest influence of the model of urban planning proposed by the POT.

<sup>18</sup> The projects developed by Brunner in Bogotá include the Caracas and Chile Avenues, the campus of the National University, and a number of neighborhoods that include Bosque Izquierdo, Palermo, Barrios Unidos, Gaitan, Centenario and El Campin.

<sup>19</sup> The early 1960s marks the beginning of the period known in Colombian political history as "Frente nacional" that represented a pact between the two ruling parties to put an end to three decades of political violence.



positive reforms of his administration, Barco was seen as an exemplar good public management.<sup>20</sup>

At the end of 1970's, young architects and students in Bogotá took part in the international debate on the city, a debate that sparked new theories and reflections on the identity, meanings and possibilities of the city beyond modernist thought. Important theorists include the Situationist International, Jane Jacobs and Aldo Rossi, along with others who studied the city from new fields including the arts, anthropology, history and sociology. Their work has contributed to a more complex vision and understanding of urban phenomena. The emerging visions of the 1970s helped to build a collective awareness of important issues in Bogotá and created the foundation for recent urban transformations (Martin, 2004). Certainly the Barcelona model has been a source of inspiration for Bogotá's contemporary planning, as urbanists tried to reconstruct a notion of the public sphere that had nearly disappeared from the planning culture in Bogotá. The work of Oriol Bohigas, Manuel Solà-Morales, and Joan Busquets, planners of post-Franco Barcelona, also inspired much of the planning done in the Colombian capital. These designers emphasized the consolidation of public space in order to reconstruct the city's identity through the valorization of cultural heritage, collective memory and citizen awareness.

### **Criticism of the First POT Edition and 2003 Revisions**

Several criticisms of the POT have emerged since its first publication. Some of the topics of debate were integrated into the final 2001 version and later into the 2003 revision. However, many groups have expressed their frustration with both the scope of the plan and certain clear incoherencies. As with any new initiative, the first version of the plan faced significant criticism. The main critiques were a denouncement of the POT's lack of regional vision. The particular status of Bogotá as a capital city and regional district made clear that the Law 388 of 1997 was inadequate to support municipal planning. The autonomy given to municipalities by the law hindered the efforts of city administration to plan regional development. Consequently, despite the idea of creating a city-region, the POT makes only few references to the region and does not suggest any practical measures concerning regional planning (Noriega, 2000). Because it is limited to the planning of the city itself, the plan does not provide the necessary tools for local administrations to plan its future as a contemporary metropolis. Critics point to the necessity of regional planning, citing Paris, Madrid, Portland, and New York as examples of cities that consider local urban planning as part of a larger regional territory. The metropolitan centers of these cities represent on average 40% of the regional territory, while the Bogotá metropolitan center has already reached 85% of the regional area (Noriega, 2000). In general terms the model of regional urban planning emphasizes the adoption of a broad view of urban development and focuses on the formation of diverse partnerships. Cities like New York and London have created partnerships with more than 30 surrounding municipalities in order to strengthen their regional development. In Bogotá many unresolved points of territorial planning have been transferred to the Department of Municipal Urban Planning (DAPD), but this entity has demonstrated incompetence and limitations in terms of territorial management. In the face of major challenges in territorial planning, the POT did not propose

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<sup>20</sup> The Peñalosa administration promoted the recognition of the administrations of Virgilio Barco and Jorge Gaitán Cortés through the publication of studies on the legacy of their mandates.

solutions to one of the most important urban issues that emerged at the end of the twentieth century, that is, the impact of technical development on the territory and the new interdependences formed between the local and global scale (Giraldo Isaza, 2004).

The lack of a global vision did not allow the POT to address social questions of housing and displacement. The egalitarian, democratic, and balanced territory promoted in the POT requires greater political will, especially regarding the informal districts and the lack of housing solutions for immigrants. The Bogotá social housing project *Metrovivienda* did not effectively compete with informal housing as the POT suggested it would. This important social housing project failed because it reached the middle class instead of the poorest communities of Bogotá. The initiative was ultimately both insufficient and inadequate (Bohorquez, 2000). Without a counterweight, the informal and unplanned city will continue to grow reproducing many of the same problems.

Environmentalists were also disappointed by the limitations of the POT's environmental commitments. The Regional Autonomous Corporation (CAR), an independent entity that works to protect the environment, vetoed the northern urban expansion proposed by the POT. This expansion of the city represented a clear conflict between the interests of real estate promoters and the environmental protection of the zone of marshes at the city's northern limits. In this particular case the POT did not demonstrate its supposed ecological commitment. Although environmental protection and the challenges of sustainable development are addressed in the POT, Luisa Fernanda Vargas Hernandez of the CAR argues that these pronouncements have been largely meaningless.

Civic participation is another concept that is emphasized in the POT discourse, but failed to meaningfully shape urban planning. According to different experts (Hernando Gomez, José Zamadio, and the Observatorio al POT) participation in the writing of the POT did not properly exist, and the only consultation that took place was with citizens who did not have any legal ability to approve or veto local planning. The lack of proper management during the planning process did not allow citizens to meaningfully share their thoughts or concerns. Many citizens did not understand the technical language used in the POT and the DADP, the government entity that organized the meetings, was not well prepared to manage the debate. The reports of citizen meetings did not appear in the POT, a reflection of what little importance was given to these meetings. Without an institutional basis and the technical translation of citizens' proposals, the impact of civic participation on the final document is quite limited.

The systematic privatization of public services and the growing number of public private partnerships undermine the stated importance of the public interest in the POT. In front of the World Bank Mayor Peñalosa rejected the privatization of water service in Bogotá because according to him, a private company would not extend its services to formerly illegal districts, many of which comprise the city's most vulnerable populations, as operating in these areas is extremely expensive. In the case of the Transmilenio system, the city investment represented 85% of the infrastructure costs (roads, bus stops, bridges, etc.), while the private partners invested the remaining 15%, paying for the bus fleet. The city, which is the major

investor in the Transmilenio, receives only 4% of the income, which is invested in the maintenance of the system, while the private partners receive the remaining 96% (Castro, 2004). In a way, because the public investment does not receive any returns, public finance serves the private sector. The recovery of the city center planned by the POT also failed to defend the public interest. Several recent projects, including the development of the Tercer Milenio area, reinforce planning models which focus on the city center at the expense of the poor, many of whom are displaced by such development.

The defenders of the first version of the POT argued that it represented advancement because previously nonexistent foundations essential to the city's development were built. There has been a strong rupture with the previous urban planning tradition, which only tried to regulate particular interests while avoiding many of the broader challenges of city planning (Del Castillo, 2000). Despite its flaws and contradictions, the POT still managed to bring attention to the importance of the public good in the construction of the city.

Beyond the debate of the ideas promoted in the POT, the reality remains that projects have been difficult to implement and the POT's lofty ideals have not always adequately confronted the complex challenges of Bogotá's specific urban development. The reality of the city illustrates that in certain cases the proposals of the POT were flawed. Nevertheless, the document was an attempt to lay the foundation for a collective reflection on Bogotá's urban planning process. While maintaining its idealistic ambitions, it is clear that future editions of the POT must be more in tune with reality.

## **2.6 - Administrations**

In addition to the described socio-political changes that redirected Bogotá's development, it must also be said that the city has benefited from electing strong mayoral candidates since the 1988 establishment of local democratic elections. The city's body of voters has certainly matured politically, electing serious and sometimes independent politicians engaged with the problems of the city. Governance in the city has increased and, compared to the last two decades, the city has clearly shifted to better political practices. During the nineteen eighties and early nineties the city administration was marked by corruption scandals, public service crises, and bankruptcy, in addition to the serious security challenges that also faced the capital. Since 1993 a series of competent administrations have improved various aspects of municipal management that were earlier discussed: the restructuring of public finances, a significant decrease in urban violence, an increase and improvement of public and social services, and finally, the construction of public infrastructure. All these improvements are the consequence of continued efforts that involved at least the last five administrations. Even though Jaime Castro's administration (1992-1994) represents an important period in Bogotá's recent history, as he was responsible for improving management of the city's finances, we consider the first election of Antanas Mockus marks the beginning of a new era in local politics.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Antanas Mockus' election represents the beginning of a period of substantial change because he promotes a new manner of engaging in city politics. He integrated academic research into policy making, and he gave special emphasis to technocratic administration and communication. In addition,

It has already been said that though the former mayors represented diverse political tendencies and had different approaches to governance, they shared common concerns regarding the importance of strengthening the public sphere and making the city more democratic. They also recognized the importance of giving continuity to successful policies of previous administrations<sup>22</sup>. In addition to some of their shared concerns, there is another point that has given continuity to the administration policies beyond political and ideological positions. A kind of parallel political and economic agenda promoted mainly by the private sector (e.g. the corporate media, chamber of commerce, and real estate developers) has emerged that is usually presented in development plans through the narrative of competitive cities. The search for competitiveness and productivity, the aim to insert the city into the global market, the pressure put on land regulation policies, and the inevitable real estate operations linked to all major urban interventions have produced very similar responses from the recent administrations. In a dissertation that analyzes the juridical and philosophic principles central to the city's urban plan (POT), Political scientist Maria Mercedes Maldonado (2003) states that the plan "is assumed to be a rationalizing instrument which seeks to reduce the uncertainty and arbitrariness of individual behavior." She continues, writing that the plan represents the goal of "constructing the rationality for the public sphere in a country where the ideas of development and productivity are central" (ibid). In a similar way to the earlier analyzed case of the political constitution, we observe in the different administrations' policies the same "avoidance of ideological definition and an adaptation to the neoliberal model with *social sense*" (ibid).

Despite the mentioned "parallel agenda" that did not change significantly from one administration to the next, the last four administrations have produced development plans that stress very different issues, while proposing varied responses to the identified problems. The number of specific actions made during each period is practically innumerable. Therefore the following analysis aims to examine the most relevant initiatives for each period, with a particular emphasis on each mayor's development plan and political visions, while pointing out the aspects which have generated the most controversy and debate. In the case of the two Mockus administrations we will analyze the attempt to substantially reinforce civic participation and to transform the city's political culture and social dynamics through the project of "civil culture." In the case of Peñalosa's administration, we will analyze the efforts made to construct and renovate urban infrastructure, which placed a large emphasis on a particular discourse of public space. Finally, for the Garzón administration, we will

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he was convinced that the solution to the city's problems should not be limited to political change, but should be shaped by social change as well. Enrique Peñalosa, another mayor convinced of the importance of transforming social space, created a similar government based substantially in communication and technocracy, although he maintained a rather different discourse on the city.

<sup>22</sup> It is interesting to note that such coincidences have erased ideological oppositions among the three former mayors of Bogotá to the point that nowadays they have joined the same political party to choose a single candidate for the 2010 presidential election.

focus on the emphasis placed on social issues that aimed to improve the quality of life for the poorest and most vulnerable sectors.

### **Antanas Mockus**

The first election of Antanas Mockus as Bogotá's mayor in 1995 marks a turning point in the city's political tradition. This unusual politician, a former academic and educator, is recognized particularly for his independence from the traditional political class of Colombia, which is often associated with corruption scandals and ineffectiveness. From the beginning Mockus' leadership and management of the city testified to his' audacity and capacity to innovate, a clear break from mayorships of the past. He is also recognized as the first mayor of civic and alternative origin (Veeduría Distrital, 2003). Jaime Castro, the mayor of Bogotá before the election of Mockus, certainly represented a change from previous administrations. Castro is recognized for having cleaned up the public finances and for having put an end to years of clientelist management of the city. However, it is Mockus who represented a real political alternative. His training in mathematics and philosophy as well as his later experience in academia as a professor and dean at the Universidad Nacional clearly shaped his distinct approach to politics.

Continuing the efforts of Jaime Castro to legitimize public institutions, Mockus aimed to reshape the public's conception of the law through the development of projects focused on civic culture. Free from bureaucratic commitments, Mockus composed a diverse administration that included academics and young professionals, a critical decision that allowed the administration to appoint competent public servants for office. Mockus promoted an original project that aimed to increase confidence and conviviality in the city. Fifteen years later his management is still seen positively by most citizens who observed the impact of his efforts and the consequent transformations in Bogotá's urban life.

### **First Development Plan: Civic Culture**

The development plan of the first Mockus administration aimed "to collectively build an integrated and fair city, a city that is kind to children and elderly people where it is possible to live peacefully, each one with his conscience, and with the law" (as cited in Martin, 2004).

When Mockus became mayor of Bogotá in 1995, he planned to revitalize a city formerly characterized by violence, law infractions and corruption. During the 1980s a wave of violence overtook Bogotá, violence that included attacks on citizens, hostage takings, riots, and crime. This violence diminished the quality of urban life in the city and created a climate of fear and paranoia. In addition a culture of illegality that was instilled in Bogotá's cultural practices made the law obsolete. Mockus identified in Bogotá's society of the early 1990s a "divorce" between culture, law, and morals, three systems which direct human behavior. This argument was inspired by theories developed in "Integration in the reconstruction of legality and morality," (Carrillo, 1991) a research paper directed by Mockus in the philosophy department of the Universidad Nacional. Such divorce is evident when morality or cultural norms tolerate illegal actions. According to Mockus, laws exist and are generally fair but remain, nevertheless, disrespected. Legal obligations are in many cases not

recognized as moral obligations and are not accepted culturally either. The concept of civic culture thus aims to reestablish legality by modifying certain attitudes. It is a transversal notion that guided the measures adopted during the Mockus administration. Mockus defined civic culture in his development plan as the “ensemble of customs, actions and minimum shared rules that generate a sense of belonging, make possible urban coexistence and lead to the respect of common heritage and to the recognition of civil rights and obligations” (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 1995). The civic culture project aims to regulate interpersonal behaviors in order to pacify social space and to lay the foundation for coexistence in public space. Civic culture is fundamentally based on individual self regulation. Communication and comprehension of laws are strategies that make moral and cultural acceptance possible as they demonstrate the sharing of common values, including respect for life.

Therefore the main objective of this development plan based on civic culture was to promote the introduction of basic rules for coexistence in the city, according to the three levels of regulation (moral, culture and law) that guarantee the respect of life. Another objective was to provide individuals with the means to persuade fellow citizens to observe the law, effectively using cultural regulation as a way to influence behavior and promote acceptance of civic norms. The administration also hoped to build an organized community that would make dialogue, cooperation and the search for peaceful solutions to interpersonal conflicts possible, with the ultimate goal of identifying a variety of alternatives to violence and strengthening citizens’ confidence in the proposals of the local government. The final objective was to improve the capacity of citizens to express these proposals. Through art, cultural activities, recreation, and sports, citizens were invited to promote tolerance and to embrace cultural and moral pluralism. Civic participation was also encouraged through practices of local planning that included the elaboration of public infrastructure and urban renovations. Citizens were called to exert control and to be a part of the decision making process. The community was intentionally invited to participate in the political processes in order to promote accountability and to guarantee the transparency of public institutions. Vibrant civic participation was meant to finding solutions, directly and precisely, to the particular needs of the community. In addition, increased civic participation strengthens the construction of social networks and fosters an awareness of important aspects of the public sphere, including notions of otherness, community and public good.

Mockus’ development plan also aimed to foster mutual respect between citizens and public institutions and to make public management more transparent. During the Mockus mayorship policies were developed along with evaluation tools in order to receive a feedback that would be used to shape future actions. A significant number of observatories were created as well as databases concerning different issues including transport, education and public space among many others. The collected information was then consolidated to form a useful educational resource about the urban life of Bogotá. In 1995 the SUIVD (Unified system of information on violence and criminality) was also created, a tool used to measure the impact of civil culture on urban violence.

## Main Projects

At the beginning of his mandate Mockus focused on continuing the work of the Castro administration, which emphasized the fight against corruption and clientelism. Through these actions the administration aimed to strengthen the legitimacy of public institutions. Mockus undertook an ambitious project of institutional reinforcement that sought to make public management transparent and competent. Thus the most important positions of his administration were given to qualified civil servants, while certain offices and departments were closed in order to make public management more efficient. The traffic police, an institution well known for high levels of corruption was suddenly dismantled, while the police department was restructured to make of it a kind of educational police force. Mockus surrounded himself with groups of experts on different subjects related to the city and the metropolis. These changes in governance reflect a search for openness and the will to promote a more skilled and efficient style of public management. Creating an efficient and transparent public administration was essential to reestablishing the credibility of politicians. In addition accountability was meant to give citizens control over public institutions, while proximity and simplification were stressed in order to listen and serve the community.

In order to protect the health and wellbeing of citizens, some radical measures were taken. The first law implied restrictions on the sale of alcohol at night in order to reduce the high number of accidents and fatalities due to alcohol consumption. This law, known as the “Carrot Law” was soon seen as very effective, due to the rapid decrease in such incidents. In the same sense the complete prohibition of fireworks reduced the number of children burned or killed during the Christmas celebrations to zero. This law affirmed that the integrity and well-being of children ultimately prevails over the preservation of cultural customs. Mockus justified the exercise of authority in these kinds of situations, which require for the understanding and compliance of all citizens. In a speech of his present political campaign the former mayor remarked, “I am not afraid of applying authority to enforce compliance of the law. But authority must be applied based on pedagogy more than force, because this is what makes it legitimate.”<sup>23</sup>

Under this premise, efforts to foster respect and coexistence among residents were based on education, awareness campaigns and communication. The teaching of respect between pedestrians and drivers, for example, was made with the aid of more visible signs and the presence of mimes in the crossroads. This peaceful regulation of civic relationships and interactions aimed to ease the cultural acceptance of norms. Restructuring the police department was also proposed as a way of promoting civic behavior in an educational manner and as a way of transforming ways of penalizing wrongdoers.

Other symbolic actions, including the implementation of civic cards inspired reflection among citizens, helped to create civic awareness, and aimed to develop a civic culture. Under the premise that public finances are sacred, Mockus invited citizens to

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<sup>23</sup> Authors' translation of the original phrase in Spanish : "A mí no me da miedo aplicar la autoridad para hacer cumplir la ley. Pero la autoridad hay que aplicarla basada en la pedagogía, más que en la fuerza, porque eso es lo que la hace legítima." (Mockus, 2010)

take part in public discussions regarding the investment of public funds. This was a way to advance civic engagement and to ensure transparent management, while civic participation was also encouraged in the design and consultation of public plans. The promotion of cultural events such as concerts in public parks introduced cultural integration as a way of promoting self regulation. Actions including a day of symbolic vaccination against violence and a plan for voluntary disarmament were set in motion. A day of reconciliation and of peaceful conflict resolution was introduced as a way to fight against individual injustice; pedagogic strategies were used that proposed solutions to interpersonal conflicts through mediation and negotiation.

The civic culture project also addressed questions of social progress by examining and attempting to minimize behaviors that lead to social exclusion. Aid was directed to the most fragile populations of the city which include children and single parent families. The improvement of educational standards and of health care coverage also helped to demarginalize the most vulnerable sectors of Bogotá. The recognition of common social rights implied the recognition of vulnerable communities as an important part of society.

According to the development plan the improvement of public spaces favors a good civic behavior (Alcaldía de Bogotá, 1995). The Mockus administration gave particular attention to public space in the sense that physical space represents social space, the space of citizens. The revalorization of parks and avenues, along with the harmonization of urban infrastructure, and the construction of new green areas helped to improve educative and recreational spaces as well. The revitalization of public space also highlighted the importance of a common patrimony that is shared by all citizens.

### **Reaffirmation of Principles: The Second Administration of Antanas Mockus**

Following the mayorship of Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2001), Mockus was elected mayor of Bogotá a second time in 2001. During his second administration Mockus continued to focus on the development of civic culture as the guiding principle of his political program. However, his ideas evolved and his second term was highly inspired by the development plan of Enrique Peñalosa. The second administration of Antanas Mockus was highly focused in the problem of competitiveness, and during this period the mayor continued to promote important public space interventions, many of which were programs initiated by the previous administration such as the Transmilenio transport system and the completion of the Tercer Milenio Park. He emphasized the importance of giving continuity to public policies and projects, demonstrating the will to sustain urban projects beyond the terms of elected public servants. Mockus recognized the positive aspects of the Peñalosa administration and acknowledged Peñalosa's influence in his conception of public space. The development plan of the second Mockus administration was thus a synthesis of his first development plan and that of the Peñalosa administration. Though Mockus and Peñalosa differed in many respects, with distinct influences, political conceptions of the city, and approaches to social policy, both were influenced by the other mayor's understanding of urban management. They both helped to increase public trust in local government and renewed citizens' belief in democracy.



## Enrique Peñalosa

Enrique Peñalosa, an independent candidate, was elected Bogotá's mayor in 1998, his third consecutive campaign for the office. Despite his international reputation as political hero, his recognition as an independent politician is far more fictional than real. Peñalosa started his political career within the liberal party, which he represented in the two mayoral campaigns prior to his elections. In 2006, five years after he left office, he rejoined the liberal party with the hope of representing the group in the upcoming presidential elections. However, after this failed attempt he joined the president's reelection crusade. In the 2007 mayoral elections when Peñalosa aspired, but failed, to be reelected, he enjoyed the support of the national government and President Alvaro Uribe. Nowadays he is part of a political coalition that unites three former mayors of Bogotá called the "Partido verde" or the Green Party.

Although his recent political career has been marked by an avoidance of ideological definition along with constant changes in political party, what one might consider opportunism, Peñalosa has a coherent and very clear vision of the city. Though his work is not unmarked by controversy, the relevance of his efforts as Bogotá's mayor is unquestionable. Indeed the administration of Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2001) is responsible for some of the capital's most visible and impressive urban projects in recent years, projects that have received a great deal of media coverage and international recognition.<sup>24</sup> In contrast to Antanas Mockus' first government that focused on the cultural and civic transformation of the city, Peñalosa's administration proposed a "top down" urbanistic approach. Peñalosa's vision of Bogotá, outlined in the POT, is that of a city where the public interest remains central. In this model the public interest is represented in the creation of public space, mobility that privileges public transport and alternative transport means, and social inclusion based on spatial integration.

The aim of Peñalosa's administration was to make significant physical transformations that would both promote social change and make the city more competitive. According to the development plan the objective was "to generate a profound change in the way of life of citizens, giving them back confidence in their capacity to build a better future, and to dynamize social and economic progress." The plan continues, explaining that "to achieve this it is necessary to substantially improve the physical and administrative structure of the city. The idea is to project and to make Bogotá visible in order to address the challenges facing the city and to take advantage of the possibilities imposed by a new era, and to work with the aim of substantially improving the quality of life for all inhabitants." (Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 1998)

According to that objective the development plan outlined a series of priorities. The priorities, which concern aspects that would "promote development and the human potential and achieve happiness" (Ibid), are summarized in the following points and strategies:

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<sup>24</sup> Such projects have also earned the former mayor an international image of a messiah, as the media attention given to Bogotá's urban transformations has privileged the most visible results of his administration over the complexity of the politic processes that made such transformations possible.

- Demarginalization of neighborhoods

Physic structure: The improvement of water management services, pavement of vehicular and pedestrian ways, construction and renovation of parks.

Social aspects: The improvement of health, education and welfare services.

- Social interaction

Improvement of social service provision: The development of individual capacities and potential, democratization of opportunities, improvement of interaction between social networks.

Human development: The productive performance of citizens (engaged citizenship and happiness).

- A human scale city

The recuperation of public space as well as the improvement of the quality and quantity of public space. The human being is considered the conceptual center of the city for a recomposition of the social life in Bogotá.

- Mobility

Restructuring of public transport: The improvement of the quality and comfort of public transport, reduction of travel times, and reduction of environmental impact.

Competition: The generation of employment and investment.

A change in transport habits. Discouragement of car use

- Urban planning and services

Organization of urban dynamics: A search for balance between densification and growth. Regulation of peripheral growth.

Urban renovation: The renovation of areas with an inferior urban function to a purpose better suited for its location.

Substitution of informal housing for planned housing.

- Security and coexistence

Prevention of crime and reinforcement of justice: A search for balance between law enforcement and improved civic behavior. A reduction of criminal impunity.

- Institutional efficiency

Improvement of governance and reduction of functioning costs.

Optimization of the allocation and spending of the city budget.

Decentralization, participation and modernization.

The objectives of Peñalosa's development priorities and strategies can be summarized by these five initiatives: the restructuring of public transport (Transmilenio), the construction of bike paths, the construction of cultural infrastructure, including libraries and schools, the recuperation of public space along with the demarginalization of neighborhoods, and the creation of a "bank of land" projects that would help to resolve the problem of low income housing in the city. Although many other projects have accompanied these central initiatives, it is evident that the development projects that have had the greatest impact on the urban transformation of Bogotá are those that have addressed the physical transformation of the city. Indeed, the strategies of social inclusion of this plan were clearly directed by a strategy of spatial integration that has had a very positive social impact.

Some initiatives of the Peñalosa administration that did not have their expected impact include the the "Bank of Land" program and the housing project Metrovivienda. The Metrovivienda project has proven to be quite inadequate in its ability to provide access to housing for the poorest sectors. Consequently, the goal of controlling illegal growth within the city has also failed. Furthermore, the project proposed housing typologies that reinforced the zonification of the city, and did not properly respond to the needs of inhabitants. The problem of housing remains an important issue that has not been adequately addressed by the city government.

Other important achievements of the administration were the consolidation of a culture of technocratic management<sup>25</sup> of public enterprises initiated by the Mockus administration, as well as a downward trend in urban violence caused in part by policies that emphasized prevention and social inclusion rather than authoritarian enforcement. Peñalosa has been, however, the target of critics that consider his imposition of a political agenda on the city authoritarian. His critics point out that during his period in office many initiatives of former administrations that promoted participation were deemphasized.

The objective of constructing public space as a tool for the creation of consensus did not originate with Peñalosa. Even though Antans Mockus' vision was in many ways different from Peñalosa's, the former mayor's projects for civic culture also focused on the collective creation of an image of the city, fostering a sense of collective belonging, and the construction of space for social interaction. The principle difference is that while Peñalosa's project aimed to transform the physical public space, Mockus' initiatives focused on modifying cultural and political behaviors. In Mockus' case, behavior in public spaces is expected to be modified, while in Peñalosa's, it is the public sphere itself that is meant to be reshaped.

Peñalosa, like his predecessor, was convinced that the solution to the city's problems would not be the result of good governance alone, but of social changes promoted by

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<sup>25</sup> By technocratic management it is understood that the administration of the city goes beyond ideological and political considerations.

the administration as well. His discourse on the city, which has been echoed in the local and international media, usually references the modification of social behavior as the way to achieve happiness and create a new way of life. In his inaugural speech Peñalosa addressed the creation of a life style “more ecological, more convivial, more equal, more artistic, more respectful of women, more sportive” (as cited in Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 1998). Such changes would be particularly focused on the improvement of the physical infrastructure of the city. This is one of the central premises of the former mayor’s discourse on public space, a discourse that was central to his most important policies. In his inaugural speech, for example, Peñalosa stated, “The essence of a civilized city is not highways or subways, but the quantity and quality of its pedestrian public space.” He continues, “we are going to make a crusade to recuperate a city for the pedestrian, a city that shows respect for him and that dignifies the human condition.” (Ibid).

According to Gerard Martin (2007), Bogotá successfully advanced social inclusion “by binding a broad sociological interpretation to the concept of mobility”. Beyond an assessment of the validity of such a statement,<sup>26</sup> it is important to highlight that the author’s claim is situated in Lewis Mumford’s vision of the city as a social institution. Martin suggests that the formulation of Bogotá’s urban policies is based in a vision of urban phenomena that does not see the city merely as a physical artifact but rather as a social institution. Such a definition of the city is essential to understanding the vision of public space that is at the heart of the Peñalosa administration’s urban policies. In Peñalosa’s vision, public space is conceived of as a pacified space for the pedestrian. It is understood as a space for consensus and conviviality; it is the space proper for the urban esthetics that configures the city. It is a space for the realization of citizenship and coexistence where relationships can be established. Public space is considered a place that both advances diversity and represents the essence for all manifestations of the human spirit. (Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 1998) This discourse on public space has found important echoes in the media and has been adopted by a variety of social sectors.

Peñalosa’s vision of public space, which corresponds to the established view of public space as the “civic representation of public good” (Joseph, 1999), contrasts with the more complex understandings found in the social sciences. Much of research done in urban sociology and urban anthropology illustrates that public space in urban societies set the stage for forms of sociability that are entirely different from those of pre-urban societies. Therefore public space is not considered a place of intersubjectivity. It is, rather, a device for the representation of the tension between distance and proximity. In his essay “Retomar la ciudad” which analyzes some of the most important aspects of the work of Georg Simmel, Erving Goffman and Gabriel Tarde, urban anthropologist Issac Joseph recalls that public space is the place of “tension between agreement and incomprehension as the basic condition of politics” (Ibid). Therefore the public space only produces “related and culturally fragmented identities” (Ibid). In that sense multiculturalism “is not the cohabitation of identities in a territory but communal accessibility” (Ibid). Public space would be in that sense an interrelational space that does not have anything to do with communal fraternities; a space “defined more by the work of a society itself than the result of legislation or an administration” (Ibid).

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<sup>26</sup> Our field work aims to observe the social dynamics of recently renovated public spaces. However, our observations have not lead to such optimistic conclusions.

Public space is not only a space marked by civility, circulation, communication and participation. It is also a place of neglect, indifference, reserve, resistance, revolt, protest, riot and turbulence.

Isaac Joseph writes that “research about the public good, circulation of goods and communication goods, are inseparable from (...) a necessary redefinition of the notions of public good and of common good in contemporary democracies” (Ibid). In the case of the Peñalosa administration this statement is particularly true. Peñalosa’s entire development plan involved a reflection on the meaning of the public good, especially considering that public space is the first of public goods. However, what Peñalosa’s discourse neglects to address is that public space is a product of collective efforts. In “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere”, Habermas proposes a definition of public space as the “domain of democratic controversy and the dynamic of a procedural ethic of communicational behavior,” (as cited in Joseph, 1999) its objective to create a social contract based on the free and public use of reason. Peñalosa’s unilateral vision of public space, justified by a discourse of democracy and drawn from the writing of Jane Jacobs, Henri Lefebvre and Richard Sennet among others (Martin, 2007) has served very different and contradictory purposes. It has justified social policy,<sup>27</sup> polemic transformations of urban land use<sup>28</sup>, and practices of social exclusion.<sup>29</sup>

### **Luis Eduardo Garzón**

The 2004 election of Luis Eduardo Garzón was undoubtedly a remarkable moment in the recent political history of Colombia. The mayorship of the Colombian capital is considered the second most important official position after the presidency, and Garzón was the first member of the political left to occupy the mayor’s office in Bogotá. This fact is relevant taking into account that, in contrast to the recent turn to the political left in most Latin-American countries, very conservative governments have been elected in Colombia’s recent past. Garzón was elected two years after the 2002 election of Alvaro Uribe Velez, the conservative and very popular sitting president of Colombia.

Beyond the political significance of the election of a former union leader to one of Colombia’s most important public offices, there were two noteworthy consequences of Garzón administration. First, he showed that the left could responsibly govern the

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<sup>27</sup> “The demarginalization of poor neighborhoods, the construction of educational centers, libraries and recreational centers in peripheral districts are the best examples.

<sup>28</sup> See the case of the “Tercer Milenio Park” described in the next chapter.

<sup>29</sup> Bogotá, like many Latin American metropolises, has an important number of people who work in the informal sector. This sector presents a very complex situation of the appropriation of public space as many people make a living engaging in commercial activity in the streets. During the Peñalosa government the response of the administration was to prohibit the presence of ambulant vendors in public spaces, who then became systematically targeted by the police. This measure, which was accompanied by social programming that could meet the needs of the high number of vendors, temporarily solved the problem of this “invasion” of public space but did not offer real solutions to the problem of unemployment .

city. Secondly, he managed to maintain popular support through his four years in office. Throughout his administration Garzón enjoyed the highest approval ratings of any of the city's last few mayors, and the left successfully kept control of the mayorship of Bogotá in the 2007 mayoral elections.

Garzón's administration faced early criticism and doubt from the city's elites as well as the media; many feared that the left was going to put an end to the achievements of the former administrations. Garzón was criticized for using a discourse that focused on social stratification in the city. In addition, he faced tensions within his own party and it was thought that his development plan would be hindered by the nation's neoliberal economy. Taking into account their success and failures, the end results of Garzón's administration was very positive. Garzón set in motion a great deal of important social programs, though he did not make significant changes in the city's economic policies. This gave political and economic elites confidence in Garzón, which allowed him to deal with political obstacles rooted in ideological differences with the establishment.

Garzón detached himself from the revolutionary and populist left, connecting his government more to the social democratic tradition. According to Alan Gilbert (2008b), democracy, globalization and neoliberalism transformed politics in Latin America. Therefore, for certain movements within the political left, "the objective of revolution has been replaced by the gradual and consensual search for changes in the fight against poverty and social inequality" (Gilbert, 2008b). The Garzón administration defined a development plan that focused on the fight against inequality and exclusion, but did not propose radical changes in terms of taxation and redistribution.

The administration's development plan proposed three strategies that aimed to "build a modern and human Bogotá, free of indifference, united, participatory, decentralized, and engaged with the promotion of new citizen values, the expansion of democracy, reconciliation, and a decrease in social polarization. Other goals included a closing of the gap between the rich and the poor, the eradication of corruption, the generation of employment, and the improvement of the city's income and productivity" (Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 2004). The main objectives of the development plan were the achievement of peace, the satisfaction of the basic needs of every citizen, and the realization of every citizen's political, social, economic and cultural rights. The other primary aims were the promotion of a healthy environment, an efficient administration, and the consolidation of a developed political and territorial region. According to these objectives, the principles that guide the plan include solidarity, autonomy, diversity, equality, participation and integrity. (ibid)

The government plan corresponds with a vision of the city based in the protection of human rights and complemented by a process of community and institution strengthening. This vision aimed to rapidly establish the conditions necessary for an effective and sustainable exercise of human rights (ibid). Therefore, the Garzón administration was close to what political scientist Benjamin Goldfrank defines as "the basic formula for what is known as the 'petista' model of government that includes three main elements: popular participation, divestment of priorities and transparency" (as cited in Gilbert, 2008b). Similar to other previously cited cases, the development plan makes subtle references to the economic aspects of managing the

city. There are references to competition as a necessary condition to promoting development, as well a rather populist statement that refers to collective production and the appropriation of wealth. Indeed, the macroeconomic management of the city during this period was very similar to that of previous administrations, including support for the Chamber of Commerce's efforts to increase competition.

The three components of Garzon's development plan concerned the social aspects of the city's development, the capital's relations with the rest of the region, and the process of socio-political reconciliation. The three components shared a common objective: the human public management of the city. For each competent of the development plan, there were particular objectives that were translated into policies, strategies and programs.

### The Social Component

The social component aimed to create sustainable conditions for the effective exercising of political, social, economic rights. The purpose was to improve the quality of life, to reduce poverty and inequality, and to boost autonomous and cooperative development. The priority was to create better conditions for the groups, communities, and people living in vulnerable conditions, and to promote social inclusion through the creation of opportunities and employment as well as the collective production and appropriation of wealth (Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 2004).

### Programs

- Bogotá Sin Hambre<sup>30</sup>
- Increased and improved education
- "Health for a dignified life"
- Reestablishment of social and political rights
- Zero tolerance for abuse, begging, and child labor
- "Bogotá with Equal Opportunities for Women"
- Instruction and opportunities for the creation of income and employment
- The city as a space for learning
- Recreation and sports for everyone
- A culture of social inclusion

### The Urban-Regional Component

The main objective of the urban-regional component was to advance the promotion of collective rights, equality and social inclusion through the consolidation of the city. The model proposed was meant to be modern, sustainable, ecological, balanced in infrastructure, integrated into its territory, competitive and the product of a participatory society (Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 2004).

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<sup>30</sup> <sup>30</sup> "Bogotá sin hambre" was the leading social program of the Garzón administration. The main objective of the program was to reduce malnutrition. The program provided proper nutrition to 670.000 people including poor children, handicapped persons, and the elderly. Over 280 restaurants served meals everyday in the poorest sectors of the city, and thousands of students received healthy meals at school. In addition, a network of food distribution, which included donations from large chains, reduced the cost of food for the poorest sectors, and created a source of revenue for small producers who directly sold their products.

## Programs

- Construction of habitat at the district level
- Networks of urban centralities
- Urban and rural sustainability
- Integration of regional development
- “Productive Bogotá”

## The Reconciliation Component

Reconciliation, the reduction of urban violence and the enhancement of social cohesion, was the third aspect of Garzon’s development plan. It was meant to be the product of public institutionalism and civic organizations. This combination was intended to create the conditions for a culture of solidarity, social inclusion and participation. At the same time, reconciliation was considered to be the foundation for a society that respects both human rights and justice. Accountability was considered an instrument of civic empowerment against violence such that civic participation, along with public management, might become the foundation for a sustainable peace (Alcaldía mayor de Bogotá, 2004).

## Programs

- “Peaceful Solution of Conflicts”
- “Human Rights For All”
- Attention to the populations most vulnerable to violence (e.g. refugees and ex-combatants) from a human rights and International Humanitarian Law (IHL) perspective
- An improved justice system in the city
- “Communication for Reconciliation”
- Multi-dimensional treatment of violence
- “Municipal Reconciliation Network”
- “Participation in Decisions”
- “Communication for Participation”
- Governance and territorial administration of the city
- Economic inclusion
- Projects focused on civic participation

Although his administration was politically moderate and today Garzón is more likely to be positioned at the center of Colombia’s political spectrum, his management of the city is considered to be an example of a government led by the political left. He refused to privatize public enterprises and education, while healthcare received a significant amount of the budget and policies to combat inequality and exclusion were undertaken. In addition, Garzón’s cultural policies defined more inclusive spaces of representation. During his administration the municipality assumed the management of national public hospitals, which the national government could not afford. At the



same time his positions on certain issues<sup>31</sup> that earned his predecessors an authoritarian reputation, were more conciliatory.

Education and health were the sectors where Garzón's administration made the greatest impact. In the sector of education, the city's achievements included the significant increase in the student capacity of public schools, a decrease in the number of school dropouts, and an increase in the opportunities for free education, as well as financial aid for children attending these schools. The health sector, on the other hand, was the focus of important improvements including the construction of three new municipal hospitals, an increase in the number of citizens eligible for subsidized healthcare, and the enormous success of the program "Bogotá sin hambre."

As a number of successful policies from former administrations were maintained, other aspects of the city's governance continued to present positive results. Public services maintained the same standards, while coverage improved and a special effort was made to reduce the price of water. In terms of security the rates of violence continued to decrease (although at a slower pace) and spending on security increased considerably. The finances of the city were well managed, and improved efficiency in tax collection allowed for growth in the city's income even though taxes were not raised. In terms of the management of public space, decisions taken were the object of controversy. For example, the administration attempted to regulate street sales; even though these sales remained forbidden, authorities were much more tolerant than previous administrations.

Aspects of Garzón's administration that presented negative or disappointing outcomes included the city's social housing policy, Bogotá's integration with the rest of the region, and mobility. In the first two cases, the city has historically had problems finding viable solutions. During the administration of Enrique Peñalosa the authorities tried to advance both the provision of social housing as well as the creation of a metropolitan area. In the first case, the model proposed did not succeed<sup>32</sup>, and in the second case, there have been many bureaucratic obstacles. Little was done to effect change in these areas during the Garzón administration. Mobility was clearly the subject most overlooked. During the 2004 - 2008 period, there were no specific initiatives focused on improving mobility. Although the Transmilenio system continued to expand, the deterioration of the roads network and the attention given to informal transport was heavily criticized. An advancement in the creation of a unified transport system was delayed, and only the current administration has assumed the responsibility for finding a solution.

The biggest success of the Garzón administration was undoubtedly the priority given to social programs, and efforts made to make these programs more visible. According to the mayor's investment plan, 60% of the budget was allocated for the

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<sup>31</sup> Garzón's positions on the occupation of public space by street vendors and public transport were objects of criticism. While the problem of street hawking/vendors (found some solutions- was solved/addressed), the attention given to mobility problems is considered to be one of the greatest failures of the Garzón administration.

<sup>32</sup> See the description of "Metrovivienda" in the previous chapter.

social components of the city's development plan. In addition, his administration showed that the city could spend more on the defense of people's rights, give continuity to the preceding administrations' successful projects, and at the same time effectively manage public finances. The Garzón administration was recognized for its efficiency and integrity, and for having improved the quality of life for the poorest sectors. Garzón's mayorship supports the idea of Goldfrank (as cited in Gilbert, 2008b) that the left "can govern better than its adversaries by introducing policies that improve the quality of life of the poorest members of society, while reinforcing the collective capacities of the poor". Some of Garzón's decisions allowed him to have friendly relations with the conservative national government and the city elites, which could be criticized by more radical sectors of the political left. His administration did not make taxes more progressive, subsidies were not augmented substantially, and the conditions for foreign investment were not made more stringent. The scope of his ambitious social program as well as his pragmatic fiscal management of the city allowed Garzón to successfully govern the city, to advance the creation of a more equal and unified society, and to successfully engage diverse social sectors in the objectives of the government plan.

### 3 - Urbanism and the urban in Bogotá

Nothing is more usual in the history of a public space than the "work of revision or of reinvention", writes Isaac Joseph (1999). That is to say, the city is a space of sustained political action, or, as it is proposed by urban researcher Carlos Mario Yory, a "stage of power...the space where power is not only established, but where it is put into play, transforming and at the same time defining its own reality". Therefore, Yory continues, "governing and designing, in the case of cities, is to know how to structure the space of cities; it is to know how to structure the space of possibility and accomplishment of every subject". (Yori, 2000)

If the city is the stage of power, it is consequently the space of tension between the discourses of urbanism and the multiple discourses of the urban. Urbanism in this case is understood, as it is proposed by the Catalan anthropologist Manuel Delgado, as a tool of the *polis*, the city administration, that aims to determine or at least to control the space, to architecturalize it under the premise that it can be conflict free and a channel for a clear and unique discourse. The urban on the other hand, is understood as the work of a society itself, work that takes place precisely in the public space. Henri Lefebvre describes the urban as "a radical form of social space, the setting and product of the collective creating itself, a deterritorialized territory where there are not objects but diagrammatic relations between objects, loops, ties defined by a constant state of excitement" (as cited in Delgado, 2004).

By accepting the distinction proposed by Lefebvre, one of our central research hypotheses was that in the case of the three studied sites in Bogotá, the Tercer Milenio Park, Jimenez Avenue, and El Tintal District, the constant tension between the city as projected by experts (town planners and politicians) and the city as experienced by inhabitants would be observable. We expected to find a tension

between a vision of the city materialized in a pacified public space<sup>33</sup> and the multiple visions of *the urban*: a space in motion that is made and unmade constantly, a place of ephemeral and unpredicted appropriations. An unexpected finding in our fieldwork was that the inhabitants in Bogotá's urban space, that is, its social space, seem to have accepted and even appropriated the discourses of urbanism widely spread by the media and official propaganda. We do not suggest here that Bogotá's urban space has become the conflict free space politicians dream of; indeed, when people repeat the political speech they often do so in contradictory ways. Regardless, it is very surprising to observe the extent to which political speech has permeated the discourse of the quotidian. However, this can be easily explained by the different administrations' use of marketing techniques to publicize their policies. This is a critical aspect that forces one to question the role of communication and urban marketing in the local and international construction of the image of Bogotá, a city that has become the center of considerable debate.

## 4 - A Mystified Discourse

One of the positive aspects of Bogotá's process of transformation is that the city has become the focus of study for many Colombian and international researchers. The number of critical works, publications and research centers engaged with the study of Bogotá's urban phenomena is surprising. Indeed, it is a radical change that has brought academics into the political, sociological, and technical debates about the planning of the city. Unfortunately most of the findings of this research remain unknown to the public. Although these findings contribute to the political debate and can have influence in urban planning circles, they do not help to create critical and collective discourses on the city. The production of these discourses remains controlled by politicians and experts who can count on the support of the media.

If the real causes of transformation in Bogotá are a series of profound political and social changes, it is also true that in a certain way these transformations are the consequence of a fortunate sequence of events. These events have not been free of controversy and contradiction, and merit deeper analysis. Our research has attempted to describe the complexities that have defined the city's development in the last twenty years. We have seen, for example, that even in the urban plan of the city (POT), which is supposed to summarize the city model the authorities imagine, there are major contradictions and conflicts of interest. The plan has been the subject of numerous, controversies and debates, and has undergone two revisions in less than ten years. Therefore the coherence of Bogotá's transformation process seems to be the product of discourses constructed a posteriori that target particular interests. The attempts of certain sectors to present Bogotá as a model are thus particularly questionable. Bogotá's transformations have generally produced positive results and there are certainly lessons to draw from the city's experience. However, it is also evident that the city's experience has been shaped by a series of isolated political actions that have been marked by conflict. Even though the political discourses and

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<sup>33</sup> Delgado (2004) proposes a definition of a pacified public space that must "ultimately guarantee mobility, serve as an instrument for the proclamation of official memory, and remain submitted to permanent control"

communication strategies aim to give coherence to the city's complex development, it is clear that Bogotá's transformations are not the product of a coherent model designed for the city. They must instead be understood as the result of a variety of causes and effects.

## 5 - The Marketing of Bogotá

Georges Benko (2000) writes that the geopolitical classification of cities is a logical consequence of the need for increased competition between localities in a globalized world. Further, the power gained by municipalities due to decentralization policies has made development a local issue.<sup>34</sup> The search for optimal conditions and environments for productive activities determines competition between territories. Thus, the problem of the attractiveness of cities arises; that is, the capacity of a city to attract investors, tourists, and new residents, is determined by different factors including the physical (infrastructure and public services), the economic (local taxes, labor conditions and land prices) and the demographic (qualified work force) among others. In addition to these aspects, Benko argues that other criteria like "the image, the identity or the representations of the urban space play a determinant role." He continues, "In that sense, the cultural, urbanistic or social local policies can participate in the economic development of the city or the region." (Benko, 2000) Consequently the "communication campaigns of territorial entities are generalized" (Ibid) and cities become products for consumption that are then advertised. Benko writes, "The fact that a region or a commune creates an image for the public, and that they use instruments of communication such as slogans or logos is no longer strange" (Ibid).

Beyond the political and demagogic discourses, Bogotá's recent transformations must be understood as part of a broader strategy to improve local competitiveness and productivity. The city necessarily competes in the global market and has thus launched its own marketing crusade. American anthropologists Ida Susser and Janet Schneider argue that globalization can present unique opportunities for cities in distress (Susser & Schneider, 2003). They write, "In cities torn apart by violence and war, globalized processes, far from being the principal or obvious source of devastation, may actually present themselves as a part of the solution, a path to the restoration of urban health" (Ibid). This is indeed the case in Colombia, where an inarguable truth has been accepted in national planning circles-- foreign investment and economic opening are important instruments in promoting social and economic development. Marketing both Bogotá and Colombia as worthwhile places to invest has accordingly become an important priority in the local and national economic agenda.

Since the Colombian capital is a city that very recently might have been considered what Susser and Schneider (2003) call a "blessed city", the problem of image holds particular interest. This distinction is used to identify cities marked by high levels of crime, civil war or natural disaster. Susser and Schneider explain that "In order to attract tourists and new investments, these cities have to recreate themselves like

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<sup>34</sup> The concept of "competitive cities" and its implications for contemporary urban planning will be further explored in this text.

merchandise, investing particularly in the representation of their image” (As cited in Cedric, 2005). Although Bogotá’s recent efforts go far beyond attempts to transform its image, it is clear that the problem of representation still constitutes a major concern for city authorities. This is especially true as changing the perceptions of Bogotá as a violent and chaotic city, even among local residents, has been particularly challenging. In a 2002 article, Colombian social researcher Armando Silva (2002) cites a survey done by the Chilean business magazine *América Economía* that ranks the best cities to conduct business on the continent. The survey ranked Bogotá 13<sup>th</sup> among the 34 most competitive cities in Latin America.<sup>35</sup> The survey compiled data regarding the cost of living, infrastructure and the effects of violence in each city, along with the impact of strategic commerce in the region. In addition, the survey examined the perceptions of these different cities by interviewing 500 Latin American executives. Although Bogotá was highly ranked in all the indicators, the interviewed executives, who had knowledge of the city’s real data, answered unanimously that Bogotá was the city they would not live in under any circumstances. This reflects that despite the considerable efforts the city has made to improve urban life, Bogotá has had the particular challenge of reshaping its international image.

Under these circumstances, Bogotá’s entry into the global market as well as its persistent problematic image, urban marketing has become a useful tool for local authorities to improve the international image and competitiveness of the city. In addition, administrations have also found value in these communication strategies on the political level. The exercise of politics in the city has been mediated by communication practices that tend to combine territorial marketing with other forms of marketing, including political, economic, and social. Of course, Bogotá does not represent a unique case. Benko (2000) explains that territorial marketing, which is meant to promote a local entity, is usually connected by journalists and politicians to other forms of political marketing. This amalgamation is a product of the fact that political actors use territorial marketing as a political tool.<sup>36</sup>

Bogotá’s success story has received a lot of attention in the local and international media as well as in urban planning circles. Clearly a good part of the publicity comes from local government, which profits politically from such recognition, from local economic groups that expect to increase their competitiveness at the national and international levels, and lastly from partnerships between the public and private sector. In addition, multilateral credit organizations and development banks are able to use successful cases to promote the benefits of a neoliberal model. Therefore a large part of the information reproduced about Bogotá, and more generally about the city’s urban planning and public management, responds to particular political and economic interests, is of an ideological nature and corresponds to simplifications in the corporate media<sup>37</sup>. In contrast to Bogotá’s complex reality, as well as the findings of

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<sup>35</sup> According to the same review the city is today ranked in 6th place.

<sup>36</sup> “Instead of promoting a territory, marketing valorizes and justifies the actions and projects of the different candidates” (Benko, 2000).

<sup>37</sup> The press usually presents the city as a model of sustainable design and urban development, its transformations the work of two heroic mayors which stands in contrast to a country at war.

recent critical scholarship, what is often presented in press articles, publications and exhibitions concerning the city is a simplified exaltation of the most visible results of the last administrations. An attempt to give coherence to a variety of particular actions is also found, a kind of retroactive manifesto.

## 5.1 - The Local Scene

At the local level the image of the city is principally shaped by political speech that, in consensus with the local elites, is continuously presented in the media in a simplified manner, often in the form of slogans. The administrations of the city have systematically used the three kinds of urban marketing practices outlined by Marc Dumont and Laurent Devisme (2006) in their article “Les métamorphoses du marketing urbain.” They define these practices as economic (the attraction of investors and tourists), political (urban actions replace or are tied to the political agenda) and social (the construction of a collective imaginary).<sup>38</sup>

Argentinean publicist Angel Beccassino (2003) explains that the word slogan comes from ancient Scotland, where “sluagh-ghairm” signified the war cry of a clan, “the cry where the argument is substituted for the affirmation.” Simplification, an important aspect of political marketing usually associated with electoral marketing, has become characteristic of the political exercise in Bogotá. Mexican publicist Eulalio Ferrer writes that “we have passed from the class struggle to a phrase struggle, that is, from the doctrine to the slogan, from the program to the advertisement, from the semantic to the esthetic” (Ferrer, as cited in Beccassino, 2003). The search for consensus around the policies of each administration has compelled city authorities to rely strongly on communication practices and narratives that very often reduce political debate to the transmission of simplified messages. Indeed each of the last administrations has been identified with what urban researcher Paul Bromberg (2008) calls a brand:<sup>39</sup> Mockus (civil culture), Peñalosa (public space), and Garzón (social inclusion). A good example is described in Bromberg’s 2008 article “Bogota, un gobierno sin marca”. He explains that the media in Bogotá perceived an anomaly during the first months of Samuel Moreno’s current administration that, according to the author, was not diagnosed

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<sup>38</sup> According to the authors, urban marketing designs refer to “all the practices of territorial communication which consist of relying on (existing or under construction) spatial artifacts with the aim of promoting them, of making them exist, of making them attractive and of inciting their use, so that people invest in them time, leisure, and capital. The work of *mise en scène* of the city, of its spaces and of its projects, is placed at the center of three kinds of practice (Dummont, 1999): economic – when they aim to commercialize new constructed spaces and to attract enterprises or tourists; political – when the *mise en scène* of the city substitutes or is wisely tied to the *mise en scène* of a report of a municipal action (Lussaut, 1995); or social – when the work on the image of the city is, therefore, meant to contribute to the creation of relations of belonging for inhabitants, visitors, etc” (Dumont & Devisme, 2006).

<sup>39</sup> In addition, a narrative of competitiveness that justifies the economic agenda constitutes a discourse common to all the administrations beyond their political or ideological differences. This is due to the fact that the national government determines the conditions for capital appreciation, both in terms of competitiveness and risk management. Therefore local governments and planners do not have the tools to transform economic policies that are highly linked to contemporary urban management (De Mattos, 2009).

correctly. Bromberg argues that this anomaly was represented by the fact that Moreno's administration could not be identified with a brand. He writes, "The mayor is everywhere, he attends the launching of new programs and inaugurations and attends to the delivery of goods and services...yet there is not a subject that unifies his discourse." After four municipal administrations clearly identified with particular discourses and programs, which were the focus of targeted publicity, the local media perceived as an anomaly the fact that the new government did not present itself with a particular discourse or a very precise label (which clearly does not mean that the administration did not have a political agenda).

The communication dynamics established between the administration and the public, which have been largely mediated by the press, impose a way of communicating that privileges the transmission of clear discourses and overly simplified messages. This is problematic because government accountability depends on the administration's commitment to communicate its actions and projects, but this information must be complete, opportune, and comprehensible.

The problem with this sort of "branding" of politics is that the promotion of political activity is reduced to a problem of communication (conceived as advertisement) that reduces enormously the quality and possibility for public debate and civic participation. Slogans may be useful in attracting voters and improving the government's ratings in the polls; they can even be valuable in transmitting pedagogic messages, as seen in the civic culture projects of Antanas Mockus. However, in terms of reinforcing the public sphere and promoting political participation, which should be the main objectives in publicizing a government's plans and actions, the communication strategies of the last administrations have proven to be a failure. According to Maria Teresa Garcés (2008) 2007 polls conducted by *Bogotá Como Vamos* illustrated that participation was practically nonexistent. The polls found that a high percentage of people claimed to not know or to not have heard of the various participatory spaces or social associations in the city (Garcés, 2008).

The consequences of a weak public space are a principal concern of Fernando Viviescas. A few years ago this important Colombian urban researcher warned that Bogotá represented "the enlightened reinstallation of the old regime", that is, "the re-establishment of (messianic, educated, and omnipotent) administrators who resolve people's problems while the citizens are expected to simply obey" (Viviescas, 2001). The author refers to the 1998-2002 period when the emerging changes in urban planning policies were just beginning to develop and show results. Viviescas considered making sense of these changes a cultural and political necessity. The inclusion of the greatest number of citizens in this process was considered essential in order to protect the transformation process from traditional dominant interests. This reflection makes more sense if we take into account that the hope of overcoming the urban crisis in Bogotá and elsewhere is centered on reinforcing citizens' participation and strengthening the exercise and construction of public space. Regrettably, the empowerment of social sectors in Bogotá's case has had a lesser impact when compared to the empowerment of private actors. While many urban projects and most public services have undergone different kinds of privatization, participation levels in social and civic movements remains very low.

The local elites, including media owners, have found in their association with city authorities a sure path towards increased competitiveness, as well as an important source of business opportunities. Therefore the private sector's participation in the construction of discourses on the city directs urban development towards particular interests. A great number of real estate operations, public-private partnerships and privatizations (which in some cases are clearly in contradiction with the public interest) are justified by discourses that appeal to the general welfare. The announced decentralization of the municipal government, in Bogotá's case, is represented by a public agenda seemingly driven by the partnership<sup>40</sup> between the local government, the chamber of commerce and the corporate media.<sup>41</sup>

A real engagement with the strengthening of governance in the city necessitates the strengthening of an engaged participatory society. Bogotá has advanced in the creation of a democratic and more just society. One of the city's greatest challenges today is promoting the political engagement of all social sectors. The quality of communication between city authorities and the public is tremendously important in the strengthening of public space.

## 5.2 - The International Scene

Internationally, the image of Bogotá is shaped by discourses that describe the city as the stage for a "radical transformation process," the product of "innovative urban development policies, (...) spectacular physical interventions, (...) an excellent public administration", and "creative programs of civil culture." The city's urbanistic culture is defined as a set of practices that "transcend the traditional discourses of town planning" and have redefined "the process of building the city," not only as a physical space but also in "social and mental terms" (Escovar et al, 2007). This international image of the city is a product of the local government's marketing efforts, in association with the private sector, urban planning circles, the international media, international cooperation agencies, development banks and international credit organizations.

## 5.3 - The Marketing of the Local Government and Elites

The most important marketing agency of the city, *Invest in Bogotá*, is a public-private partnership between the city and the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce. This initiative aims to both encourage tourism and attract direct private foreign investment. Through

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<sup>40</sup> The existence of a sort of parallel political agenda, in which the concerns of the economic sector and the authorities' are aligned, has already been discussed.

<sup>41</sup> One of the most well known tools of accountability that exists in Bogotá is the project *Bogotá Como Vamos*. This project periodically conducts a survey of inhabitants' views of public affairs in Bogotá. This poll is an initiative of *El Tiempo*, Colombia's most important newspaper, the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce and the Corona Foundation, another private organization. The project is valuable as it provides a useful public source of information on many aspects that affect the city and covers a variety of important issues. However, the results of the survey that receive the most attention and coverage in the media are those that directly interest the promoters of the survey. Recently the survey has proven to be a tool for placing pressure on political leaders.



an international promotion of the city based on a strategy of urban competitiveness,<sup>42</sup> Bogotá entered the world city network and the global system of production based on hubs and networks. This international marketing strategy reproduces the concept of creating attractiveness through differentiation and specialization. Efforts to increase the city's competitiveness have proven to be effective: according to *América Economía* Bogotá is today considered the 6<sup>th</sup> best city in Latin America to do business.

The promotion of the city through the initiative *Invest in Bogotá* perfectly illustrates how Bogotá's urban development has been planned in terms of entering the global economy. The marketing strategies of the city reveal that competitiveness is a primary goal. It is the same discourse of international planning that is oriented towards international trade and the liberalization of markets led by the private sector. Such discourse is usually presented in municipal development plans, though it is generally framed as a concern for general welfare that is central to contemporary urban planning discourse. Competitiveness is presented as a way to boost job creation, to generate new productive activities, and to improve the quality of urban life. However, according to some Latin American researchers the impact of this model in the region has produced rather negative results (Brand, 2009; De Mattos, 2009; Betancur, 2009; Pradilla, 2009). The authors mention the increase in unemployment, the terciarization of the economy, the relaxation of labor regimes and modifications in the organization, functioning and morphology of cities that have consequences on the emergence of new forms of social exclusion.

The negative impact for Latin American cities shaped according to the economic paradigm implicit in contemporary urban planning has certainly been subject to debate and controversy. Bogotá seems to be, in many senses an exception in the region. Despite its uniqueness, the non-populist discourse of Bogotá's marketing agencies reveals that the real interests behind the narrative of competitiveness are guided by the same economic paradigm (with an equally negative impact in certain aspects). According to *Invest in Bogotá*, foreign investors can benefit from one of the most flexible labor regimes in Latin America as well as competitive salaries,<sup>43</sup> tax deductions, trustworthy investor protection and a rising economy with only 436,000 unemployed people (11.3% of the work force) and 1.2 million underemployed<sup>44</sup> citizens (*Invest in Bogotá*, 2009).

Other favorable reasons to invest in the city include:

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<sup>42</sup> Under this model cities become everyday more important for the global economy; they also become the preferred place for the strengthening of governmental legitimacy (Brand, 2009). That model implies some general tendencies for the urban development of Latin American cities that will be analyzed further, taking into account the role they play in Bogotá and the particular recent development of the city.

<sup>43</sup> Though authorities consider national salaries competitive, in reality the country's labor force remains very precarious and workers are remunerated with a very low monthly minimum wage of US\$ 227.

<sup>44</sup> Underemployment according to *Invest in Bogotá* (2009) refers to "those formally employed who consider they can earn more, work more hours or better apply their skills."

“Bogotá’s economy is larger than that of many countries... Bogotá’s strategic location and the numerous daily direct flights to major cities in the hemisphere make Bogotá an excellent location to serve the Americas... Bogotá has an abundant supply of offices and land at competitive costs... Bogotá is not only one of the safest metropolises in Latin America, but is rated as one of the best places for doing business... More than 800 multinational companies are located here... Beyond business, in Bogotá you will find cultural and gastronomical diversity... The city has more than 4000 public parks, and the largest bike route network in Latin America... In Bogotá you will be able to incorporate your business in two days... There are attractive investment incentives such as permanent and company-specific free trade zones, legal stability contracts, income tax deductions, exemptions from VAT and ICA for the exports of goods and services, and free training programs, among others” (Invest in Bogotá, 2009).

Beyond these convincing arguments, the testimony of satisfied investors and the international media also serves as evidence: “It’s not just the facts and statistics: satisfied investors and journalists from all over the world eloquently refer to Bogotá as a choice place to live and invest” (Ibid).

## **6 - The International Media and Bogotá**

As the urban and political landscape of Bogotá has transformed in the past decade, the international media has turned its gaze to the streets of the Colombian city. From New York to London, Paris to Johannesburg, the foreign press increasingly reports on the changing dynamics of Bogotá. The city’s impressive development, as well as its evolving political and social discourse, has gained the attention of major newspapers throughout the world. Though the coverage varies in perspective and scope, a number of distinct themes emerge in the articles written about Bogotá in the last decade. In the international media, the city is often described as model for urban development, an inspiration for other cities facing similar challenges. Bogotá serves as a paradigm for both vibrant civic engagement and sustainable design. Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa, two former mayors of Bogotá, have also emerged as distinct characters in the city’s narrative of transformation, descriptions of their personalities and visions sometimes overshadowing the complicated nature of their efforts. Bogotá’s achievements are almost always set against the backdrop of Colombia’s recent history of conflict, the city cast as an exceptional site of progress and peace. Finally, the international media generally focuses on the positive stories of citizens impacted by the city’s development, creating a romantic, often incomplete narrative.

### **Bogotá as Global Model**

Much of the international media praises Bogotá as Bogotá as a model for the future of the developing world. As cities in South America, Asia, and Africa continue to grow at rapid rates, the challenges they face grow increasingly difficult. Much of the foreign press describes Bogotá as a promising framework for sustainable transport and

design. Indeed, “the city has provided a model of how international programs to combat climate change can help expanding cities pay for transit systems that would otherwise be unaffordable.”<sup>45</sup>

Emissions for cars, buses, and vehicles account for a rapidly growing component of gases linked to global warming, and though emissions from industry are decreasing, those linked to transportation are expected to rise globally by more than 50 percent by 2030.<sup>46</sup>

Bogotá’s Transmilenio has drawn particular attention as a public transportation system that improves traffic flow, while reducing pollution at a fraction of the cost of building a metro. Indeed, by 2005, there was a 32% reduction in commute times and a 40% decrease in air pollution, according to one study.<sup>47</sup> Versions of the system have been built in developing cities around the world, including Mexico City, Jakarta, and Beijing, and more are being planned in Delhi, Seoul, and Johannesburg.<sup>48</sup>

The city’s transformations are also represented in the media as an inspiration to the developed world. From New York to London, citizens are calling on politicians and architects to study Bogotá as a model of urbanism for the future. As Charles Montgomery writes in *The Globe and Mail*, the city is “being championed by planners and politicians in North America, where Mr. Peñalosa has reinvigorated the debate about public space once championed by Jane Jacobs.”<sup>49</sup> In a *Guardian* editorial, James Wolfensohn argues that the United States must take the opportunity to lead in green urban planning. He calls for the approval of PanNYC, a \$537 million grant that would make New York City “an environmentally sustainable megacity.” He warns, “If the US does not act soon, American cities will lag behind not only European capital, but also cities in developing countries such as Bogotá and Curitiba (Brazil), which are already implementing innovative environmentally friendly solutions.”<sup>50</sup>

In the summer of 2008, Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City introduced the “Summer Streets Project,” an initiative that was closely modeled after Bogotá’s Ciclovía, an initiative that closes down the capital’s main streets to traffic on Sundays and holidays all year round. Though the “Summer Streets Project” began as an experiment, seven miles of Manhattan closed to car traffic for six hours on three consecutive Saturdays, the results were impressive.<sup>51</sup> Like the avenues of Bogotá on a Sunday morning, the streets were filled with pedestrians and cyclists, jugglers and musicians. And shortly after, *The New York Times* published a staff editorial, “Putting the Park in Park Avenue” describing the wonders of a car-free Manhattan. The editors write, “Without honking horns and speeding taxis, the streets became serene parks, open to throngs of cyclists, in-line skaters and strollers.” Noting the great success of Bogotá’s Ciclovía, they argue that New Yorkers must also “vote with their

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<sup>45</sup> Rosenthal, Elisabeth. “Buses May Aid Climate Battle in Poor Cities.” *New York Times*, July 9, 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Rosenthal, 2009.

<sup>47</sup> Woo, Michael and Christian Peters. “An Above-Ground Solution for Wilshire Traffic,” *LA Times*, November 18, 2006.

<sup>48</sup> Montgomery, Charles. “Bogotá’s Urban Happiness Movement.” *The Globe and Mail*, April 3, 2009.

<sup>49</sup> Montgomery, 2009.

<sup>50</sup> Wolfensohn, James D. “The Greening of New York.” *The Guardian*, August 8, 2007.

<sup>51</sup> “Manhattan to Ban Cars in Summer” *BBC News*, July 18, 2008.

feet- in favor of more chances to displace the cars, trucks and taxis for a day, and go for a stroll.”<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, two urbanists write to the *Los Angeles Times*, criticize the city’s efforts to expand the subway system at the expense of rapid bus transit in Los Angeles. The authors site Bogotá as a model, writing “Local officials now considering the fate of the bus lane ought to look at how Bogotá, Colombia- a metropolis of nearly 7 million residents—tackled its traffic problems...”<sup>53</sup> After describing the innovative changes in the Colombian Capital, including a 300 mile system of bus lanes, bicycle paths and pedestrian streets, the writers conclude, “ The success in Bogotá has shown that bus rapid transit is a proven solution for moving people efficiently.”<sup>54</sup>

Finally, Bogotá is described as a model for the international community, because as Martin Wiseman argues the city inspires healthy living and well being. A medical adviser at the World Cancer Research Fund, Wiseman writes that a city’s design can promote the physical health of its residents, a critical concern in the face of increasing rates of cancer and diseases. In his *BBC* editorial, “Make London like Bogotá,” he contends that public health and urban design are essentially linked; where pedestrians, cyclists, and public space are considered a priority, residents are more likely to take to the road and stay physically fit. Wiseman concludes, “This is why when it comes to our attitude to public space, we in the UK need to become a bit more like Bogotá.”<sup>55</sup>

## **Mockus and Peñalosa: Characters in a Narrative of Urban Change**

### **Violence and War, Urbanism in Contrast**

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the media’s fixation on Bogotá is that the city’s achievements are nearly always painted against the backdrop of Colombia’s national conflict. The changing landscape of the capital is rarely described without first recounting the bombs that once tore apart the city, the violence of guerillas and paramilitary groups, and the abandoned farms of the countryside. Bogotá is understood essentially for its exceptionalism, persistently described in the media as a “miracle,”<sup>56</sup> a beacon of hope amid the terror of war.

Many articles refer to Bogotá’s own violent history as a reflection of how far the capital has come. In the *New York Times*’ “Conflict Rages, but Capital Basks in Good Times,” Juan Forero writes that there was little hope in the city’s future for many years: “In the early 1990’s, Bogotá was a basket case. Traffic made short trips grueling. Crime was increasing out of control. Refugees were streaming in.

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<sup>52</sup> Staff Editorial. “Putting the Park in Park Avenue,” *New York Times*, August 11, 2008.

<sup>53</sup> Woo and Peralta, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Woo and Peralta, 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Wiseman, Martin. 2009. “Make London like Bogotá.” *BBC News*, June 24, 2009.

<sup>56</sup> Wilson, Scott. “Bogotá: An Island in a Land at War.” *Washington Post*, September 6, 2002.

Development was hamstrung by corruption.”<sup>57</sup> Mauricio Rodriguez, editor of the Colombian newspaper *Portfolio*, makes similar remarks about this period in the city’s history. He reflects, “Ten or twelve years ago, Bogotá was a disaster. There was a lack of infrastructure and there were security and safety problems. There as no optimism in relation to the future.”<sup>58</sup> In another piece, “Bogotá, An Island at War,” the author writes, “Bogotá has emerged from a period of almost daily bomb attacks during the early 1990s, as an island of relative peace.”<sup>59</sup> Bogotá suffered the cumulative effects of decades of civil war, but also from rapid population growth and a lack of planning. Yet the efforts of Mockus and Peñalosa “helped to transform a city once infamous for narco-terrorism, pollution and chaos into a globally lauded model of livability and urban renewal.”<sup>60</sup>

Bogotá’s urban development is also drawn into sharp contrast with the continued violence and conflict that shapes much of Colombia. Articles often contrast the impoverished and neglected countryside with the modern, innovative, and progressive Bogotá. Forero writes:

Thirty-seven years of conflict have left Colombia with two million displaced villagers. In some cities, urban warfare rages between rebels and right wing militia members. Farms lie fallow. The economy suffers. But not in Bogotá., the fog shrouded capital 8,000 feet atop the Andes. In this city of seven million, many Bogotanos agree, things have never been better.”<sup>61</sup>

Yet, the presence of this displaced villagers is a frequent reminder that the city is in fact not disconnected from the conflict. In “Outside Colombia’s Peaceful Cities, A Country at War,” author Simon Romero writes that in 2008 three hundred Colombian citizens moved to Bogotá and attempted to occupy Parque de la 93, “a verdant, tranquil island of sidewalk cafés where Bogotanos listen to jazz, sample microbrewed beer or dine on Cantabrian prawns.” These protesting refugees, displaced because of the ongoing conflict, serve as a reminder that if “Colombia’s capital city is looking to a bright future, much of the countryside surrounding it is not. There in the hamlets and jungles, Colombia remains at war, as it has been for generations.”<sup>62</sup>

## **The Citizen’s Respond**

Though Bogotá’s process of urban transformation is shaped by the complexities of class, identity, and power, the discourse of the city’s residents that has emerged in the foreign press is remarkably one-dimensional. Nearly all of the interviewed residents describe the positive impact the city’s transformations have made on their families, neighbors, and community. Those whose lives were improved by the construction of the Transmilenio are a common focus. Rosenthal describes Jorge

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<sup>57</sup> Forero, Juan. 2001. “Bogotá Journal: Conflict Rages, but Capital Basks in Good Times.” *New York Times*, September 15, 2001.

<sup>58</sup> *Bogotá: Building a Sustainable City*. PBS: Kontent Real Production, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> Wilson, 2002.

<sup>60</sup> Montgomery, 2009.

<sup>61</sup> Forero, 2001.

<sup>62</sup> Romero, Simon. “Outside Colombia’s Peaceful Cities, A Country at War,” *New York Times*, September 8, 2008.

Engarrita, 45, a leather worker who explained that riding the Transmilenio “changed his life,” reducing his commuting time to 40 minutes with one transfer from two to three hours on several buses.<sup>63</sup> Forero interviews Heberto Acero, 58, a security guard who said his neighborhood was electrified, so happy to have telephone service and drinkable water.<sup>64</sup> Edgar Saenz, a 30 year old designer, remarks, “Incredible, but now this city has possibilities. We can walk downtown without fear, in a pleasant urban landscape. I think the capital is an example for the whole country.”<sup>65</sup> Yet, rarely does the international media explore the dissenting voices, those who were not affected or even negatively impacted by the development in Bogotá. The unemployed, displaced, and otherwise marginalized communities of the city remain in these narratives. A romantic vision of urban transformation is instead embraced, reinforcing a political and social discourse that is disconnected from the reality of many.

## **7 - The Discourses of Urban Planning and of Multilateral Organizations**

While urban planning circles praise development models according to the goals specified in international agreements, including the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the United Nation’s Habitat II, multilateral organizations commonly insist on the importance of good governance in achieving development. In both cases Bogotá is presented as a model. In circles of urban planning the city is usually presented as an original model of urban development and sustainable design, an idea that is reinforced by the international media. In terms of public management Bogotá is seen as an exemplary model of “governance” and “good practices.” While multilateral organizations use Bogotá’s positive transformation to praise the benefits of democratization and decentralization, the attention that the city receives likely corresponds to the fact that the Bogotá represents a successful case of urban development based on the search for competitiveness.

According to a 2004 study of the United Nations Development Program, “Bogotá is one of the best examples of local governance and urban development.” The premise of the UNDP’s report on Bogotá is the same of the World Bank’s discourse on governance: “Achieving development depends on policies that incentivize democratic governance and efficient local governance from the part of developing countries” (2004).

In most of the World Bank’s reports about governance and decentralization the same formula emerges:

“Why should we decentralize? The answer is that decentralization deepens democracy. It does so in three ways. First, decentralization enhances

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<sup>63</sup> Rosenthal, 2009.

<sup>64</sup> Forero, 2001.

<sup>65</sup> Forero, 2001.

responsiveness and accountability, two related concepts that represent the essence of democracy... Second, decentralization provides another critical ingredient of democracy: increased effectiveness. Effectiveness is the capacity to actually implement the policies formulated, with the desired results. Finally, decentralization promotes democratic socialization—the inculcation of democratic norms and values in a society, including political participation” (Campbell, 2004).

A strong commitment to “good governance” is evident in the policies of Latin America’s national governments, as well as in the efforts of the U.S. government and its development agencies:

“Simply put, subnational reform cannot be separated from democracy-building objectives or from the formulation of second-generation institutional reforms currently underway. The commitments of the Second Summit of the Americas confirm recognition of the importance of strengthening local and subnational governments. The U.S. government and USAID, as its voice in development policy and programming, are placing increasing focus on decentralization, local and other subnational governments, and partnership with civil society as the best vehicles to achieve good governance” (Campbell, 2004).

Nevertheless, the empirical evidence of the benefits of decentralization in Latin America remains insufficient and even contradicts some of the World Bank’s arguments.<sup>66</sup> Bogotá’s transformation, which is the product of complex sociopolitical processes, hardly provides this evidence. Although Bogotá is in many ways a positive example of urban development, it is difficult to argue that its transformation is just the consequence of the recommendations of development banks. Even though Bogotá is often presented as an example of the positive impact democratization and decentralization can have on the improvement of governance, democracy in Bogotá still faces critical challenges. The quality of democratization is undermined by conflicting relations between the city mayors and the city council, the excessive power concentrated in the mayor’s office, and the limited decision making power given to the local district mayors. In addition, the low levels of participation in the city are cause for concern. Meanwhile, decentralization has questionable consequences in terms of the social impact of privatization on the public sector. On the other hand, research critical of the implications of the neoliberal model in Latin America offer very discouraging evidence. Despite some of Bogotá’s important advances, many aspects of the city’s present situation are as dramatic as in every South American metropolis.

Gilbert warns that “even though much has been written about the benefits of democracy, decentralization and privatizations, a lot of those texts are ideological in nature” (2008). Therefore, these works must be read with discretion. Even the concept of governance must be considered within a specific political context. The discourses of governance usually describe the public sector as a source of inefficiency, while the

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<sup>66</sup> Although the implications of neoliberalism for cities in North America and Europe has been largely studied, independent research on the effect of neoliberalism for Latin American cities is limited and quite recent. Much of the research done presents a distressing scene. According to UN-HABITAT, cities in emerging economies have become places overcrowded by a surplus of residents employed in precarious work; they have failed to become nuclei of economic growth and prosperity (UN-HABITAT, 2003).

private sector is generally lauded for its positive attributes (Betancur: 2009). Other authors argue that the idea of governance itself is a product of the neoliberal narrative; a decrease in state intervention gives way to political concepts like “governance” and “strategic planning” that lead to the reconsideration of the role of the market as a mechanism for regulation and for the participation of social actors (De Mattos, 2009). Therefore, the recognition of Bogotá as a model in the literature of credit organizations and development banks is necessarily linked to the fact that the transformations of the city, including political reforms and efforts to increase governance, and the whole modernization process in general, has taken place in the context of a very liberal management of the economy. Consequently, when the literature of credit organizations refers to the positive impact of “good governance” in Bogotá, it also implies the professed benefits of democratization, decentralization and privatization. Similarly, the attention Bogotá receives in urban planning circles and the international media is possibly due to the fact that the transformation of the city represents a successful model for urban development that ultimately aims to create favorable conditions for investment.

The fact that urban development today, in Bogotá and elsewhere, is conceived and realized in the context of globalization and following the idea of the “competitive city” (Brand, 2009) is hardly discussed, at least in a critical sense, in urban planning circles and in the literature of multilateral organizations. To comprehend the complexity of Bogotá’s transformation, the way the city’s urban planning corresponds to the development model of competitive cities must be understood.

According to urban researchers Peter Charles Brand and Fernando Prada (2003), the narrative of competitiveness has directed the discourses of urban planning for the past two decades. In this context the recommendations of multilateral organizations do not seem aimed at the promotion of the supposed benefits of good governance. Instead, they are aimed at the advancement of a narrative of competitive cities, along with the creation of favorable market conditions for global competition between cities. In many ways Bogotá’s development has been directed by a narrative of competitiveness, a narrative that hides, along with other contemporary discourses of urban planning and public management, the complex dynamics of urban centers today.

### **The Competitive City**

The planning of cities around the world has been enormously influenced by important changes in the global economic landscape of the last two decades. These changes include economic liberalization, deregulated public management and new information technologies. In this context local governments have become the administrators of economic development and global competition between cities has emerged (De Mattos, 2009).

In Colombia municipal governments have recently started to consider the question of competitiveness in urban planning. Local development plans now address economic globalization, economic opening, the competitiveness of cities in the world economy, and the varied perspectives of socioeconomic development (Brand, 2009). These supralocal elements of national planning, which represent the efforts of the private sector to insert the country into international markets, must be included by legal



mandate in local municipal policies and development plans, which shape the strategies of competitiveness of Colombian cities.

Brand and Prada argue that the circles of urban planning use a narrative of competitive cities to justify a neoliberal economic paradigm. The premise of the prevailing competitiveness discourse is that increased competitiveness should generate new productive activities, create employment and income, and improve the quality of life of urban inhabitants. The generation of wealth is seen as the principal way to ensure general welfare and fight against unemployment, inequality and social injustice (Brand & Prada, 2004). The authors argue that this narrative, accepted by local governments without criticism, has become the heart of local urban planning in Colombia. Indeed one of the main objectives of the urban plans (POT) recently produced in the country is to support policies of economic development. Therefore, competitiveness and internationalization are presented as necessities in the present geopolitical context and become the main priorities of urban development strategies.

The narrative of competitiveness presents globalization as a new era, and to enter that era governments must leave behind old practices including centralism, protectionism, and state regulation. State regulated economic management is thus replaced by a model that emphasizes international trade, economic opening, foreign investment and competitive labor markets. Consequently conditions to improve competitiveness, including increased stability, fiscal and financial resources, competent human resources, and commercial and technological strategies become a priority of public management. At the same time decentralization gives municipal governments the responsibility to promote economic development.

Once declared the main priority of cities, competitiveness becomes the focal point of local public policies, the private sector increasingly influences social dynamics, and new priorities are defined. The strengthening of business activity, increased research and innovation, and improved infrastructure and public services emerge as main concerns. In addition urban marketing becomes a common practice of local governments (Brand & Prada, 2004). In terms of urbanistic actions, the strategy implies industrial reconversion and the promotion of a modern sector of public services and technology. This includes the creation of industrial parks, free trade zones and international business centers. The construction of recreational and health care related infrastructure, public transport, and telecommunications infrastructure is also considered, along with an international projection of the city's image.

Many studies on the impact of the neoliberal model argue that in practice the consequences of neoliberalism on emerging economies generally fall short of their announced benefits. In Latin America negative employment trends are observed and most of the newly created jobs are in areas of low productivity in the tertiary sector. In addition, the insufficient creation of employment has a considerable impact on the informalization of the economy (Betancur, 2009; Brand, 2009; De Mattos, 2009; Pradilla, 2009). Neoliberalism as an economic paradigm implies a radical change in the global economic landscape that has affected Latin American metropolises in many ways:

- Neoliberalism implies a return to economic liberalism. Markets regain the function of economic regulation.

- Neoliberalism affects territorial organization: larger cities are privileged for foreign investment and transnational activities. Consequently a global hierarchy of cities in function of their integration modalities emerges; cities enter a world city network.
- Transformations in the economic base produce changes in the city's organization, functioning, image and morphology. These changes include the tertiarization of the urban economy, territorial fragmentation, polycentric urban configuration, periurbanization, and gentrification. According to Dematteis and Governa the city becomes a network of settlements organized around a large number of specialized hubs in a vast multicenter region (as cited in De Mattos, 2009).
- The urbanization of poverty is generalized. According to UN Habitat, 31.9% of Latin America's urban habitations are in informal districts that concentrate 128 million inhabitants (as cited in Brand, 2009).
- The deregulation of labor regimes produces inequality, leads to an increase in informal urbanization, and reinforces new forms of social exclusion.

According to Betancur (2009), the implications of liberalization, deregulation and the application of new urban planning models have greater significant consequences for cities in emerging economies. In many Latin American cities the degradation of the manufacturing industry, the informalization of the economy, the precarization of labor regime, and privatizations imply according to the author, a decline in terms of development.

Bogotá's development in the last three decades has been similar to the patterns and urban dynamics observed in other Latin American cities. Despite the important progress described earlier, the city still faces important challenges, particularly in terms of reducing poverty and inequality. Bogotá's development is in that sense an example of the complex contradictions between urban planning and the capitalist system. However, in Bogotá's case it would not be fair to say that the city's recently developed projects have only aimed to mask the ruptures in the social space produced by the competitive city development model or to create the illusion of social cohesion. In contrast to other Latin American cases many of the projects developed in Bogotá have had a real impact on the democratization of the city. To a certain extent these initiatives have promoted equality and reduced social segregation despite a prevailing economic agenda that in many ways undermines these objectives.

## 8 - Bogotá: An Exceptional Case

Compared to the recent urban development of other metropolises in the region, Bogotá's transformation is promising. The engagement of recent administrations in resolving some of the city's most complicated problems has produced positive results. In addition the Garzón administration proved that investing in social programs is both possible and sustainable (Gilbert, 2008b). Although Bogotá's urban dynamics are similar to those observed in other Latin American cities, there are key differences that have shaped its particular development.

- In contrast to the Latin American experience, many of Bogotá's urban interventions have had a positive impact on restructuring the urban morphology. In most of the cases there have been important public investments as opposed to disconnected and fragmentary private actions.
- According to Colombia's Department of National Planning and the UNDP, Bogotá has made important progress in reducing poverty. From 2000 to 2007 indicators show a decrease in poverty from 46.5% to 28.5.<sup>67</sup> However, these findings must be considered cautiously, and it is difficult to know if the decrease in poverty is a direct consequence of local policies.

Many believe the social policies of Garzón's administration had a positive impact on the reduction of poverty in the Colombian capital. Alfredo Sacramento, director of the national program for human development in Colombia, argues that since it has been clearly demonstrated that economic growth doesn't necessarily lead to reduced poverty, it is clear that in Bogotá's case the political decision to promote social rights and equality has been very essential (*El Tiempo*, 16 Mars 2007). If this is indeed the case, the potential for promoting economic change at the local level would be very promising, because it is generally believed that local government has limited influence on a city's economic agenda.

Gilbert is skeptical of Saramiento's thesis, at the same time that he finds inconsistencies in the indicators of the department of national planning disturbing. In two different national planning surveys for the year 2003 there is a difference of ten points in Bogotá's poverty indicators (Gilbert 2004). Although the author doesn't doubt that the income of many families has increased in recent years, he doubts that the impact of Garzón's social policies has been so significant. Echoing Montenegro, he assumes that the reduction of poverty in Bogotá may respond to a general improvement in the national economic situation (as cited in Gilbert, 2008).<sup>68</sup> Yet, taking into account the complex socioeconomic problems of Colombia's rural areas, which lead to the

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<sup>67</sup> The indicator shows the percentage of people living under the line of poverty.

<sup>68</sup> For this same period, poverty in Colombia decreased from 57% to 47.9%, which is roughly equivalent to the decrease in Bogotá. This can be explained by an increase in salaries, a decrease in unemployment and the sustained economic growth of the city.

continual migration of refugees to Bogotá, Gilbert finds these findings of poverty reduction suspiciously high. He also doubts those who argue that the decrease in poverty is a consequence of an increase in the equal distribution of wealth. There are no indications that the distribution of income has improved in Bogotá (Gilbert, 2004).

It can be argued that Bogotá's strong economic performance and an increased public investment in social issues has led to important advances in poverty reduction. However the situation may not be as promising as the surveys indicate. Economic growth may have had an impact on employment generation (though this says little about the quality of employment or the labor regime) and social policies may have also helped to promote equality in terms of access to social services and the reduction of people's living expenses. But in general terms, distribution remains very unequal and the social gap remains a considerable problem in Bogotá.

- In the Latin American case heterogeneous levels of infrastructure and of urban services are observed. Contrary to this tendency Bogotá has invested important resources in the "demarginalization" of poor neighborhoods, and the majority of new urban projects have been made in peripheral districts. The impact of these projects represents a remarkable improvement in the quality of life for many people.

Samuel Jaramillo writes that many years ago in some urban planning circles, theorists warned of the impending death of urban planning and the grand urbanism (Jaramillo 2009). When the Keynesian model of capitalist development was replaced, the models of functionalist urban planning linked to the modern movement in architecture also disappeared. In the new models prominent and precise actions prevail, actions that should trigger an urban dynamic executed by private actors. State intervention is replaced by the initiative of private sectors. The market becomes the mechanism for regulating the precise and fragmented interventions of private actors. It is not clear how this model implies an improvement in the living conditions of urban inhabitants, particularly in developing countries. The evidence in Latin America illustrates that under the public management of liberal urbanism the conditions of habitability remain extremely precarious and have even deteriorated (Jaramillo, 2009).

In Colombia, the Law 388 of 1997 represents very important support for a new kind of urban management. The application of the law has had positive consequences for the urban management of Bogotá. In addition to the obligatory redaction of an urban plan (POT), four important aspects can be highlighted. First, the law redefines the meaning of territorial property; the idea that property has a social function subverts the idea that individual interest should be privileged over collective interest. Second, the new urban regulation promotes equilibrium between the costs and benefits of urbanization as well as among landowners and the community. Third, the legislation creates mechanisms for intervention into the land market. Finally, some changes, including prioritized urban development and administrative expropriation were created to combat land retention. For these reasons the law represents a useful tool for social development, and various Latin American countries are considering the introduction of similar mechanisms (Jaramillo, 2009).

## 9 - Conclusion

In an article where social researcher Armando Silva (2000) discusses the construction of urban sensibility through the arts and the media, the author presents an interesting hypothesis. Silva suggests that the structures of classical literature are reflected in the contemporary media, particularly the structure of fairy tales. It is striking to note the presence of this structure in many texts describing Bogotá's recent transformations. The story begins with a conflict, a problem is introduced, danger appears as well as the attack of evil characters, a struggle ensues, and the protagonist attempts to find happiness, generally with great success. In a similar way the discourses that describe Bogotá's transformation process describe the victory of a city over its many challenges disregarding any possibility for contradiction, ambiguity and, particularly, complexity.

In reality, the apparent coherence of the transformation process in Bogotá is a product of narratives that target particular goals and interests. These narratives aim to explain complex processes in a simple way or to present Bogotá's transformation as a model for other urban centers. As we have discussed earlier, among the representations that create the image of Bogotá there is both the marketing of local governments and of the private sector as well as the marketing of partnerships between the public sector and the private sector. At the same time, the image of the city is constructed by the discourses of multilateral credit organizations and development agencies that publicize successful cases of local development based on the idea of good governance. Finally we find representations of Bogotá in the international media that exalt the city's original model of urban planning and of sustainable development. All these representations of the city target particular objectives, are often shaped by simplified rhetoric, and rely on the mystification of the transformation process and its protagonists.

Although the urban transformation of the Colombian capital has taken place in a geopolitical context of increasing competition between cities, with the resulting consequences for urban management, Bogotá's process is the product of a complex dynamic that involves the last five local administrations, significant sociopolitical changes, diverse models of urban planning and varying international influences.

The recent development of the city has been clearly influenced by considerable transformations in the dominant economic model and the resulting models of urban management that have produced substantial changes in the organization, functioning and morphology of cities. While supporters of public management models based in the neoliberal paradigm praise its benefits, detractors point to neoliberalism as one of the main causes of the urban crisis in Latin-American cities. This crisis is marked by a generalized urbanization of poverty, the "informalization" of the economy and new forms of social exclusion. Although Bogotá has not resolved the profound social contradictions of contemporary Latin-American metropolises, the city has made important advances in the construction of a more just society. While the experience of Bogotá does not empirically represent the supposed benefits promised by the neoliberal model and discourses of good governance, it cannot be argued that in recent years the urban crisis of Bogotá has worsened under these systems. Indeed,

recent administrations have found solutions to some of the most challenging problems of the city. This is precisely the particularity of Bogotá's transformation and the reason it has emerged as an interesting focus for study, beyond the simplifications of political and media discourses.

If, like most Latin American cities, Bogotá is currently engaged in the neoliberal geopolitical dynamic and in the last decade decentralization and increased competitiveness have emerged as the priorities for its urban development, how can the success of the last administrations' public policies be explained? At the beginning of the text we noted the five tangible causes of Bogotá's transformation proposed by Alan Gilbert (2008): good mayors, the end of clientelism, technocracy, continuity of administrative policy, and an increase in economic resources. We relate these five causes to four determinant sociopolitical processes: the constitutional reforms of 1991, the process of democratization and decentralization, the new laws of urban reform and the distinct development plans of recent local administrations.

These four processes have produced changes in the administration of the city that differ significantly from contemporary practices of public management. Despite the fact that local development plans have emphasized increased competitiveness as the means to urban development, in Bogotá's case there has also been a serious engagement with diverse aspects of social development in the city. Public expenditure on infrastructure and social programs targeting the poorest sectors has been noteworthy, and though the gap between the wealthy and poor remains a cause for major concern, important reductions in poverty have also occurred in the past ten years in Bogotá. In addition the laws of urban reform have become useful tools for social development.

Nevertheless, despite these notable successes, the process of transformation of Bogotá can hardly be presented as a development model. In addition to the fact that Bogotá's change is closely linked with a particular sociopolitical process, and the fact that it is the result of a fortuitous succession of independent events, Bogotá's transformation is an incomplete process that has not been free from social stress and contradiction. Even some of the projects that are today presented as accomplishments of recent administrations were extremely divisive and remain the object of considerable controversy. The process has not been flawless and even certain aspects that are generally regarded as achievements have been tremendously problematic, as we have discussed. It is certain, however, that there are lessons to learn from the experience of Bogotá's recent development.

The experience of Bogotá illustrates that it is possible to spark a rapid improvement in governance and to transform the political practices of local governments and citizens. It is also important to note that in Bogotá a significant increase in public expenditure, made possible by a substantial improvement of the city's local tax collection system, was necessary to realize ambitious projects, and that such an increase could be sustainable. In the case of Luis E. Garzón's administration, the government proved that it is possible to manage the public finances responsibly while maintaining public expenditure in infrastructure projects and paying greater attention to social programs. This point brings us to a critical aspect of the changes observed in Bogotá in recent years: beyond ideology and political positions the combination of good management and the focus of successive administrations on social

development has produced positive results in key aspects of urban life including security, mobility, education, health care, recreation and access to public services.

This feature sets the experience of Bogotá apart from those of other Latin American metropolises. Despite the fact that the dominant economic system imposes a model of public management that prioritizes business opportunities as the focus of local public policy and allows for the increasing influence of the private sector on the social dynamic of the city, the last administrations of Bogotá have successfully emphasized other aspects of the city's development plans. These aspects include investments in education, civic culture, the quality of public services and a focus on social progress.

### III - Small Scale : Localized approach







# 1 - Localized Scale: Public Spaces Today

The in situ work on the Bogotá case study consists of an analysis of three recently developed paradigmatic projects: The Jimenez de Quesada Avenue, The Tercer Milenio Park and The Tintal Zone. The impact of these new projects has been examined in each case, taking into account changes in Bogotá's urban dynamics that include socioeconomic, physical and morphologic transformations. This analysis includes observations from ongoing fieldwork, a description of the urban ambiances of each site and conclusions based on interviews with the sites' inhabitants.

Interest in the ordinary making of the city often requires to collect what might be called the story of the place. This story, while being each time unique, is never singular. It is by nature diverse and multi-faceted. It focuses on practices and ambiances. It blends past, present and future and informs us, inhabitants, policy makers as well as designers about what makes the urban everyday life, for oneself, as well as for others.

To collect these stories is a listening, thinking and enunciating exercise of one's territory. To this end, many methods that come from urban research have been formalized: commented walks, recurrent observations, "reactivation techniques"... The story could then be expressed through words, photography, sound, drawing, video or even body language. Each place, each project and actors context becomes an opportunity to test and modify methods to collect and bring together the perceptions and representations of all.

These tellings are both ordinary and expert, and are given to us most often in situ; the place influences then as a third-party between the narrator and the interviewer. These methods are not tools for consultation on their own, but they can begin to outline the characteristics of a site with its ambiances and practices, thereby revealing the elements of its ordinary heritage. They then enable in the rendering of these tellings, knowledge between actors of representations and issues of all (contracting management, project management, use management). They finally allow, through their synthesis, to identify issues, locate levers for the project and identify urban figures.

To fully understand how the three chosen sites are experienced and perceived after their profound recent urban transformations, we have displayed, besides the classical cartographical and typo-morphological analysis, a set of methods and field tools to get as close as possible to the urban ambiances on one hand, and to the inhabitants and users tellings on the other hand.

- Observation and note-book
- Sound, photographic and videographic recordings
- Commented walks with users and professionals
- Brief interviews all along the field work

## Ambiances materials: principles

We are all attentive, sometimes even "captured" by the perceived atmosphere while arriving in a given place. Alert to a remarkable lighting, a special sound, boosted by a bustling public place, or on the contrary pacified, brought to contemplation in a place bathed in peace and quiet. Often singular and irreducible, the ambiance of a place depends on the date, the time, the weather, the public as well as our actions. Yet, despite these variations, it generally has characteristics that give it an identity and make it recognizable.

Everyday, we do experience ambiances as much as they do affect us in return. While we feel and share these sensitive experiences without difficulties, however, the notion of ambiance defies formal definition that would be too rigorist. It is experienced in the singular, as a whole which does neither separate sensory channels nor our actions from our perceptions or representations. But we know how to analyze it only by dissecting it in a pluralistic way, sense after sense, discipline after discipline. Thus, the more knowledge on ambiances is specified in terms of composition and constitution methods - enhanced with sound, light, tactile ... but also spatial and social expertise - the more we risk losing what makes their unit, this always unique experienced relationship to the place.

"Un singulier fugace, un pluriel éparpillé<sup>69</sup>". Clearly identified since the mid-1970s, this notion is based on a wide scientific history<sup>70</sup> that makes an interdisciplinary approach today possible, and enable to go beyond the useful but restrictive notions of nuisance or comfort.

Describing situations in which sensitive interaction is experienced at some point in a given place, the notion of architectural and urban ambiances can be sketched in a few traits<sup>71</sup>:

- It involves a sensitive relationship to the world, synesthetic as well as cenesthetic<sup>72</sup>.
- Its study requires a multidisciplinary approach with attention to the built, sensitive and social dimensions of living space.
- It does not refer to a particular spatial scale. Used for housing, public space,

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<sup>69</sup> "Fleeting in the singular, strewn in the plural" summarizes Jean-François Augoyard in « Ambiance(s) », in *L'espace anthropologique. Les cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine*, n° 20/21, march 2007, Paris, Éditions Monum, p. 33-37. The english translation of the word "Ambiances" is not fixed. It is usual to use the word "Atmospheres", but many rather keep the word "Ambiances", or might as well write it "Ambiances".

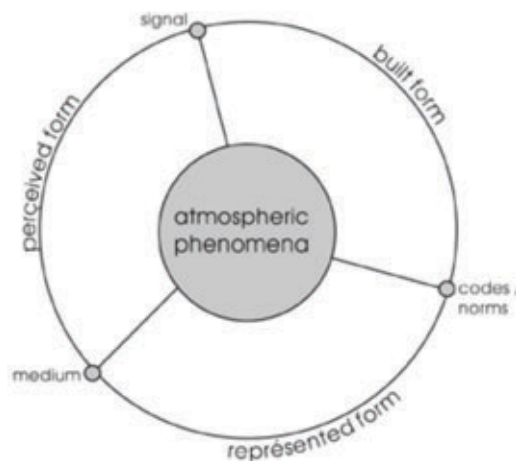
<sup>70</sup> For the first half of the 20th century, we might in particular cite the contribution of existential psychopathology, phenomenology, physic of effects, micro-sociology, and more specially north American ethnomethodology, but as well more recently, thesis and practices of Situationism.

<sup>71</sup> Elements of debate around the definition and efficiency of the notion: Pascal Amphoux, Jean-Paul Thibaud, Grégoire Chelkoff (éds) *Ambiances en débat*. Bernin. Éd. A la Croisée, 2004, coll. Ambiances, Ambiance; Luc Adolphe (dir.), *Ambiances architecturales et urbaines. Les cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine*, n° 42-43, 3e trim. 1998. Marseille, Éditions Parenthèses.

<sup>72</sup> That is to say involving separately or simultaneously sensory modalities and the general sensitivity of a person; general impression of ease or unease resulting from a set of inner sensations.

working or commercial areas, spaces of mobility as well as spaces of representation, it refers to a situation of sensitive interaction. In this concept, it is a trans-scalar notion; that applies to "ordinary" as well as to more scenographic spaces.

- Used for the study of spaces as well as for their design, it is, through attention to sensitive configurations, a posture ranging the user's experience at the heart of the project.



Principle sketch of the ambiance notion (Cresson, 1990)

However, architectural and urban ambiances are not restricted to those who point it as an object of study. This is an open and porous research field enriched by many physical modelings and characterization works of sensitive space, by research in aesthetics, in cognitive sciences (particularly the ecological approach of perception), or by contributions of living spaces' sociology and anthropology. It is also an internationally growing research field, which now allows better consideration of the cultural dimensions of this notion's history, use and efficiency<sup>73</sup>. And if we are curious to know how and why this concept and these methods can help us to better understand a radically changing complex as the one outlined today by Bogota, it is also for us a challenge to test this notion in a context so different from European cities. We will cover this in the conclusion of this research.

Thus, collected materials<sup>74</sup> (sound, photographs, video recordings, noted observations, micro-interviews, commented walks, local documents) are a way to

<sup>73</sup> The very expression "architectural and urban ambiances" is very french. This notion is convenient and covers very different approaches, depending on countries and authors; while in Brazil for example, anthropological and political dimensions are actively involved, geography and aesthetics color german approaches, environmental and executional dimensions north American ones, etc. Two pieces of work noteworthy to illustrate this diversity: Böhme, Gernot. *Atmosphäre. Essays zur neuen Aesthetic*. Frankfurt/Main, Ed. Suhrkamp, 1995 ; et Zardini, Mirko. (dir). *Sense of the city*, Montreal, Lars Müller Publishers.2005. Trad.: *Sensations urbaines. Une approche différente de l'urbanisme*. Montréal, Éd. du Centre canadien d'architecture et Lars Müller Publishers, 2005. Cf. Besides, the scientific network [www.ambiances.net](http://www.ambiances.net) enables to open on the international.

<sup>74</sup> We disposed for our field work of the following equipment: digital cameras and video cameras, portable recorders for interviews, and digital sound recorders with either a cardioids' type

"capture" urban situations as much as a way to let oneself get "captured" by these same situations. For us, multiplicity of points of view (different researchers with different cultures on the same field) and variety of understanding techniques are essential to maintain the required distance between any research and its object, but also to ensure that the understanding ain't disconnected to the place as perceived by the senses and experienced by its users.

The challenge is then to build stories out of the whole corpus in order to understand how these spaces, through people's practices and uses as well as through people's representations, have evolved. These stories owe to articulate individual and singular perceptions with global observations and make one feel the life, richness and complexity of any situation while identifying these new spaces' urban figures. For this purpose, we propose different modes of restitution: text (the document itself - particularly the analysis parts on the three sites), images, sound and video recordings (DVD), and a crossing of all in the form of multimedia urban transects (DVD).

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, walking has occupied a place both in methodology of investigation on cities and as the fundamental mode of practice of urban space in itself. Among the well-known works on the subject to which our work refers is Jean-François Augoyard's *Step by Step* of 1979 which propose a ground-breaking analysis the rhetorical dimension of walking<sup>75</sup>. Since the 1990's, Jean-Paul Thibaud has developed the method of the "commented walk", according much importance to the sensory components and technical aspects of the walker's experience<sup>76</sup>. Following on the work of these two authors, many researchers have developed modes of analysis concerning everyday experience of walking in the city and a variety of means of representing their results, notable using photography, video and sound-recording techniques. As interesting as many of there are, all seem more useful for analysis than for practice as they give little attention to the relation for architectural form, or to geographical context.

All of the materials is thought as a mosaic that enables to capture the complex and lively public spaces of Bogotá. Useful for understanding recent changes, they are also living proof of a situation at a given period in time. These documents are particularly useful as situations change very quickly. And they are also essential because if Bogota is in the spotlight after an undeniable successful recent

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microphone with 120° aperture for soundscapes, or dummy head microphone for "on board" recordings.

<sup>75</sup> Jean-François Augoyard. *Pas à pas, Essais sur le cheminement quotidien en milieu urbain*. Paris : Éd. du Seuil, 1979 (new edition : *Step by step: everyday walks in a French urban housing project*, translation by David Ames Curtis, University of Minnesota Press, 2007. We could of course also insist on the importance of the writing of Kevin Lynch et al on the perception of city space by the walker and the motorist and, from the same period in France, the works of the writer Georges Perec, or those of the sociologist Pierre Sansot. Each developed in his own way a direct relation between ways of seeing, of hearing, the act of walking and modes of description of urban space from and immediate, "engaged" perspective. Cf. an article on "attempting to describe" by Georges Perec. Jean-Paul Thibaud, Nicolas Tixier, "L'ordinaire du regard", in *Le cabinet d'amateur*, Toulouse, Presses Universitaires du Mirail, n°7-8, décembre 1998, pp. 51-57.

<sup>76</sup> Michèle Grosjean, Jean-Paul Thibaud (dir.). *L'Espace urbain en méthodes*. Marseille, Parenthèses, 2001.

evolution, too few studies and fieldworks are today available. Our research, on its scale, would like to contribute by putting into the public domain not only its analysis that remain to be discussed but also the collected living material.

### **Citizen's words: methodology**

According to us, to re-examine the in recent years in Bogota initiated urban policy implies to collect, in the form of interviews conducted *in situ*, points of view of users and residents of the three studied sites. Combining social representations, perceptions and uses evocation, these interviews complete the qualification of places and their ambiances, while provoking debate on political, institutional and scholar discourses on urban transformation process.

As it is usual in sociology, interviews are a way to reach the actors social representations. In this sense, two objectives guide here our research:

- Generally, to restore the polyphony inherent in every city;
- More specifically, to set the ordinary city users' representations against those of experts or actors involved in urban policy, without on principle presupposing any opposition. On this account, one followed way to work concerns the citizens' appropriation level of the « official » urban rhetoric.

However, the originality of our survey based on interviews is here mostly due to its *in situ* character. To interview people on-site is primarily seen as a way to avoid or minimize the overestimation of social representations in relation to the concrete experience - avoid ready-made discourses that are, when expressed around a table, too easily detached from the richness and complexity of a living context. The choice of working *in-situ* is then to recognize and take into account « the influence of context on perception » through the double role of the environment (physical and social) and the situation (the commitment of the user, the inhabitant in an activity).

To seek users or residents' talks *in situ* can also enable access to a more detailed knowledge of the studied public spaces in relation to various individual uses. The interviewees, that can be regarded as first hand resource persons, offer an internal look of the site, shaped by a daily or occasional attendance that the researcher does not have. So the collection of their words *in situ* is a way to let the place talk and completes the observations and reading of ambiances.

43 interviews have been conducted and recorded between March 31<sup>th</sup> and april 6<sup>th</sup> 2009:

- 16 for Tercer Mileno park;
- 13 for Jimenez Avenue;
- 14 for El Tintal.

For each of the three public spaces, sociological diversity has been respected in terms of age, sex and socio-cultural group within the number of interviews. In this sense, a number of typical users' figures are each represented: street vendors, policemen or watchmen, casual passerby, residents, students (especially on the upper Jimenez Avenue).

In most cases, interviewees were approached “on the fly”. Presenting our work as a study on public space in Bogotá, we launched interviews by the following instructions: “We would like to know what is your personal perception of this place.” Depending on the availability of people and their current activity, half of the interviews were conducted as a walk (following the interviewees in a part of their journey), the other half in a static position. Similarly, the degree of availability and the ease or unease of the interviewees brought us to distinguish interviews in terms of their length: some are brief, similar to vox-pops, others go over 5-15 minutes. Two long interviews (more than half an hour) reflect walks conducted on Jimenez avenue, from its upper part down to beyond San Victorino Plaza. These long interviews have a special status because they enabled interviewees to display a rather one-sided talk : architecture students exercising environment description along Jimenez avenue, a bitter toward Colombian policy homeless man describing Jimenez avenue through very difficult survival social conditions. Two other long interviews (about 1 hour) reflect two walks conducted in the district of el Tintal library with a local longstanding Patio Bonito resident (one through the neighborhood, the other from Patio Bonito to the library), whose comments focus on the neighborhood's and its social life's transformation. Furthermore, we interviewed for over an hour the architect who built the secondary school near El Tintal library while walking in the area.



Walk along Jimenez avenue with two architecture students returning from Los Andes University – April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009





Walk through Tercer Milenio park – April 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2009



Interviews in Tercer Milenio park – April 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> 2009



Interviews in front of El Tintal library – April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009

Following contact sheet : walk with a resident of the self built neighbourhood Patio Bonito, near El Tintal library – April 6<sup>th</sup> 2009





The description of these three urban spaces, along with an analysis of their impact on Bogotá's urban transformation, is the result of extensive bibliographic research. This research takes into account the historical development of each site and the significance of these recent transformations. The bibliographic research was complemented by observations made *in situ* and a cartographic analysis of the recent morphologic evolution of each of the three zones.

## **2 -The Three Sites**

The Jimenez de Quesada Avenue project is one of the major developments in the city center's urban renovation. The project proposed the rehabilitation of the most important axis of the city center, including the avenue's adaptation to the Transmilenio system. The creation of the Tercer Milenio Park was also part of the plan for the city center's urban renovation; it was a immense intervention that implied the demolition of an entire marginal neighborhood located in the heart of the city. Finally, the intervention in the Tintal zone represents the radical transformation of a peripheral district that included the transformation of a garbage treatment plant and a city dump into a public library and a public park, the rehabilitation of various public spaces, and the construction of public schools, bicycle paths and transport infrastructure.

These three projects share a number of important elements in common; they all correspond to important urban interventions that concern the rehabilitation or construction of public spaces and public infrastructure in the city, they are all connected through the RBT system (Transmilenio), and they all have tremendous metropolitan significance. In addition the three projects were all a central focus of the Peñalosa administration's development plan for the city.

Many of the urban projects recently developed in Bogotá have produced significant transformations at social, economic, and territorial levels. There is an almost general consensus regarding the positive impact of these projects. However, the magnitude of the interventions as well as the different economic, social, and political interests that shaped these projects are a continued source of controversy. At the same time, the interpretation of concepts such as public order and public interest, inherent to the public space discourse developed by successive city administrations, has created conditions that legitimize urban actions regardless of their potential impact on different social sectors. An analysis of the Tercer Milenio Park, one the most paradigmatic and radical urban interventions in Bogotá in recent years, illustrates that in terms of the project's social management, there were serious failures on the part of the city administration (Castro, 2003). Other important urban interventions, the renovation of the city centre in particular, leave doubts about the city's capacity to formulate social policies that mitigate the potentially negative effects of urban development. These effects include the displacement of local residents, a process which tends to marginalize an already vulnerable population that doesn't have access to legal representation, social services, or dignified living conditions, while

prompting the loss of social networks produced by the disappearance or gentrification of traditional sectors.

During the construction and rehabilitation process of public infrastructure in urban areas there are often recurring development patterns that have significant social implications but that are usually considered as collateral damages external to such projects. We have already mentioned the displacement of population caused by processes of gentrification. Additionally, changes of use and the redirection of urban dynamics are common consequences, planned or not, of large urban interventions. Another common pattern is that the poorest populations are generally the most negatively affected by these processes and tend to be impacted in a number of ways.<sup>77</sup> The urban projects developed in recent years in Bogotá have led to a number of these patterns with varied consequences. The three studied sites of this research study have been no exception. However, public opinion has tended to justify every intervention through a defense of public interest regardless of the potential social impact.

In the three studied sites there are observable patterns that have implied important transformations, positive and negative, of the socioeconomic dynamics of each site. It is important to understand these new dynamics and to identify the benefits and disadvantages of each process. Since in the discourses of urban planning the development projects are considered necessary and the supposed benefits of the projects are widely justified by the premise of the primacy of public interest, some negative consequences are considered inevitable collateral damages. Yet, as Cernea argues, the administration, in order to maintain a coherent discourse of development that legitimizes its actions, should recognize that the unfair distribution of gains and losses is not an inevitable consequence of urban development (Cernea, 1997).

The case of the Jimenez de Quesada Avenue is a valuable example of an incipient process of change of use that will likely lead to a process of gentrification. The Tercer Milenio Park, the most complex and controversial of the three sites,, implied a significant displacement of population, a clear change of use of the public space and a radical morphologic transformation of the zone. The real estate operations underway, as well as the projected developments, will likely imply the gentrification of the adjacent zones as well. The Tintal case represents the dramatic transformation of a zone's urban conditions (social, economic and physical), marked by the creation of formerly nonexistent public services and the emergence of important real state operations. Even though the three cases are radically different and their impact has also markedly differed, a common aspect of these urban projects is that they have all boosted various kinds of real estate operations that have the potential to significantly transform each zone. Each one of the three analyzed cases is part of a larger urban strategy that includes a radical transformation of entire urban areas that are

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<sup>77</sup> Castro (2003) explains that in zones that are the object of public development efforts an important number of people are generally settled. Eventually that population is often displaced in order to give way to the building process. The risk of displacement for poor populations includes the potential loss of property, the loss of important sources of income, as well as the social disarticulation of communities (which implies dependency, vulnerability and a loss of power).

associated with partial development plans (of renovation and new developments as well). These cases merit analysis for future development, especially because the three zones will continue to undergo significant transformations due to ongoing urban projects. The Tercer Milenio Park project, which represents the most complex situation in social terms, must serve as a lesson regarding both the strengths and shortcomings of the city's formulated social policy.

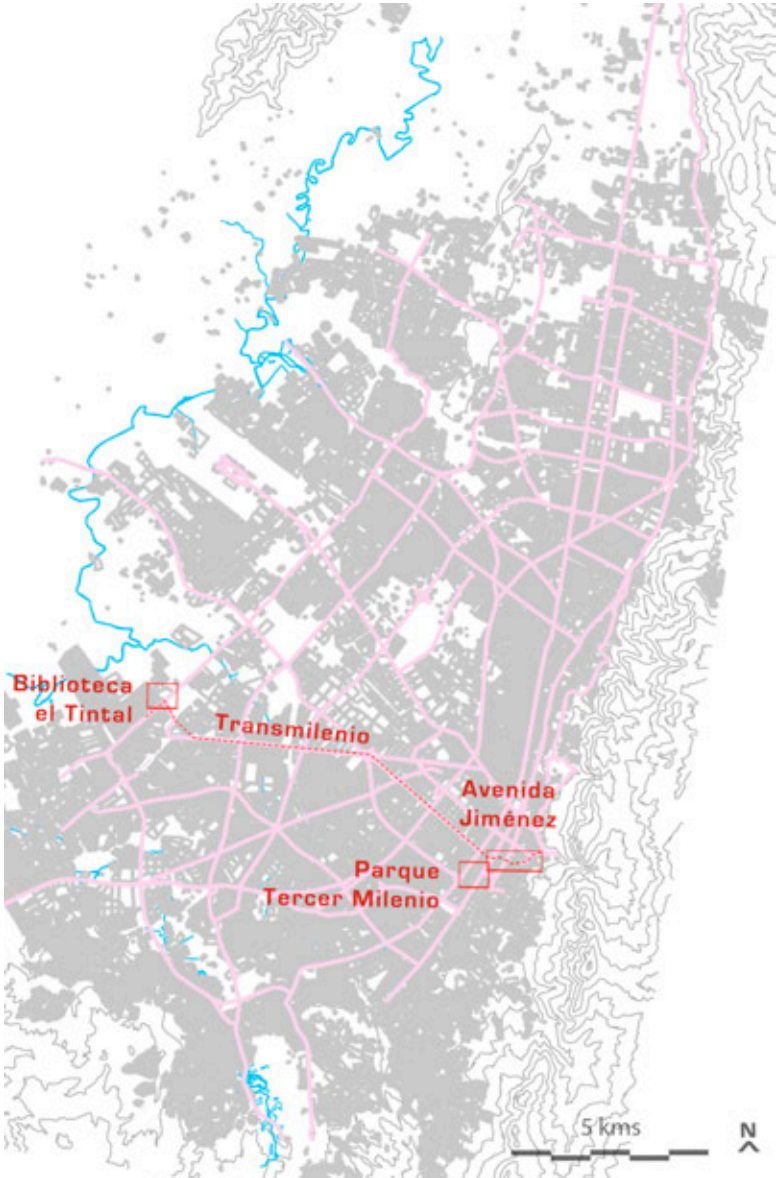


Fig. 1 Localization plan of the three studied sites

### 3 - Plan Centro

Two of the analyzed sites (Tercer Milenio Park and Jimenez Avenue) represent part of the urban strategy for the centre of the city. A brief explanation of the model for the urban renovation of Bogotá's centre is fundamental to understanding the context in which these two important urban interventions took place. In addition, the situation of



the city centre is particular; the territorial planning decisions adopted for this zone are considered the starting point for the future development of the master plans (which consist of projection studies that are then used to formulate strategies, programs and projects for the entire city). Therefore, what is proposed for the central districts illustrates quite well the goals for the urban development of the city.

The vision of the city centre's renovation plan is that of a long term project in which the zone will continue to be the most important environmental, historical, cultural, touristic, residential, economic, administrative and commercial space in both the city and the country. The plan for the renovation of the center anticipates that in approximately 30 years this space of the city will reach 500,000 inhabitants, which represents twice the number of residents living there in 2005. The model also anticipates that the center of Bogotá will be the most competitive economic space in the country and the region due to the internationalization of the economy, technological innovation and the strengthening of economic, educative and cultural institutions. This will necessitate the consolidation of multifunctional urban structures with attractive residential space and a broad range of activities for the rest of the city and the region. It is therefore necessary to dispose of high quality public spaces and infrastructure to guarantee the optimal life conditions for the users.

It is expected that this space will achieve high levels of competitiveness and will become a strategic leader and cultural referent for the continent. This transformation will be the result of policies, programs and projects that encourage economic competitiveness, social inclusion and respect for the environment through an equitable and inclusive process. The policies of the plan aim to boost the potential of the zone through urban actions that are meant to mitigate its deterioration. The policies that direct the territorial planning of the center include: the integration of the center with the city and the region, an increase in the residential population, an improvement in residents' quality of life, the protection and recuperation of cultural heritage, an increase in the competitiveness of the zone, a restoration of the area's positive image, a promotion of urban renovation, and the urbanistic consolidation of the zone.

The model adopted involves four dimensions focused on different aspects of the centre's development: the social dimension focuses on social inclusion and cohesion, the economic dimension is directed towards competitiveness, the environmental dimension aims to integrate the natural environment into public spaces, and the urbanistic dimension intends to improve the existing urban elements and activities and to reshape the ecologic, economic and social connections within the zone and the city. In other words, the model is oriented towards the consolidation of the offer of goods and services in the city center, the interdependence of the center and its environment, and the promotion of the competitive and singular advantages of its strategic location and infrastructure. Additionally, the model assumes that the credibility and consequent economic development of the center depends on the improvement of the quality of life for the zone's residents and visitors.

## 4 - Jimenez de Quesada Avenue

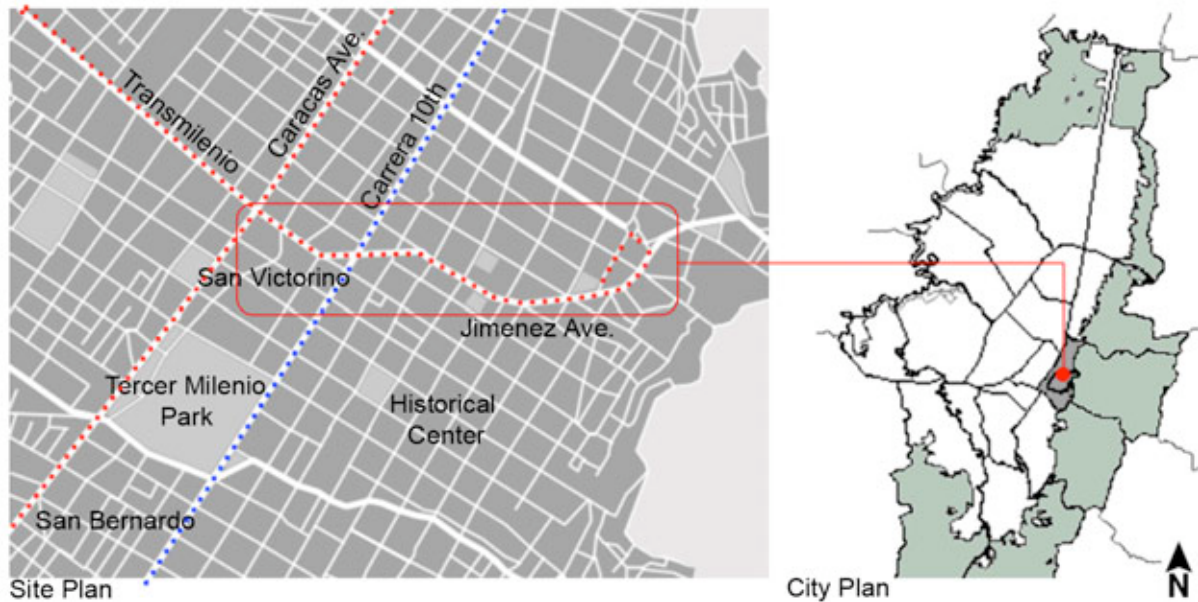


Fig. 2 Localization plan of the Jimenez de Quesada Avenue

The Jimenez Avenue is considered the most important and central axis of Bogotá's central district. However, in the colonial period the San Francisco River (today Jimenez Avenue) was for a long time the city's northern limit. Breaking from the rational grid of Spanish urban planning, this avenue follows the snaky path of the San Francisco River descending from the *cerros orientales* (the eastern mountains that are the city's geographical limit to the east) to the west. The city's founders chose to place the foundational square of Bogotá, *Plaza Mayor*, at the bottom of the mountain and in the middle of two rivers, the San Francisco and the San Agustín. Back then, the mountains and rivers represented a frontier as well as a natural source of protection. The city's northern entrance was a bridge (located in what is nowadays the *carrera septima* that allowed for crossing over the San Francisco River. Since the colonial era this area has been an important urban landmark.

When the city started to grow beyond these natural limits, urban planners adapted the orthogonal geometry of the city to the river's meandering path. The bridge of the *carrera septima* gained great importance because it connected three important spaces- the central square (*Plaza mayor*), the monastery of San Francisco and the first market of the city (*Plaza de las Yervas*). The commercial usage of the north-south axis determined the future importance of the *carrera septima* and, particularly, its crossroads with the Jimenez de Quesada Avenue.

By the early twentieth century the San Francisco River was essentially a sewer and a garbage dump. Due to the decisions of public health officials the city started to canalize various parts of the waterway. Finally, like many other rivers that extend across the city, the deep gap that isolated the city center was entirely filled in to give birth to the avenue we know today. Since then this avenue has undergone many

transformations. The avenue was enlarged at the beginning of the twentieth century though the violent urban riots of 1948<sup>78</sup> destroyed part of it along with an important part of the city center and a tramway that had run along the *carrera septima* from the turn of the century. The two story colonial houses along the avenue have since been replaced by important cultural and administrative institutions as well as modern financial buildings.

The Avenue starts on the eastern limit of the city at the bottom of the mountain and goes until San Victorino Square where it becomes 13<sup>th</sup> street. The avenue's atmosphere changes slowly as it descends towards the west. The shops, restaurants and mobile markets give a special quality to the street, which is crowded with pedestrians. Due to the presence of universities and educational centers the east side of the avenue is mainly visited by students. Around 7<sup>th</sup> street the population is more heterogeneous; there is a mix of office clerks, students, street vendors, laborers, business men, homeless people and vagabonds. Coffee shops, small restaurants and small shops are mixed with important financial and corporate centers. Towards San Victorino square, the atmosphere of the avenue changes even more. Around the 10<sup>th</sup> carrera just before the San Victorino zone, the commercial activity becomes more informal, movement increases and transit is even more chaotic because of the numerous street sellers. Due to the area's diverse quotidian activities, the use of the avenue changes substantially depending on the place, time and day of the week. While the entire avenue is full of pedestrians, workers or students during the day, most people leave the center area at night, the emptiness reinforcing the image of the center as an unsafe place.

Along the Avenue a large number of official and academic institutions are located, including *Banco de la Republica, Banco Central Hipotecario, Palacio de la Gobernación, Ministerio del Interior y de la Justicia, Ministerio de la Agricultura, Universidad de Los Andes, Universidad del Rosario, Universidad de las Americas, and the Academia Colombiana de Historia.*

### Recent Urban Transformation



Fig. 3 Solid – Void Plan of the Jimenez Avenue zone

<sup>78</sup> In 1948 an urban revolution occurred in Bogotá after Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, a popular political leader, was assassinated. As a consequence of the violent protests parts of the city center were set on fire. After this violent event known as *el Bogotazo*, the upper classes began to leave the city center and moved to new neighborhoods built in the north of the city.

The recent transformation of the Jimenez Avenue into an *Alameda* is the result of an architectural project designed by the recognized Colombian architect Rogelio Salmona. Through the construction of continuous ponds all along the avenue, the developed project makes reference to the San Francisco River and aims to strengthen the cultural heritage of the zone. The Institute of Urban Development described the project as an architectonic development that would restore the historic memory of Bogotá's citizens through the recuperation of important landmarks of the city centre (Duran, 2003)<sup>79</sup>. On the other hand, according to the Institute, the urban renovation would contribute to the construction of civic values including a sense of belonging, the protection of the city and of its cultural heritage and an interest in its development. Directed by the Peñalosa administration, this project is one of most visible actions developed as part of the *Plan Centro*, the city's plan to renovate the zone to improve its competitiveness and to attract both business and tourism.

The transformation of the public space was radical. What was a highly congested street was transformed into a partly pedestrian way well equipped with street furniture that integrates the RBT system and partially eliminates the transit of cars and buses.



**Fig. 4 RBT system and renovated public spaces**

Vegetation is also present, creating, along with the stream of water a pleasant contrast in a highly urbanized zone. As a consequence of the zone's physical transformation, along with an important increase in tourism and the consolidation of the centre as the epicenter of cultural activity, the avenue has become one of the most visited places of Bogotá's city centre.

The most evident consequence of the urban transformation is that commercial activity has received a notable boost. This has implied, in certain zones, a replacement of previously popular commercial activities with commerce directed at students and young employees. Much of this new commerce represents, in other zones, services and goods directed towards tourists and wealthy consumers. So far

<sup>79</sup> The recuperated spaces include *chorro de Padilla*, *plazoleta del rosario*, *gubernacion*, *parque de los periodistas* and *la sabana* station.



the physical transformation of the zone, marked by the renovation of public space, has implied a moderate change in the area's commercial activity.

Until now the changes observed have responded to emerging changes in the social dynamics of the city; there have not been significant modifications in the morphology of urban structures. However important real estate operations, including new developments and rehabilitations, are now in process. Some old and quite abandoned buildings are being transformed into luxurious hotels and middle-income residential units. In addition, at least eight renovation partial plans for the city centre, which will completely transform the morphology of entire districts, are in the process of being formulated. Of those eight partial plans at least three are adjacent to the Jimenez Avenue and one of them affects an entire neighborhood located in our site of study.

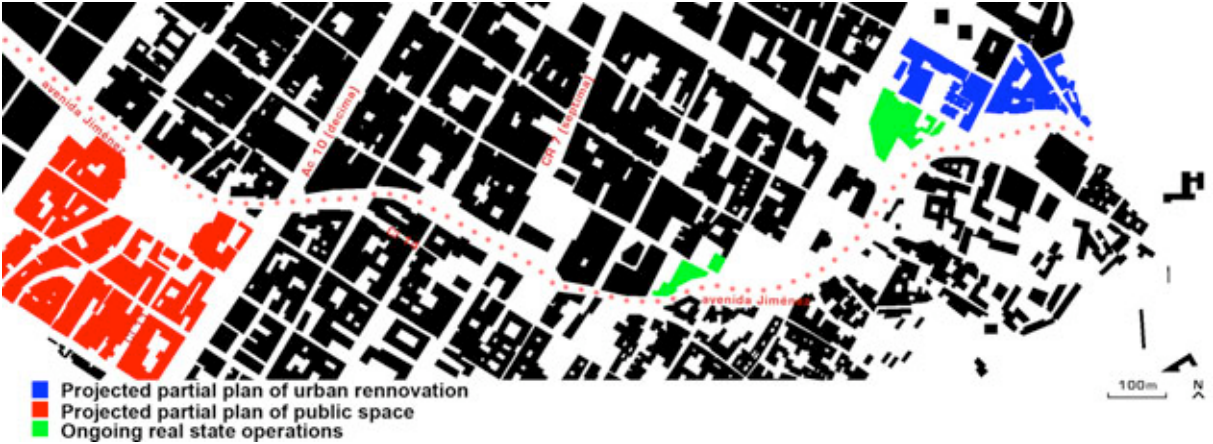


Fig. 5 Ongoing urban transformations

Although the city centre's transformation has thus far not implied a radical transformation of the zone's social dynamic, it is possible that the real estate operations currently underway will lead to the gentrification of the poorest sectors of the studied area. Given that the city centre's renovation plan aims to double the number of inhabitants in the zone in the years to come, a substantial displacement of population caused by the urban projects in process should not logically occur. Nevertheless the experience of the Tercer Milenio Park, as well as other international development experiences of urban centers in which the proposed model for Bogotá's center is based, have proven to trigger the displacement of the poorest residents.

**Jimenez de Quesada Avenue**  
**Citizen Words**



**Sample and survey conditions**

For elaborating this work, fifteen interviews were conducted at Jimenez Avenue in the form of micro-sidewalks interviews and go-alongs. These interrogations usually took less than seven minutes (6 interviews), but five of them lasted for about ten minutes while other two relatively long walks lasted from 30 minutes to an hour. Some of the interviews were conducted with couples or small groups of people and that makes the total number of the "passers-by" investigated in this site reaches 20 persons.

These passers-by are from different generations and social backgrounds. Among them, we met an apprentice gardener who comes regularly comes to "spend time" at the upper part of the avenue. We also met laborers who work at the university campus, street vendors settled in front of Los Andes, an elderly woman who receives social services, a lawyer who we met in a university bookstore in city center, students of Los Andes and the American University, a security guard who's working at the University, a young couple of engineers and a homeless artist, etc.

The interviews took place at the upper part of the Eje Ambiental, between Los Andes University and Las Aguas district. All the interviewees could not or rather did not want to continue the walk till Plaza San Victorino. The gathered comments mainly focused on the upper part of Jimenez Avenue.



**Comparison Between Before / After Project: Recurrent Comments**

During the time of the survey, several sectors of Jimenez Avenue were still under-construction, mainly the upper part of Las Aguas and its the intersection with Décima where a new Line of Transmilenio was being realized.



The city, as a construction site, was repeatedly evoked in many interviews with allusions to some controversies generated by the major work of rehabilitating the center such as: the radical work that had been delayed and once it have been



realized, it requires a costly maintenance. It is important to mention that these under-construction sites have made the new redevelopment work already achieved seem more noticeable. Almost, all the interviewees commented on the situation of the avenue before and after the construction works, highlighting the improvements such redevelopments have brought to the site.



*The Place before the development project (Internet Photo)*

So many worries like pollution, traffic congestion and insecurity were raised when discussing of the urban problems of the avenue and its near past before the remodeling project.

*«De hecho hace rato no venia al centro, y me llamó mucho la atención por ejemplo lo que están haciendo. La construcción del Transmilenio. Porque esa lleva como retrasado un montón de tiempo, estaba planeada hace hartísimo, y como que ya ahora la arreglaron digamos. Después, bueno que por fin habían hecho algo.» (17ª) "In fact I had not come to the city in a while, and I was surprised by what they are doing. The construction of Transmilenio. Because there are delays, the works were planned a long time ago, and it seems that they are fixing it Well, at last they have made something." (17ª)*

*«Si no estuviera el eje ambiental yo creo que esto sector seria muy feo. Seria peor, seria mas peligroso.» (22b) / "Without the axe.... This sector would be worse. It would have become more dangerous" (22b)*

### **The Upper Part the Eje Ambiental: A Place Away from Urban Agitation**

Most of the interviewees' remarks illustrate in particular the space prior to Las Aguas.

Not so long time ago, the top of the avenue at the Candelaria, was described as a place congested by buses and impassable for pedestrians. While now, after the realization of new amenities, it has become more safe and secure.

« esta zona antiguamente era terrible. Aquí las busetas antes llegaban hasta acá y bajaban por la Jimenez, por eso era terrible, las busetas, trancones, el sector no era agradable para caminar en realidad.» (17ª) / "Previously, this zone was terrible. The minibuses used to come up here and then they went down through the Jimenez Av. That's why it was awful, the buses, the traffic jams, this sector was unpleasant for walking". (17ª)

« Acá antes era la plazoleta de los policías, subiendo los buses por aquí y por allá, lo han arreglado bien, me parece muy bonito, porque prácticamente antes los monos (los estudiantes) se acomodaban como de poquito ahí, porque como no había mucho pasto (sic), ni nada, entonces lo que les arreglaron así me parece bonito y además esta pendientes de las zonas verdes de ustedes.» (23b) / "Before, this area was a small place for the police. Buses used to pass here and there, now this place has been well organised. It seems nice to me. The students tried to use this place but there were not a lot of green areas or anything. I think that what they did is beautiful, and in addition there is a permanent maintenance of your green areas." (23b)

« Ya esta mas seguro, y mas ágil el ingreso a Bogota, esta mas amplio el paisaje y se mejoró. Mucha la mejora que tuvo con los cambios que se hicieron. Claro que se ha "destugurizado" la Jiménez, porque antes había mucha polución, mucha contaminación, se mejoro el medio ambiente, había mucha indigencia, o habitantes de la calle.» (28) / "There is more security now, and now it is more simple to enter to the city. There have been a lot of improvements due to the changes. "The dreadful conditions of the Jimenez Avenue have been changed; before there was a lot of pollution, a lot of contamination, the environment has improved; there was a lot of homelessness." (28)

«Entonces esto si cambio mucho, urbaniza mucho la ciudad como un ambiente mas paisajístico, como algo así. Y después ya se siente como mas seguro caminando por ahí, como mas fresco por acá, por esta zona.» (17) / "So yes, it has changed a lot. Now there is a more urban atmosphere and a sort of landscaped ambience. And now one feels safe walking around here, like more relaxed." (17)

« Ha bajado el ritmo del robo por eso la gente viene mucho acá tambien.» (24) / "As the rate of robbery has declined, people have started to come here more and more". (24)

« El espacio es un corredor ambiental que fue recuperado para el peatón. Porque había mucho tráfico, mucha congestión y mucha inseguridad. Se mejoro con los paisajes y la formación del hilo de agua que hay desde la tercera hasta la décima con Jiménez.» (28) / "This space is an environmental corridor renovated for the pedestrian's use. Before, there was a lot of circulation, traffic jams and insecurity. Now everything has improved with the new landscape and the construction of this stream that runs from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the intersection of the 10<sup>th</sup> and the Jimenez Av". (28)

Eje Ambiental's name and its traces are well known. It was once related to the watercourse that passed there before and which is now embodied by a stepped basin that runs until San Victorino.

From now on: "Rico caminar por acá." (22b). Away from urban bustle reigning the lower parts of the avenue, its upper part which is perceived by all interviewees as an "agradable", "[muy] bonito", "mucha tranquilidad acá" (24), clean and maintained place. It was nominated several times as a landscaped space recalling the image of a park, with its vegetation, its water stream ("Arroyito"), "el agua corriendo suena" and its less polluted air. ("Y Siente the menos contaminación en el eje (19)). The

portion of the avenue is also perceived as more "open" (21), with a background of Monserrate Mountains.



The presence of water, benches, shade of trees and cleanness makes it a place where people love to spend their time. (20)

*« La historia es que antes era un río.» (17b) / « era un antiguo río que pasaba por la ciudad, y que se llamaba el río San Francisco.» (22ª) "The story is that there was a river here." (17b) "It was a river that formerly passed through the city and it was called the San Francisco River." (22ª)*

*« Es muy rico llegar por la mañana y cuando la montaña esta iluminada, es una imagen increíble como este verde que se mete hasta allá. Entonces me gusta mucho el eje ambiental» (22a) / "It's really nice to arrive in the morning when the hill is illuminated: it is an incredible view, as the green reaches far. This is why I adore this environmental axis." (22a)*

*« Aquí las señoras y los viejitos vienen a sentarse a leer el periódico por las mañanas con el sol. Entonces tienen el sol y las sombras de los árboles y se sientan a leer por la mañana con el movimiento de este lugar, es un contraste que me encanta.» (22ª) / "In the mornings old men and women usually come to sit down and enjoy reading under the sun. With the sun and the shadows of the trees, it's a contrast that I love". (22ª)*



As being sensitive to the space amenities offered by the new planning, the interviewees proved to be sensitive to the maintenance of the place as well.

*« Y es muy limpio. La gente se preocupa por mantener el ambiente. Los aseoadores mantienen siempre las aguas bien limpias « (19) "The place is*



large. People take care of the conservation of the environment. Those who take care of cleaning keep the water clean.” (19)

« Solo que ya lo están dejando dañar. Ahí vea. Solo mugre y eso.» (20)  
“However the place is worsening, just look, only litter and stuff like that.” (20)

« [...] yo ya vi la gente bombeando el agua, limpiando el fondo del canal, después me pregunto a la larga si es tan eficiente, que tan autosostenible es, digamos.» (17<sup>a</sup>) “I’ve seen people cleaning the stream, then I wonder if this is efficient, how sustainable is this project.” (17<sup>a</sup>)



### **A Place Marked by the Daily Presence of Students**

In addition, this place is also considered as a gateway to the centre and as a touristic area (linked to the nearby historic district of La Candelaria and to the Sundays’ attendance of Monserrate). The upper part of Eje Ambiental is mostly associated with the presence of students attending the surrounding universities.

In fact, students appropriate the space. During the daytime, they are found there, sitting on the edges of the water basin to smoke a cigarette, make phone calls or chat. After finishing their lectures, they usually go to the surrounding local bars.

« Esta zona es como la zona mas turística y estudiantil.» (17b) “This is the most turistic zone of the city. It is also the center of student activity.” (17b)

« Y alla en la Candelaria, es el primer barrio que tuvo Bogota, es el barrio colonial por excelencia de Bogota, y alrededor de este barrio hay muchas universidades. Por lo menos cuatro o cinco universidades. Es decir ese es el corazon de Bogota, se podria decir el corazon estudiantil.» (29) / “Up there is located La Candelaria, which is the first district that existed in Bogota. It is the colonial district. Around La Calendaria, there are many universities. There are at least four or five universities. That means that La Candelaria is the heart of Bogotá, It could be said that it is the heart of the academic activity.” (29)

« ha habido muchos momentos en que me siento acá con mis amigos a hablar y entramos a un bar. Y salimos del bar a fumarnos un cigarrillo y nos sentamos acá. O tal vez a veces me siento en la zona verde con unos amigos y nos sentamos a hablar.» (19) / “I used to sit here most of the time with my friends to talk and then go into a bar. We used to come out of the

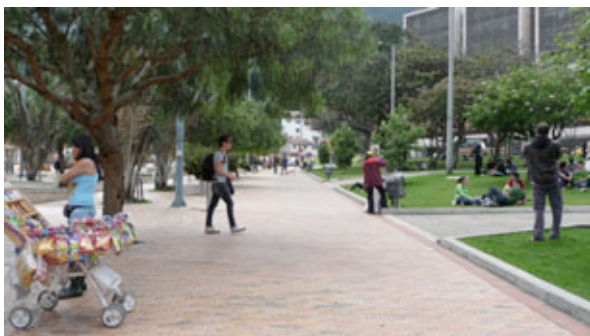
bar to smoke a cigarette and sit here. And sometimes, I prefer to stay in the green area with my friends; we sit here to talk.” (19)

« Y este punto de encuentro, el cenicero se llama de...De encuentro de jóvenes en las tardes...no sé...como por la noche debe ser pesado el ambiente ahí en la realidad. Pero si es un punto de encuentro acá, en el centro.» (17<sup>a</sup>) “This meeting place is known as “the ashtray”. It’s a meeting point for the young persons in the afternoons. I do not know but in the nighttime the atmosphere must be heavy. Yes, this is a meeting point in the downtown.” (17<sup>a</sup>)



This daily presence of people, gives livelihood assistance to many mobil vendors who set along the watercourse. At the same time, it contributes in animating the public space giving it the image of a modern city.

«Acá se encajona la ciudad y se vuelve una ciudad vertical, mas la metrópoli que tiene esa dinámica, están los estudiantes están los restaurantes, esta el Transmilenio, es la imagen de la urbe del movimiento, la ciudad como movimiento.» (22<sup>a</sup>) / “In this place the city becomes a vertical city. It has the dynamic of a metropolis; there are students, restaurants, the Transmilenio. It’s the image of a city in constant movement” (22<sup>a</sup>)







The social identity of the space is also evoked in a pejorative way by an interviewed couple, who stigmatizes the social adherence of students and the bourgeois imprint they give to the neighborhood.

This appropriation of the space by students, or more generally by the university, makes the site supervised by a dozen of security guards who are recognizable by their uniforms gives certain people an ambiguous status of the place.

*«Aquí estan los gomelos, son gente de la clase alta, son gente que habla así como toda estirada y hablan con muchos modismos. Como casi siempre se la pasan diciendo “guevon”. No sabemos porque pero.» (18) / “Here are the rich kids. They are upscale people; people who talk affectedly and they use a lot of idioms. For example they keep saying “guevon”.” (18)*

*«Quien permanece acá? Los policías de vez en cuando. Yo creo que mas que todo por las personas que bajan a robar, pero la mayoría son vigilantes de la universidad. Ellos yo creo que los paga la Universidad.» (23b) / “Who is here permanently? The Police from time to time. I think it’s mainly because of those who come to steal things. But most of them are the guards of the university. I think it is the university that pays them.” (23b)*





The notion of public space is questioned by a street vendor, whose unofficial activity seems to be daily “threatened” by the presence of security guards.

In this sense, certain speeches helped relativising the observation, made by most of the interviewees, that the place is more secure and more favorable to social cohabitation than before.

Here, as in other places of Bogotá where we conducted other surveys, a mutual mistrust remains between different population categories. In particular, the presence of police, which might appear as a source of security to some, while with respect to others, it is a synonym to insecurity. Similarly, a student who was embarrassed when telling us that the place tranquility is somewhat disturbed by the presence of beggars. Moreover, the district is considered dangerous when the night falls.

« Yo pienso que el espacio público es una cosa, pero prácticamente la universidad es la que esta pendiente de los estudiantes. Porque el espacio publico ...ustedes pueden venir allá abajo y esas calles son horribles. Entonces creo yo, no se si estoy equivocada, que creo que tiene la universidad algo que ver con esto. [...] Entonces yo creo que esto prácticamente, puede permanecer mas de la universidad.» (23b) *“I think that public space is one thing, but actually, the university is taking care of its students. Because when you go down there, you find that the streets are horrible. That's why I think, and I do not know if I'm wrong, that the university has something to do with this. [...] So I think that this place is like if it belonged to the university”* (23b)

«[¿Este sitio le parece un sitio seguro?] Pues seguro, seguro, tanto, tanto. Pero no, pero sí, mas o menos.» (23<sup>a</sup>) *“Do you think that this is a safe place? Well, really safe, no. But I think it is quite safe.”* (23<sup>a</sup>)

« Y que a veces hay mucho gamin. Yo no discrimino a nadie, pero digamos es un poco incomodo que uno vaya bajando así tranquilo y de un momento a otro le vayan pidiendo plata a uno. Eso es lo que me incomoda un poco.» (19) *“Sometimes there are lots of hemeless people. I do not aim to*



*discriminate anyone, but it is quite uncomfortable that when one is calmly walking someone comes to ask you for money. That's what makes me uncomfortable.” (19)*

*« Aquí la vida nocturna es muy agitada. Y por la noche puede ser muy peligroso. De hecho una vez [...] salimos tarde de por allí, y por la 19 vimos pasar un señor como cogiéndose la oreja, estaba sangrando...eso fue bien crudo.» (17ª) “Here the night life can be really hot. And in the nights it can be very dangerous. Indeed once [...] we went out late and in the 19th street we saw a man holding his ear. He was bleeding...that was really hard to see.” (17ª)*



### **Las Aguas: Atmospheres of Contrast**

When going down towards Las Aguas, the presence of passers-by intensifies, while the pedestrian path gets narrower which causes certain collisions in a complex circulation network often congested.

### **Immersion in the Atmosphere of Jimenez Avenue**

The atmosphere of this sector of the avenue is negatively described in a mode of contrast: from the tranquillity felt by the pedestrian in the upper sections, which is gradually substituted by a feeling of "tension". In particular, the perception of the watercourse disappears under the invasive effect of different sources of pollution: traffic noise, congestion, smell of exhaust fumes, "dirt" and noise related to the construction works.



This tension increases progressively as one walks down the avenue. It's like a sort of a gradual immersion or plunging in the bustling activities and in the saturated atmosphere of Jimenez Avenue.

« Y aquí esta zona es la zona de mas ruido, de contaminación. De noche en este pedacito hace un frío impresionante. Corre mucho viento. Es un frío muy seco, y pues ahorita estamos en todas estas obras y espero que van a encontrar una mejor solución tanto para la movilidad, el transporte y los peatones!» (17b) “This zone is the most noisy, the most polluted. During the nights right here it's really cold. There is a lot of wind. It's cold and dry. Now that we're in the middle of all these works I expect that they will find better Solutions for mobility, for the public transport and the pedestrians.” (17b)

« Acá como que cambia, acá comienza a haber mas ruido, es que esta subida hacia atrás es mucho mas tranquila.» (22b) “Here the things change. There is more noise here; indeed back there it's a lot more tranquil.” (22b)

«[¿Porque creen que es mas sucio abajo que acá?] Porque se sitúan mas vendedores. Entonces la gente va bajando. Se termina de comer lo que compra, ve la basura y no botan donde es.» (19) “Why do you think that down there the streets are more dirty? Because there are more vendors. So as people walks they buy something to eat and they do not throw the garbage where they must.” (19)

« Aunque cuando uno va bajando es como mas tensionante, porque mucha gente baja. San Victorino es muy lleno y uno tiene que estar pendiente de las cosas.» (22b) “As you come down the avenue it becomes more stressful, because of the crowd. San Victorino is crowded and you have to take careo f your belongings.” (22b)

« Se siente totalmente diferente, el ruido, el comercio se vuelve molesto. Ese ruido es canzon.» (22ª) / “Here everything feels differently; the noise, the commerce, everything turns unpleasant. This noise fatigues us”. (22ª)



## Metropolitan Identity

In a positive mode this time, the interviews evoked stimulatingly the contrast that urban landscape offer to the site as well as the spectacle of the moving passers-by. The perception and the descriptions of Las Aguas reveal the effect of telescoping between the ancient city, which is still present with its low-rise houses and narrow streets, and the modern city with its modern architecture of high-rise office buildings. Similarly, the "contrast of mezcla" was also mentioned in the form of paradox arising from the diversity of commerce and the closeness of different social classes: people living in the street, popular classes, students, citizens' (estrato 6).

*« Aquí por la Jiménez con tercera, por la Jiménez con cuarta, así como se ve también se había un restaurante francés. Al frente ahí en el edificio de Aviatur, en el primer piso. Y al frente queda la librería lerner. Y queda "crepes and waffles". También se ve ese contraste de la mezcla entre los estratos 6 de los estudiantes de la universidad de los Andes y el Rosario, con la mezcla del estrato uno o de los habitantes de la calle. En la puerta de "crêpes and waffles", y también otro restaurante que pusieron de comida árabe que es un restaurante para estrato 6. Es una gastronomía árabe. Está también reducido para una gente de ingresos alto.» (28) / "Near the intersection between the Jimenez Av. and the 3rd or 4th, there was a French restaurant, opposite to the Aviatur building, at the first floor. In front you find the Lerner library and Crepes and Waffles. You can see how the upscale students of the Los Andes and Rosario University are mixed with the poor, the homeless people who live in the street. There is also an Arabic restaurant, which is exclusively a place for rich people." (28)*

*« A la izquierda esta la Candelaria, es el tema histórico. Se ve el contraste entre edificios antiguos, de poca altura, de calles estrechas para los peatones. Aunque hay espacios para peatones, son muy pequeños. Y por el otro lado están los edificios modernos. Son dos ciudades que están muy cercanas y conviven. A mi me gusta esa convivencia, no todo tiene que ser tan moderno. [...] Acá no se ve solo una convivencia de las personas, sino una convivencia de la historia con lo contemporáneo. La ciudad antigua y lo nuevo. Las personas que han vivido aquí toda la vida y los que venimos a estudiar. Entonces confluyen muchos tipos de convivencia aquí. Que están en torno al espacio público.» (22ª) / "To the left is located La Candelaria, a historic site. Here, you can see the contrast between the old low-rise buildings and the streets for pedestrians. Although, there are spaces for pedestrians, they are too narrow. On the other hand there are the modern buildings. They are like two different neighbouring cities that are living*



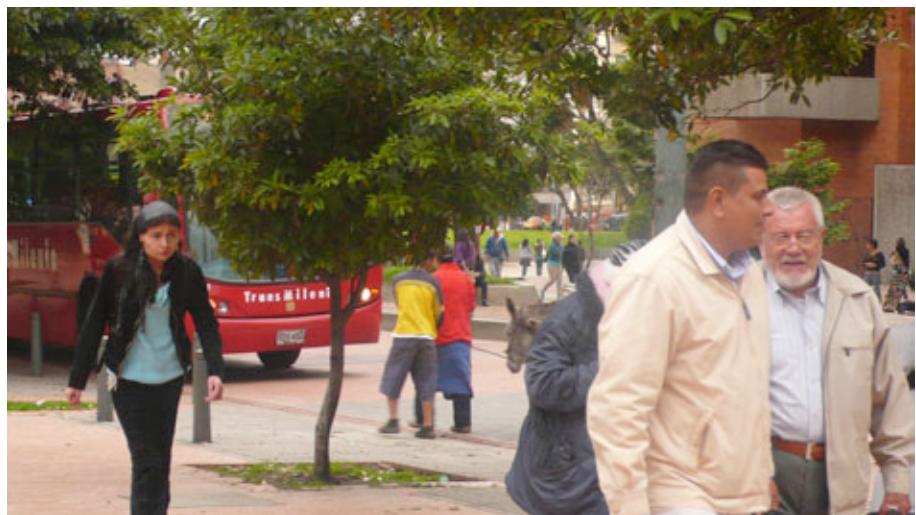
together. I love this coexistence, not everything has to be modern. [...] Here, there is coexistence between people and there is also the coexistence between the history and the contemporary, between the ancient and the modern city, between those who have lived here for their lifetime and those who have recently arrived, like us, the students. In this public space, several ways of coexistence can be found". (22<sup>a</sup>)



In addition, the urban landscape of Jimenez Avenue and the social mix found in the street constitutes, from the interviewees' point of view, the main signs of the renewed metropolitan identity of Bogotá.

« Cuando uno piensa en Bogotá, piensa mas en la arquitectura colonial, en la candelaria, en los edificios de ladrillos, en las torres del parque, en los barrios de invasión, de autoconstrucción, uno no espera esto. Uno no espera ese edificio súper racional, súper moderno, abandonado ahí funciona algo del gobierno pero se ve el descuido podría estar en Nueva York perfectamente este edificio, el movimiento internacional, y todo está a tan cerca y convive, nos falta trabajar mas y que estemos mas pendientes de las cosas. Cuando camino por acá siento que Bogotá ha mejorado mucho. Que estamos mejorando no solo como ciudad en cuanto a imagen, sino como sociedad, que hay mayor cercanía entre las personas.» (22<sup>a</sup>) "If we think about Bogotá, we think about the colonial architecture, about La Candelaria, about brick buildings, about the "torres del parque", about the illegal neighbourhoods, about the self construction. But we does not expect a building like this, super rational, super modern, an abandoned building. It seems a governmental building, but it is neglected. This building could be in New York. The international movement is present here. We must work to

*preserve that. When I walk around here, I feel that Bogota has improved a lot. We have improved not only the image of the city but the society itself, there is more proximity among the people". (22<sup>a</sup>)*



### **From the Septima to San Victorino: Ambivalent Perceptions**

However, while walking down the Avenue between Septima and Plaza San Victorino, the speeches in the few interviews conducted in this space, were dominated by ambivalent perceptions.

### **The "Chaos" at Jimenez-Decima Square**

The section of the avenue that evoked unanimous comments is its intersection with Decima Avenue. It is doubly crowded by an informal flea market installed on the sidewalks and the construction site of a new line of Transmilenio. This intersection is described as chaotic, extremely polluted and insecure zone. It is a place known for its thievery, drug traffic and criminality.





According to what is mentioned by two interviewed students of architecture: The densities of activities and traffic flow have made the intersection Decima-Jimenez look like a “world apart” or a special zone. It’s elusive to describe its main functions, characters and details for who only traverses it.

*« Por las obras que están realizando por el Transmilenio por la carera décima. Ya se iniciaron las obras de la carera décima. Entonces taparon una calle, y hay mucho caos vehicular y de peatones y para pasar eso esta terrible. Desde la carera décima con calle 19 hasta la carera décima con Jimenez.» (28) / “Down there, there are situations of insecurity because of street vendors, the traffic, traffic jams as well as the construction sites of Transmilenio located in the 10th. They started the construction and they closed a street, causing a chaos due to the continuous movement of vehicles and pedestrians. It’s terrible trying to cross the road at the intersection of the 10th and the 19th street and till the intersection between the 10th and the Jimenez Avenue.”*

*“Damn It, there are police everywhere. Here, we do not go to the flea market, as it might be anywhere. You see the guy right there, he had a computer keyboard. Yeah, damn it, Look at that, there are cops every ten meters. And there are cops everywhere, but criminality is still there, robberies with knives and all other types of criminality.” (29)*

*« La décima me hace pensar en caos. Un desorden impresionante. Siento un poco de miedo porque hay muchos robos. Es la imagen que tengo, pienso en suciedad, ruido. No es ni siquiera una imagen sino que es así.» (22b) / “The tenth makes me think of chaos, of disorder. I’m afraid here because there is a lot of robbery, probably not so much, but that’s the image I have, I think of dirt and noise. This is not even an image. It’s the reality.” (22b)*



«Iguale una persona que trabaje o que estudie ahí va a tener un idea diferente.» (22b)/ “Probably someone who works or studies here, he might have a different idea.” (22b)

« Yo creo que la costumbre hace que ya no vea esas cosas.» (22<sup>a</sup>) / “I think that once you get used you don’t see the same things.” (22b)



### Urbanity as being Discovered

Generally, the rehabilitation project of Jimenez Avenue neither erased its bad reputation, nor its "dangerous" memory. One of the two interviewed students commented on the gap between the street representations, yet vivid, and the daily practices of the avenue, which she describes as a public space that is being gradually tamed, and whose qualities are being discovered. They are being discovered beyond certain unwelcoming aspects such as dirt and noise.

In this sense, the two architectural students, who were some of the few who continued the walk till San Victorino, see this place as an urban model due to its

image as an open space more than an avenue and due to its amenities and the presence of public as well.



From their descriptions, in which the choreography created by the passers-by was evoked, we find—from our observations- that certain elements concerning this aspect are related to the new amenities offered by the street furniture.

*« He aprendido que me gusto un poquito mas pero las primeras veces que yo venia acá estaba asustada porque a uno siempre le han dicho que es uno de los sitios mas peligrosos, San Victorino es muy peligroso. Uno va aprendiendo que no es tan peligroso a verle las cosas buenas pero le sigo viendo muchas cosas feas. El agua es muy sucia, acá hay mucho ruido. No es un sitio para sentarse.» (22b) / “I learned to love it but, at the beginning,*



*when I came here, I was afraid because we always heard that this is one of the most dangerous places of the city. San Victorino is very dangerous. Gradually, we know that this place is not as dangerous as we used to think. It has some good things. But I always see the bad ones. The water is very dirty and there is a lot of noise. This is not a place to sit.” (22b)*

*« En la plaza de San Victorino, uno llega al espacio y se relaja. Este espacio es súper abierto. Hay mucha gente pero no se percibe la masa. Aquí a diferencia del eje ambiental que tiende a llevarnos, uno prefiere parar y sentarse un rato. Tal vez eso muestra como influencia el espacio publico a las personas. Como lo determina a ir, como un flujo de movilidad, o a estar, a muchas actitudes.» (22<sup>a</sup>) / “We relax in the San Victorio sqaure. It’s an extremely open space. There are many people here but they do not look like a crowd. Contrary to the axis ... that leads you, that invites you to move, here I prefer to sit for a moment. This is an example of how public spaces have an influence on people; it determines their mobility, their permanence and their attitudes.” (22b)*

*« Miren por ejemplo, esto me parece bastante bueno. El espacio esta ocupado. Tal vez en el diseño mismo uno podría pensar que una línea recta no lleva a que la gente... Si uno se sienta en una línea curva... las personas se están viendo la cara, es muy bueno ver como se utiliza y la gente esta ahí usando la calle, y dándole seguridad. Cuando uno esta en la calle, esta dando seguridad al otro. Otra cosa que me parece muy bonita es que cuando uno va caminando por acá de tanto en tanto aparece Monserrate. Aparece y desaparece y es el referente que siempre esta ahí.» (22<sup>a</sup>) / “Look! In my opinion, this is wonderful. This space is always occupied. One might think that a straight line does not conduct people to ... but if you sit on a curved line people can meet face to face. Seeing people makes us feel safe. The presence of people in the street gives security to everyone. Another thing that I like is when Montserate appears, it appears and disappears. It is always a point of reference.” (22a)*



## **Between Social Mix and Space Appropriation**

If the construction work is, for most of the interviewees, a synonym to a greater social harmony, social cohabitation, or even a more "living together" society, Jimenez Avenue is recurrently described in terms of its appropriation by particular social groups.



Rosario Plaza, indirectly qualified as a popular square, is also occupied by both students of the universities limiting the space, and by the informal activities, which attract people such as street vendors, street performers, and barkers.

*« Entre la carera séptima y la carera décima es donde me siento mas insegura. Ademas ahí hay muchos hombres y es incomodo para una mujer.» (22b) Between the “Septima” and the Decima” is where I feel more vulnerable. There are many men and that’s uncomfortable for a woman.”(22b)*

*«Se da un poquito en la plazoleta del rosario, porque ahí hay mucha influencia de mercados populares, de ventas callejeras y mercados informales.» (28) / “There is some insecurity in the Rosario square because there are many popular markets, commerce in the streets and informal markets.” (28)*

*«[Y que pasa en la plaza del Rosario?]*

*Aya, hay una universidad, la universidad del Rosario. Como dentro de la universidad no hay tanto espacio, salen a la plaza que es su sitio de encuentro. [...] Yo creo que también hay mucha gente que no es de la universidad, pero pienso que la dinámica principal la da la universidad. También esta la gente que llama la atención para ganar dinero porque el espacio publico en nuestro país y en Latinoamérica es el espacio para ganarse la vida de alguna forma. Esta el que embola los zapatos, el que tiene mas abajo las careras de unos animalitos para hacer apuestas [...].» (22ª et 22b) / “Here, there’s a university, El Rosario University. In the university, there is not much space and that’s why students come to this square to meet. [...] I believe that in the square there are many people who do not belong to the university, but it is the university which dictates the dynamics of the square. There are also people who work in the street to make some money. “In this country and in Latin America, public space is a*

*workplace. We may find people who shine shoes, and those who organize gambles of animal races.” (22<sup>a</sup> et 22b)*



In this sense, the portion of the avenue between the Septima and Decima, is also where the emerald sellers, shoe-shiners, beggars, indigents, those who attract attention are mostly present.

More precisely, the actual state of the appropriation of public spaces by these groups evokes general comments about the Colombian society, while questioning at the same time what really makes a public space.

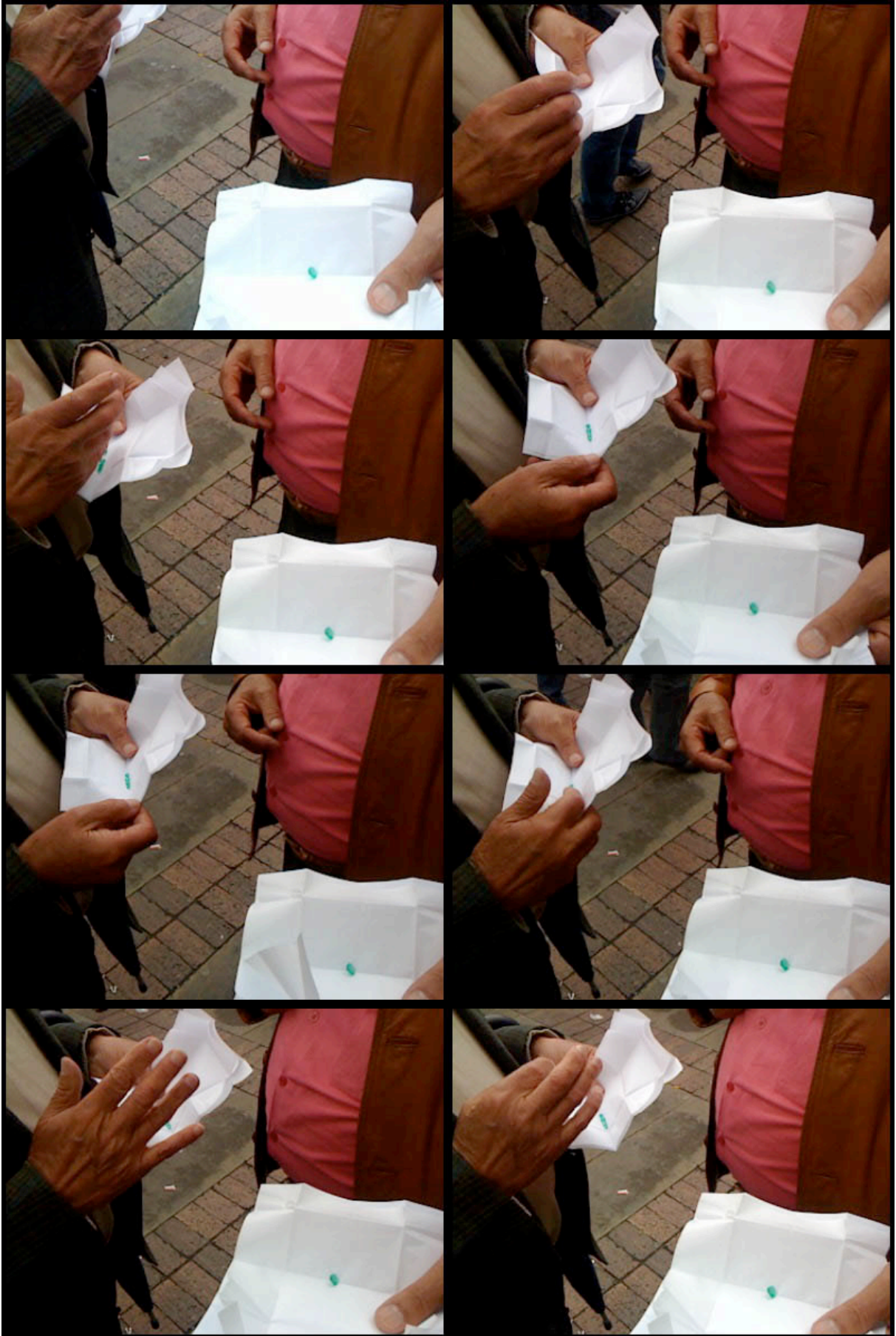
In addition, the daily contact with homeless people living in the street is ended by becoming “normal”, disturbing, and querying at the same time.

It's the same about the street commerce, highly present between Septima and Decima, in particular the emeralds trade. Every day dozens of merchants gather on the same sidewalk in front of "Emerald Trade Center".

The existence of illegal networks is more or less known. As such, one interviewee, who lives in the street, presents the public space of Jimenez as a place of social conflict and struggle where spaces of commerce are negotiated between merchants by money and sometimes by violence.

In addition, perceived as a sort of Latin American fatalism that helps absorbing the high percentage of unemployment, street commerce is described in terms of ambiguity, between legality and illegality, and the tolerance that exists in respect to this ambiguity.





«Me parece terrible venir acá ver todos los indigentes inhalando boxer . Acaba de pasar uno y es impactante la primera vez que uno ve eso. Después se vuelve normal y eso es horrible también.» (22b) / “I think it is terrible to arrive every day and see indigent people inhaling boxer [solvent]. It is impressive to see this image for the first time. Afterwards it becomes normal which is also terrible”. (22b)

« Este espacio a mi me genera preguntas por ejemplo, estas personas que son los esmeralderos son personas que comercian con esmeraldas, y estas personas están aquí haciendo negocios todas las personas que ves ahí comercian con esmeraldas y arriba también esta el “emerald trade centre” que es un comercio de esmeraldas mas formal; a mi esto me genera muchas preguntas, una esquina de la ciudad que se vuelve lugar de comercio de una piedra preciosa. [...] ¿Porque pasa eso? ¿Porque no hay una formalización? ¿Es legal hacerlo? ¿Es bueno para la ciudad? No lo estoy criticando, me genera preguntas.» (22<sup>a</sup>) / “Concerning this space, I have many questions. For example, there are some people who trade in emerald, so all these people that you see here are trading in emerald too, while there is the Esmeralda Trade Center, which is more formal. This activity makes me think how a small corner of the city can become a place of commerce of precious stones [...] Why does this happens? Why this type of trade isn't legalized? Is this activity legal? Is it good to the city? This is not a criticism; I only have questions” (22<sup>a</sup>)

[Original words in french] “[Comment les cireurs de chaussures font pour obtenir le permis de s'installer ?] Y en a pas mal qui sont démobilisés, si vous voulez. Y en a pas mal qui étaient des guérilleros, y en a pas mal qui étaient des tueurs, donc voila on vous donne de la marchandise, on vous donne de l'argent, on vous donne le capital pour travailler, mais ce n'est pas possible dans un pays comme la Colombie, on est obligé d'avoir les mains salies, il faut tuer pour avoir une place dans la société. Donc si tu n'es pas démobilisé de la guérilla, ou des paramilitaires, tu ne peux pas avoir un business, à moins que t'ailles faire des affaires comme ça avec la coke, avec des pierres je ne sais pas.”

[les émeraudes] “Ben oui c'est la mafia ça.[...] Ce sont des vendeurs qui sont en connection directe avec des familles qui ont les mines de pierres. Il faut que tu sois de cette région là pour avoir le droit de vendre les pierres, pour avoir des connections, ça appartient pas au peuple Colombien, ça appartient à certaines familles. C'est la mafia quoi! Tu ne peux pas déconner avec les gens qui vendent des pierres, c'est une mafia, ils sont armés, et ils font de l'intimidation comme ils font les paramilitaires. Parfois ils sont alliés avec les paramilitaires et avec des groupes de narco trafiquants. Ca devrait être quelque chose de normal que les pierres sont une richesse du peuple, que ce n'est pas la richesse de quelques uns. Les gens qui vendent des pierres, qui arrivent à avoir un certain pouvoir d'achat, eux même ils discriminent et classifient les gens qui au début étaient comme eux ; ce sont des gens qui n'étaient pas riches sauf qu'eux ils ont les mines et ils sont devenus riches à cause des pierres. Ils sont au top au haut niveau et les autres ils sont en bas. C'est la même chose ça évolue pas, ils continuent à faire la même chose.” (29)

“What do shoeshine boys do to get the permission to settle here? Among them, if you want, there is quite a good number who are demobilized. There is quite a good number who used to work with the Colombian guerrillas. There is quite a good number who were killers. Normally, in other countries, they give them goods; they give them money as a capital for working. But it is not possible in a country like Colombia, as one is obliged to have his hands dirty, he must kill to have a place in the society. So if you're not demobilized of guerrillas or paramilitaries, you cannot have a work, unless

*you do a business like trading with coke or with precious stones.... I do not know."*

*[Emeralds] Yeah, it's a Mafia. [...] These vendors are in direct connection with the families who own the mines stone. Because to be a part of this area as you have to make some connections that permit you to sell precious stones here. It is not for all the Colombian people, it belongs only to certain families. It is a mafia! You cannot screw with people who sell gemstones. It is a mafia. They are armed, and they intimidate people as they are paramilitaries. Sometimes they ally with the paramilitary and with groups of narco-traffickers. It might be normal that the stones are considered as a source of wealth to all the Colombian people and not only for some of them but this doesn't happen here. People who sell gemstones and who could reach a certain capacity of purchasing it, they are themselves who discriminate and classify people who were initially like them. They are people who were not rich before but they had only the mines and they became wealthy because of gemstones. They are at the higher levels and the others are in the lower ones. This is why this type of commerce does not progress as they continue to do the same thing."(29)*

## **Security and Social Labeling of Public Spaces**

In the streets of Bogotá, certain categories of users are immediately recognized such as the police, security guards and the military who are instantly identifiable by their uniforms or their fluorescent jacket on which their functions are printed. Also, mobil street vendors, whose equipments such as (cart, stroller, box ...) are signs of their activity, are also noticeable. In addition, there are the "indigents" people who live in the street, are recognized by their poorest and most ragged cloths. Those indigents are also considered as the most dissocialized people because of their disoriented behavior like their stumbling walk, dazed look, men and women sleeping on the ground, sometimes in the middle of the passageway ....



The fact that these categories of citizens are visible all over the avenue, acts as a social labeling (indicator) that marks public spaces.



The speech of the interviewed passers-by makes itself the echo in three ways:

- The way they look at the other social groups found in the street and whom they mentioned during the interviews, have always been accompanied by a personal judgment.
- When evoking this topic, their talks were always related to the question of security.
- Their speeches vary, and sometimes oppose, according to the social class to which the interviewees belong.

### **A Look towards People Living or Working in the Street: Between Discomfort and Comprehensive Distance.**

The "indigent" and many street vendors, by whom we passed along Jimenez Avenue, were the subject of some recurrent remarks. For example, while the interviewees were trying to describe the swarming spectacle of the avenue, one of them commented several times on the "contrast" that the mixture between "los estratos 6" and "los estratos 1" offer.

Through a mode that tended to mix discovering facts, describing registers, giving opinions and expressing feelings together, the interviewees from the upper social classes like lawyers, students, engineers have expressed their opinions concerning homeless people and those who are trying to earn their living in a mood proved to be ambivalent.



In their general talks, they linked the presence of the homeless and the beggars, in some way or another, to the feeling of insecurity that is being felt at certain places especially between la Septima and la Decima.

*«Claro que se ha "destugurizado" la Jiménez, porque antes había mucha polución, mucha contaminación, se mejoro el medio ambiente, había mucha indigencia, o habitantes de la calle.» (28) "The dreadful conditions of the Jimenez Avenue have been changed; before there was a lot of polution, a lot of contamination, the enviroment has improved; there was a lot of homelessness." (28)*

As mentioned before, their presence and their closeness in public space disturbs, embarrasses or rather evokes discomfort and inconvenient feelings even if we hardly dare to admit it.

*« Aun a pesar de eso [la mejora que tuvo con los cambios que se hicieron ] todavía sigue habiendo uno que otro habitante de la calle que baja de los cerros orientales o de los barrios de la periferia que bajan y se mezclan con la gente.» (28) “Despite the improvements there are still indigent people who come from the mountain or from the peripheries and they mix with the other people.” (28)*

*« Y que a veces hay mucho gamin. Yo no discrimino a nadie, pero digamos es un poco incomodo que uno vaya bajando así tranquilo y de un momento a otro le vayan pidiendo plata a uno. Eso es lo que me incomoda un poco.» (19) ) “Sometimes there are lots of hemeless people. I do not aim to discriminate anyone, but it is quite uncomfortable that when one is calmly walking someone comes to ask you for money. That’s what makes me uncomfortable.” (19)*

*«Me parece terrible venir acá ver todos los indigentes inhalando boxer. Acaba de pasar uno y es impactante la primera vez que uno ve eso. Después se vuelve normal y eso es horrible también.» (22b) / “I think it is terrible to arrive every day and see indigent people inhaling boxer [solvent]. It is impressive to see this image for the first time. Afterwards it becomes normal which is also terrible”. (22b)*

Described as a source of disturbance and as a violation of public space, street ambulant commerce is also considered, when it is not regulated, as a synonym of insecurity. It is interesting to notice that certain interviewees during the in-site inquiry, ignored their immediate feelings, and admitted that this form of informal activity constitutes almost a necessary harm, a Latin-American fatality that they got used to. It’s hard to find a real solution. For summarizing the gathered information, no one denied the right of these people to work facing the unemployment. They also admitted that this work is the only source of earning their living; as working in the street is considered a mean that support the country economy.

*«[Usted hace referencia con frecuencia a los vendedores ambulantes, y lo relaciona con la inseguridad.] Si se presenta inseguridad, en muy pequeña parte pero si se presenta. Pero si, se presenta inseguridad a veces. Por los informes que dan en caracol noticias y RNC de que cuando hay una venta ambulante organizada no hay inseguridad pero cuando es desorganizada hay caos y hay inseguridad. Ahora se ha solucionado mucho el problema de las ventas ambulantes, por la séptima y por la décima pero el caos sigue con el aumento del desempleo. La informalidad que siempre hay en las ciudades latinoamericanas pero se sigue trabajando en eso. La alcaldía sigue trabajando en eso.» (28) « [You mention frequently street vendors when you talk about insecurity.] There is a feeling of insecurity, may be a little bit, but it exists. I listen to Caracol and RCN news. They explain that it’s safe when the commerce is organized, but if it is not, there will be chaos and insecurity. Now the problem of street vendors has diminished, but the chaos did not disappear because of the unemployment rate. The informality is always present in Latin American cities, but they continue to look for solutions, the city administration is still working to find solutions.” (28)*

*« el espacio publico en nuestro país y en Latinoamérica es el espacio para ganarse la vida de alguna forma. Esta el que embola los zapatos, el que tiene mas abajo las careras de unos animalitos para hacer apuestas, es una*

*cosa que termina siendo determinante para la economía de la ciudad.» (22<sup>a</sup>). “In this country and in Latin America, public space is a workplace. We may find people who shine shoes, and those who organize gambles of animal races.” (22<sup>a</sup> et 22b)*

*Working in the street is a crucial activity to support the economy of the city.” (22<sup>a</sup>)*

*« Creo que las ventas ambulantes representan un retroceso, es injusto que estas personas no tengan trabajo y negarles la posibilidad de que trabajen ahí es un poco miserable, pero tampoco esta bien que estén ocupando el espacio publico.» (22<sup>a</sup>)/ “I believe that the existence of street vendors is like a step backwards; it is not fair that people do not have work and it is miserable to deny their right to work, but at the same time it is not correct that they occupy public spaces like that. » (22<sup>a</sup>)*



### **Appropriation of Urbain Projet and its Rhetoric by the Interviewees Belonging to Upper Social Classes**

The interviewees, who belong to upper social classes, are those who tackled, openly, the renovation process of public spaces mainly in terms of improvements.

The recent improvements are thus described as a source of greater coexistence and social diversity that is now reflected on the actual use of public space.

The improvement of comfort and urban landscape is associated with a feeling of higher security and achieving more safety and security, which is a main objective of this rehabilitation project from the beginning.



They agreed that in return, improving security has made the center more attractive and promoted social mix as well.

Finally, the comments of these interviewees reflect a fairly strong adherence to the rehabilitation policy "recuperación" of public spaces, which is being applied by successive municipalities for over than 10 years.

During the interview, the lawyer, who we met in a university bookstore at Jimenez Avenue, remembers the huge informal market that ended up with being installed in San Victorino. He also evoked the image of famous Cartucho with its hundreds of barracks and uncontrolled commerce. Despite highlighting the criticism created by the major redevelopment work, but he also admitted that this radical renovation has solved "radicals" problems.

*«Si no estuviera el eje ambiental yo creo que esto sector sería muy feo. Sería peor, sería mas peligroso.» (22b) / "Without the axe.... This sector would be worse. It would have become more dangerous" (22b)*

*« Ha bajado el ritmo del robo por eso la gente viene mucho acá también.» (24) "As the rate of robbery has declined, people have started to come here more and more". (24)*

*«También se ve ese contraste de la mezcla entre los estratos 6 de los estudiantes de la universidad de los Andes y el Rosario, con la mezcla del estrato uno o de los habitantes de la calle. En la puerta de "crêpes and waffles", y también otro restaurante que pusieron de comida árabe que es un restaurante para una gente de ingresos alto.» (28) / You can see how the upscale students of the Los Andes and Rosario University are mixed with the poor, the homeless people who live in the street. There is also an Arabic restaurant, which is exclusively a place for rich people." (28)*

*« Ahora han entrado sitios de rumba y de comida internacional porque se ha generado mucha seguridad. Por el CAI , la policía que queda ahí en la Jiménez, entonces la gente se siente mas segura con la estación que queda al frente del supermercado Olímpica. Entonces eso ha generado mucha afluencia de publico y de estudiantes.» (28) "Now there are nightclubs and international restaurants because there is more security. Because of the police station (CAI). The police station is just there in the Jimenez Av. Therefore people feel safer with the police station that is in front of the supermarket. That has encouraged the students and the people in general to come." (28)*

*«Igual va a haber un gran cambio, porque por la décima están construyendo Transmilenio y están construyendo una vía, que se llama la avenida de los Comuneros, que también va a renovar este sector que subiendo unos lega a las Cruces. [...] hay mucha gente que la critica y se habla mucho que fue un intentado contra la historia que esta contenida en estas casas pero talvez a problemas radicales se necesitan acciones radicales. Y eso fue lo que paso un poco. Y acá también no se si ustedes sabían, esta plaza no existía, había sido tomando por los comerciantes entonces era un sin fin de casetas. Ustedes pueden buscar fotos de San Victorino antes de la renovación, en esta plaza solo se vean techos de casetas. Entonces la gente se metía ahí al comercio. [...] El cambio fue radical, pero también fue una acción muy fuerte de parte de la ciudad con muchas cosas por criticar, pero también nos dio esto que es algo muy bueno para todos.» (22ª) / “There will be a a big change because in the 10th the Transmilenio is being constructed, in addition to a new axe called Los Comuneros Avenue. They will also renew the area till the sector that reaches Las Cruces. There are people who criticize the projects; they say that it is an attack against the history that had reserved its historical traces like the old houses. But I think we need radical action to solve radical problems. You know that this place did not exist before, don't you? It was taken by street vendors and it was filled with kiosks, if you look at pictures of San Victorino before the renovation project, you'll find that there was nothing but kiosks. The people came here for the commerce. [...] A fundamental change has happened, it was a very strong action in the city accompanied by a lot of criticism but at the same time, it was very good for everyone.”(22ª)*

In another time, the two interrogated architectural students hold on a peaceful vision of public space. During the interview, they referred to the recent exhibition "La calle es nuestra de todos ...", 5 a 27 de marzo de 2009 at the Institute of City in Motion, Los Andes University. They stated that; it is the presence of people that creates security:

*«Al estar ahí la gente genera seguridad, la seguridad no es solo de la policía, sino de la gente que se cuida unos a otros. Esto lo tiene también el eje ambiental, sino estuviera esta renovación, nadie caminaría por ahí y entonces sería peligroso, el peligro aparece cuando no hay gente. Y eso es el espacio publico: llevar a la gente a que se cuiden unos a otros a través de convivencia y no de represión de la fuerza publica.» (22ª) / “The presence of people generates safety, as security is not just the police, but rather people who take care of each other. It is the same in the environmental axis, without this renewing process, no one would walk around here as it was dangerous. Danger appears when there are no people. Public space allows people to take care of each other through the common life it creates, and not through the repression of the police.” (22ª)*

*«[¿Y que pasa en la plaza del Rosario?]"What do you think about the Rosario Square?*

*Ella:*

*Esto de día es muy diferente a como es de noche. De noche no hay nadie porque no hay estudiantes, las universidades están cerradas todos los locales los cierran, si uno pasa un domingo a las nueve de la noche es súper solo y es súper inseguro.» (22b) / “Here, daytime is different than night-time. At night there is no one because there are no students as the universities are closed, local services are also closed. If you come here on a Sunday night at around nine o'clock, you will find that the place is empty and it's very unsafe.” (22b)*





## Public Space as a place to live together

*«El: Yo creo que la convivencia se da en el espacio publico. Este es el valor de estos espacios. No importa si estudia en la universidad de Los Andes, o sea indigente, o lo que sea, tiene las mismas oportunidades y los mismos beneficios y ahí es donde se da esa convivencia; Las personas podemos estar conviviendo realmente, no como en un centro comercial que es una cosa cerrada y solo para un grupo de personas. Acá no se ve solo una convivencia de las personas, sino una convivencia de la historia con lo contemporáneo. La ciudad antigua y lo nuevo. Las personas que han vivido aquí toda la vida y los que venimos a estudiar. Entonces confluyen muchos tipos de convivencia aquí. Que están en torno al espacio publico.» (22ª) / “I believe that common life emerges in public space. This is the value of such spaces. It does not matter if you study at Los Andes University, or if you are indigent. All have the same opportunities and the same benefits from these public spaces and from here emerges the common social life. This is not the same in a mall, which is an enclosed space that is made for only certain social groups. Here, there is a public life between people and between the history and the contemporary, between the ancient city and the modern one, between those that have lived here for their lifetime and those who have just arrived such as the students. In public spaces several modes of life can be found.” (22ª)*



## Security for Some Creates Insecurity for Others

The narrated stories of the interviewees who work or live in the street bring a different perspective to the question of safety and security in this public space. . Perceived by

others with a kind of mistrust, they testified during the survey using some personal experiences of insecurity.

A street vendor, who we met in front of Los Andes University, talked about her good relationship with the students, her principal clients. She has worked since so many years in the vicinity of the university. She insists at the same time on her worries as being a daily victim to the security guards of the University who are "regularly after her", which reinforced the precariousness of her informal activity.

*« Y pues obviamente, si un mono se va sentar ahí, yo le cojo el carrito. Pero ellos nos ven trabajando y evitan y se sientan en otra parte; entonces este espacio nos lo respetan.» (23b) "Of course if a student is going to sit there I move my chariot. But they see that we are working and they go to sit somewhere else; they respect our space." (23b)*

*«aquí a veces nos saca la universidad. Hay vigilantes que nos tratan muy feo. [...] Yo ayer, por lo menos insulté a uno y le dije, "deje trabajar, no sea, hijoe no se que. Porque a ustedes les pagan es para que cuidan a los estudiantes.» (23b) "Sometimes the university expels us from here. Some of the security guards treat us really bad. Yesterday, for example, I insulted one of them. I told him "let us work, don't be such an son of a"...you know what." (23b)*

*[...] « [Entonces ¿considera eso como espacio suyo?] No, mío, no. Porque en cualquier momento me sacan y yo no puedo decir este pedazo es mío. Que lo lucho, si monito. Lo lucho porque es la fuente de trabajo de mi hermano y el lo ha luchado mucho. Este pedacito para nosotros vale mucho, porque por lo menos caen aguaceros y nosotros aquí permanecemos parados, nos mojamos, llega el sol y aquí estamos. "Do you think of this space as your space? No, not mine. Because at anytime they can drive me out of here and I can't say this space is mine. Yet, I fight for it, because this is the source of work of my brother and he has fought for it. This piece of land is very valuable for us. Even if it rains we stay here, we get wet, when the sun shines we're still here." (23b)*

*Este pedazo es una fuente de trabajo para nosotros. Y pues obviamente, si un mono se va sentar ahí, yo le cojo el carrito. Pero ellos nos ven trabajando y evitan y se sientan en otra parte; entonces este espacio nos lo respetan.» (23b) / "This piece of land is very valuable for us. Even if it rains we stay here, we get wet, when the sun shines we're still here." (23b)*

Further down Jimenez Avenue, there was a man who invited us up to Periodistas place where we conducted a commented-walk to beyond San Victorino with him, he told us about other forms of violence. Moreover, there was a thirty years old painter, who was born in Cali and who returned to Bogotá after passing 10 years in France, he was homeless at the time of the interrogation. He manages to get money by selling art crafts and cannabis "weed" and used to sleep in the street or in modest hotels.

While he was "angrily" expressing his feelings throughout, throughout the interview, his words highly criticized the Colombian authority.

*[Original words in french] « C'est-à-dire que ici je suis très en colère parce que je ne peux pas, je n'arrive même pas à faire ce que j'ai envie de faire ici. C'est-à-dire je fais de la peinture, et ici c'est très dur pour les artistes, donc je suis obligé de faire de l'artisanat [...]. Bon, je revends de l'artisanat, et je*

*revends un peu de la beu et voila. Comme on dit, je me débrouille, parce que je ne peux pas faire la peinture ici. Ici la peinture c'est pour les riches.» (29)*

*« Ceux qui gouvernent la société ici, ils ne changent pas d'attitudes vis-à-vis du peuple. Ce n'est pas bon parce que le peuple il n'est pas bien traité si vous voulez. Il n'est pas traité comme il devrait être. Il n'est pas aimé, il n'est pas respecté.» (29)*

*«C'est qu'on avait jamais eu un président avec autant de sécurité. Et les choses qui s'améliorent en apparence, mais ce sont toujours les mêmes problèmes. Il y a un problème énorme de corruption, il y a un problème énorme de société, social, de gens qui crèvent la dalle, de gens qui vivent dans la misère dans gens qui sont obligés de voler, de tuer pour survivre. Ca ce n'est pas normal dans un pays qui est pas pauvre du tout. La Colombie, un pays pobre ? Si la Colombie elle est un pays pauvre, alors moi je suis le père Noël. Non, moi je ne suis pas le père Noël, et la Colombie elle n'est pas pauvre.» (29)*

*« je fais de la peinture, et ici c'est très dur pour les artistes, donc je suis obligé de faire de l'artisanat, maintenant j'ai tout emballé, parce que les flics tournent et tournent et ils ne laissent pas travailler.» (29)*

*"I mean that, here, I'm very angry because I can't, I can't even do what I want to do here. I mean, I paint, and here it's very hard for artists, so I'm forced to make art crafts [...]. Well, I'm selling them, and I sell some weed and that's it. As we say, I try to cope, because I cannot paint here. Here, painting is only for the rich." (29)*

*"Those who govern the society here, they do not change their attitudes towards people. This is not good, as people are not well treated. They are not treated as it should be. They are neither appreciated nor respected (29)*

*"We've never had a president with such security regulations. And things are improving only from the appearance, but the same problems continue to exist. There is a real problem of corruption, there is also a huge societal problem, a social one, people who are dying of hunger, people are living in misery, they are forced to steal and to kill to survive. It is not normal in a country like this that is not poor at all. Colombia a pobre pais? If Colombia is a poor country, then I'm Santa Claus. No, I'm not Santa Claus, and Colombia is not poor." (29)*

*"I paint, and here it's very hard for artists, so I am obliged to make crafts, now I have everything packed, as cops make rounds and rounds and they do not let us work."*

Police surveillance, which he described as omnipresent, represents a direct threat for him. ("There are guards everywhere, even in the toilets there are security guards."). While for others, like for the shop vendor, the presence of these guards fosters their sense of security.





The precarious situation in which he lives is not only related to the practice of illegal activities (selling cannabis) or (selling art crafts) which is hardly considered legal but also to the absence of housing. Trying to escape from his fear of sleeping in the street, sometimes he sleepover in some hotels that extort him and that when his income permits him to. He also referred as well to the new "social cleaning" practices tempting to eliminate physically; contra jóvenes, prostitutas, drogadictos, delincuente to homosexuals. These practices are adapted by organized campaigns.

*Iván Cepeda, leader du Mouvement de las víctimas del paramilitarismo y los crímenes de Estado (MOVICE), promoteur de la «marche du 6 mars 2008» en «Homenaje a las víctimas del paramilitarismo, la parapolítica y los crímenes de Estado» : Iván Cepeda, «COLOMBIA: la nueva fase de la «limpieza social»», <http://www.tlaxcala.es/pp.asp?lg=es&reference=7399> (Reproduction d'un tract d'appel au nettoyage social) : «A pesar de que el director de la Policía, general Óscar Naranjo, considera que se trata de bandas criminales dispersas, a simple vista es notorio que en esta operación nacional se reconocen los métodos utilizados en el pasado por las estructuras paramilitares, encubiertas hoy con nuevos nombres y símbolos. El procedimiento se despliega especialmente en los barrios populares de las grandes urbes y en las zonas en las que las Auc han ejercido control. El plan busca el miedo colectivo mediante acciones en distintas fases. En un primer momento se lanza el rumor de que van a comenzar los actos de "limpieza", luego se distribuyen los panfletos, se impone el toque de queda a partir de las diez de la noche, y se procede a realizar los asesinatos. De esta forma, muchas zonas de las principales ciudades del país viven ya sometidas a esta nueva etapa de terror social.»*

*Form of institutionalized violence :*

*« yo una vez lo pensé, me iba dormir alla arriba, pero estaba haciendo como mucho frio y no tenia una buena chaqueta. Si alla arriba se puede dormir. Por lo menos como mas protegido, porque ahorita por lo question de proteccion en Bogota, esta como dificil. La gente que duerme en la calle. [...] (29) / [Original words in french] Une fois j'ai eu l'idée de dormir là, mais il faisait froid et je n'avais pas un bon pull. Oui, il est possible de dormir au-dessus, parce que là nous sommes bien protégés. La question de la sécurité à Bogota est difficile. Ceux qui dorment dans la rue... [...] Moi j'essaie de ne pas dormir dehors. Quelque chose qui n'est pas facile dans une société où il y a que des hôtels à 100 000 pesos la nuit. Et tu dors mais ils te réveillent pour te demander encore 100 000 pesos. Donc oui moi parfois je dors dans la rue mais je ne dors pas n'importe où. Et la plupart*

*des fois je ne dors pas, j'essaie de dormir la journée, mais bon ça fait peur de dormir dans la rue à Bogota.» (29)*

*"Once I had the idea to sleep up there, in the street, it was cold and I did not have a good pullover. Yes, it is possible to sleep over there, because there you are well protected. The question of security in Bogotá is difficult. Those who sleep in the street ... [...] I try not to sleep outside. It is something that is not easy in a society where there are hotels that cost 100,000 pesos per night. And you sleep but they'll wake you up to ask for another 100,000 pesos. So, yes, I sometimes sleep in the street but I do not sleep anywhere. And most of the time I do not sleep at all, I try to sleep during the daytime, but it's scary to sleep in the street of Bogotá. » (29)*

*[Original words in french] « les gens qui dorment dehors c'est à dire les sans abris sont exposés à se faire tuer par des tueurs. On ne va pas dire sur cette place, on a eu des flyers qui disent qu'on va tuer tous les homosexuels, toutes les putes, tous les sans abris, tous les drogués, ça fait un peu peur mais bon moi j'ai peur que de Dieu. Je peux pas trop parler, on s'est pas qui est qui, mais c'est dur. Il n'y a pas de pitié. [...] des gens qui se font tuer dans la rue, parce qu'ils dorment dans la rue, parce qu'ils sont sans abris, ou parce qu'ils sont dehors à 3 ou 4h du matin, c'est assez cruel. [...] parce qu'il y a des mecs qui arrivent en voiture, ils t'approchent, ils te disent « va te faire enculer » et après ils te tirent dessus. Ce sont des types qui agissent comme des nazis, quoi.» (29)*

*"People who sleep outside i.e. homeless people: they are exposed to get killed by killers. I am not talking only about this place. We had flyers that say we will kill all gays, all hookers, all homeless people, all drug addicts. It is a bit scary but I'm only afraid from God. I cannot talk, as we do not really know who we can meet with, but it's hard. There is no mercy. [...] People get killed in the street because they were sleeping in it, because they are homeless or because they are out till 3 or 4am. It's pretty cruel. [...] As there are guys who come by car, they approach you, they'll say "fuck you" and then they can shoot you. These are guys who act like Nazis, you know. "(29)*

*«Colombia: NGOs rechazan a la 'limpieza social'», rubrique alertes de l'organisation « Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados», Bogotá, abril 7 de 2009, <http://www.jrs.net/alerts/index.php?lang=es&sid=4696>: «En los panfletos se amenaza de muerte a los jóvenes que se encuentren en la calle o en bares después de las 10:00 P.M. También se menciona la existencia de listas y se señala que la campaña de limpieza social va dirigida en contra de mujeres en situación de prostitución, portadores de VIH, homosexuales, consumidores de drogas, expendedores de drogas, ladrones, jaladores de carros, secuestradores, etc. En algunos panfletos se menciona a la organización «Ogdis» como la responsable de las amenazas y en otros »*

Several articles available on web show the existing new campaigns of "limpieza social" since fall 2008 till spring 2009 in Colombia and more specifically in Bogotá, that deal with popular neighborhoods like Ciudad Bolivar.

- Cf. «Colombia: NGOs rechazan a la 'limpieza social'», rubrique alertes de l'organisation « Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados», Bogotá, 7 april 2009, <http://www.jrs.net/alerts/index.php?lang=es&sid=4696>
- John William Montaña, «¿Quiénes Amenazan Al Sur?», El Tiempo, 20 de marzo de 2009, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/MAM-3367019>.
- "Es que es más barato matarlos", ElEspectador.com, 5 Sep 2008, <http://elespectador.com/impreso/bogota/articuloimpreso-mas-barato-matarlos>. This article is about the threats of "limpieza social" towards the youth living in

Ciudad Bolivar neighborhood, highlights the claimed character, organized (perhaps by the local residents themselves) as known by their actions.

While opposing the peaceful vision mentioned by other interviewees, his words clarify another characteristic of this public space that is "under domination".

They let the poor kill each other. Everywhere in Bogotá is dangerous. The improved security is only for the rich.

*« Mais moi je pense que tout Bogota est dangereux. Parce qu'on peut se trouver au mauvais moment au mauvais endroit. »*

*"They kill people that they do not like, and, yes, there is more security. It is clear that it's only for the rich and for the oligarchs, there is more security. That's clear. You can not solve these problems using the force. We cannot always solve it like this. Here, we are not in a western. Damn it, we talk about human rights, which are not possible for us. "*

*"[...] I am not a criminal so I'm not afraid. But it is true that it is not easy to see that there are security guards who attack guys who are totally harmless. Maybe they are afraid of these guys because they look like someone who lives in the street, but this is because of their ignorance. They will hit the guy right away despite he did nothing. It is an attitude of a company that operates in the wrong way because there is no real social solution that a different mentality can visualize. It is always the violence, a culture of violence. "(29)*

Presenting themselves as victims, and do not identify with illegality. Testify the suspicion. Poverty and social injustice related to the corruption prevailing in Colombia. The role of the police is considered ineffective.

*"Damn it, there are cops everywhere. Here, we do not go to the flea market, because the flea market can be anywhere. You see the guy there; he had a computer keyboard. Yes, damn it, look at this, there are cops every ten meters. And then there are cops everywhere, but crime is still there, thefts, robberies with knives all other kind of robberies. "(29)*

We Stick together (On se sert les coudes) Elbows are used, but each for himself. It is the law of the jungle. "Save yourself"; yes it is exactly like that.

As being constantly monitored, for about half an hour since our arrival, she has observed also the mistrust that the security guards showed against us.

### **Strategies of Protection: Permanent Motion.**

*« Cuando nos dicen "salganse o caminen", nos toca caminar por el parque.» (23b) / Quand ils nous disent «partez ou circulez», on est obligés de marcher dans le parc.*

*When they tell us "go away or move" we have to walk through the park." (23b)*

*Entonces ¿considera eso como espacio suyo?*

*No, mío, no. Porque en cualquier momento me sacan y yo no puedo decir este pedazo es mío. Que lo lucho, si monito. Lo lucho porque es la fuente de trabajo de mi hermano y el lo ha luchado mucho. Este pedacito para*

*nosotros vale mucho, porque por lo menos caen aguaceros y nosotros aquí permanecemos parados, nos mojamos, llega el sol y aquí estamos.*

*“Do you think of this space as your space? No, not mine. Because at anytime they can drive me out of here and I can't say this space is mine. Yet, I fight for it, because this is the source of work of my brother and he has fought for it. This piece of land is very valuable for us. Even if it rains we stay here, we get wet, when the sun shines we're still here.” (23b)*

*Este pedazo es una fuente de trabajo para nosotros. Y pues obviamente, si un mono se va sentar ahí, yo le cojo el carrito. Pero ellos nos ven trabajando y evitan y se sientan en otra parte; entonces este espacio nos lo respetan.*

*“This small corner is a source of work to us. Of course if a student is going to sit there I move my chariot. But they see that we are working and they go to sit somewhere else; they respect our space.” (23b)*

### **The Conflictual (confrontational) dimensions of and in public spaces**

When talking about the strong presence of the supervisory function in the place, it's worth mentioning that there is a mutual surveillance; as the security guards of the University are themselves monitored.

Mainly the interviewees, who live in modest circumstances and when talking about the difficult conditions of working, were often tackling the description and perception of the immediate environment.

The street vendor who we met in front of Los Andes; tried hardly to justify her presence in the space due to the service that she offers to the students. This woman, whose tolerated activity seems constantly examined, invokes her condition – as being poor and victim. Throughout the interview, her words resemble what Goffman described in *Asylums* as a sad tale, referring to a form of narration in which a person justifies his (bad) behavior by referring to a miserable past and unfortunate circumstances.

But from the point of view of the urban atmosphere, what meaning does this narrated story add since it's being considered a priori "out of topic"?

As I. Joseph pointed out that these sad tales are a way to take into consideration a specific situation and to make the context talk. What the seller has stated informs us also about the context of the interview. During half an hour since our arrival, she observed the mistrust that the guards were demonstrating to us. They were recognizable by their uniform and their dog, and several were continuously observing the edges of the nearby university.

This situation and generally all the gathered information during this interrogation, force us to wonder about how to take into consideration the conflictual dimensions of and in public space. Despite the density of social interactions that made Jiménez Avenue a place of intensive urbanity during the daytime, few of them showed the conflict (social and other uses ...) should it be considered as a background?

We also have emphasized the presence of certain types of citizens in the urban public spaces of Bogotá, in the invisible parts.

"Moving around in the streets at night, in order not to find ourselves in the wrong place at the wrong time "

« Camilo : Que hace en las noches ?

*El: Vagar. Por aca cerca, por el centro; deambular. Buscar no dormirme porque si me duermo me da como miedo. No tanto miedo porque tengo fe en Dios pero es algo que no se como explicarlo, es mas precaucion que miedo. Miedo de morirme no, porque me toca morirme algun dia. Es este sentimiento ambigo de inseguridad en un pais que no tiene leyes, la letra muerta dicia Bolivar. (29) / "Camilo: What do you do during the night? Him: Wander around here, trying to not fall asleep because If I fall asleep I'm scared, I'm not really scared because I have faith in god, but it is something that I can't explain. I'm rather worried, not scared. I'm not afraid of dying, because I have to die sometime. It's more like an ambiguous feeling of insecurity in a country where there are no laws, the dead words as Bolivar said." (29)*

*« Para mi es prohibido hablar con usted. [...] Porque, de pronto usted me esta extorcionando, me esta pasando plata. De pronto hacemos negocio, extorcion; y de pronto me esta diciendo una direccion tal, o yo no sé que preguntas. Calquier cosa, pero acá las cameras lo véen y me regañan despues. Y igual con las niñas, no puedo hablar con ellas, ni decirles adiós o saludar. Así es el trabajo, no? Toca respetar.» (24) / "For me, it is forbidden to speak to you. [...] Because you can force me, give me money. We can negotiate something; you can dictate me an address or ask me some questions. Here, the cameras can show everything and after that they..... It's the same thing with girls; I cannot speak with them or greet them. My job is like that and we must respect it." (24)*



## NOTES

About 9 April 1948, (beginning of the period "La Violencia") [http://www.elcorreo.eu.org/article.php3?id\\_article=4098](http://www.elcorreo.eu.org/article.php3?id_article=4098). Gaitan almost assassinated at the corner of the Septima and Jimenez

Notes extracted from:

Mario Perilla Perilla, El habitar en la Jiménez con séptima de Bogotá. Historia, memoria, cuerpo y lugar, Universidad Nacional de Colombia (Sede Bogotá). Facultad de Artes, 2008, 169 p. ISBN: 9789587190892

P. 86 and following pages : 09 april 48

Modern Period

p. 98 and the following page.

1925 : The Actual tracing of Jimenez Avenue at Quesada following the bed of San Francisco River.

1926 : Construction of Cubillos Building (Andes)

1934 : El Tiempo Building

Widening the avenue since 1940 between Cuarta and Decima, narrow sidewalks, parking facing the Gobernacion

1945 : Construction of H. Faux Building (still existing till now)

1949 : Construction Francisco Camacho Building (at the corner Jimenez Octava)

Same period: Monserrate Building

About 1957 : Banco de la Republica Building

1951 : Plan d'ensanchamiento de la Calle real del comercio et changement en Septima

1963 : New Head Office of El Tiempo

1969 : Avianca Building (40 floors), burned in 1973

From the 30s, modern architecture buildings (where a sudden break with historical reference till it is used by the architectural medium, presented the modernity by the form of volumes and facades: p. 81) \*

La Jimenez, entre les Cuarta et Decima «sera laboratorio para los arquitectos y constructores reconocidos realicen obras importantes e inovadoras, con las tecnologias norteamericanas y la estetica moderna de tendencia internacional» p. 83 ,

+ Cosmopolitan Model of certain capitals such as London or New York for the new bourgeoisie; who since that time on use (yartad) the boulevards and the coffee shops. P.83

Head Office of main newspapers in the 40s.

p. 112 : «con la intensificacion de la actividad en el lugar, asi como la diversificacion de la forma urbana, que en un brève lapso cambia escalas, formas y perfiles, el cuerpo en la cotidianidad se desenvuelve en medio del ritmo y aceleracion que lentamente han ido tomando las rutinas de los habitantes de lugar, muchos de los cuales no son ya quienes que tienen alli sus moradas, sino viandantes, comerciantes, empleados, estudiantes y turistas.

Es asi como la Ciudad moderna se presenta en su dimension mas evidente en la calle : es la Ciudad capitalista y del consumo. Las actividades se restringen y regulan por los horarios de trabajo. Se hace tertulia a las doce del mediodia y a las seis. En esos momentos la carrera Septima se congestionna y un rio humano fluye hacia el cruce con la Avenida Jimenez, que se marca como une cruz sobre el territorio del centro. [...] Los sentidos estan a la expectativa y la percepcion es ahora capturada por las vitrinas,



con su abigarrada exhibición de mercancía, y los cuerpos que pasan al lado en una y otra dirección. La lentitud y parcimonia del siglo XIX quedó atrás, el afán es la característica de la naciente ciudad moderna [...].»

p. 123: 1987 «Plan Centro»: Redefining places such as Periodistas Park or Plaza San Victorino.

Rehabilitation Plan of Plaza del Rosario that started in the 70s.

Jimenez Avenue is declared to be a national monument between Tercera and Novena Streets.

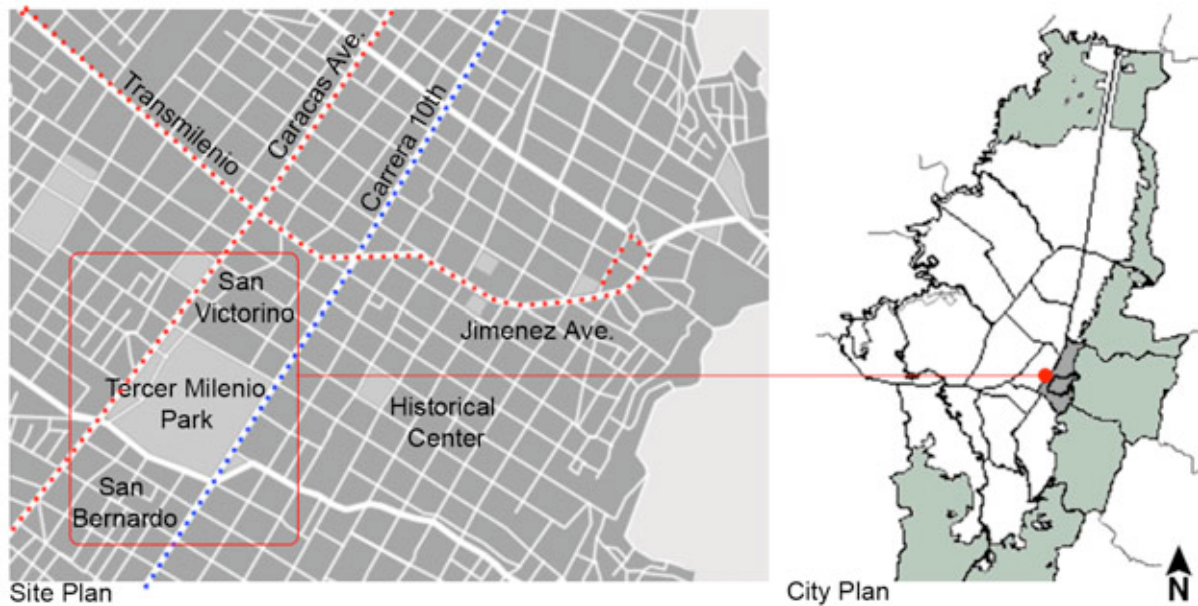
p. 125 : río San Francisco = One of the historic references concerning the memory of the place used to elaborate the idea of Eje ambiental.

125-126 : «El Eje Ambiental constituye un gran esfuerzo por dar al habitante del centro de Ciudad la oportunidad de aproximación a la experiencia estética y significativa de los lugares que así buscan recuperar el espacio en la memoria tanto cultural como social y del individuo, y es reconocido por los paseantes como obra que identifica al lugar.»

p. 127: Transmilenio Station "Museo del Oro" created in 2004

\* d'après Pizano Olga et alii (1998). Recuperación espacial de la avenida Jiménez y el parque Santander. Bogotá, centro de investigaciones estéticas, Universidad de las Andes, p. 39.

## 5 - Tercer Milenio Park



**Fig. 6** Localization plan of the Tercer Milenio Park

The Tercer Milenio Park is situated in the central locality of Los Martires. Located two blocks west from the presidency, the recently built park is surrounded by four historical districts: Las Cruces, San Bernardo, Santa Inés, and Voto Nacional. Before its urban transformation, the park was traditionally a popular district of the city centre. The project was the initiative of Enrique Peñalosa's administration, though several earlier initiatives proposed the transformation of this area into a park in 1947 and 1960). Many others considered state intervention necessary in a zone that was long considered problematic. Since the 1940's the district of Santa Inés, where the park is now located, has been identified as a problematic area by city administrations. Even though Santa Inés is one of Bogotá's oldest districts, it has never been recognized as part of the city's valuable cultural and historic heritage. On the contrary, it has always been considered outside of the dignified downtown (Perilla, 2007).

Since the colonial period, Bogotá has expanded around Bolivar square. Justice, religion and local power have always been concentrated and represented around this plaza, and until the beginning of the twentieth century it was also the historical place of residence for the upper classes. The ruling aristocracy established its symbolic buildings around the plaza. The colonial powers, applying their conception for the construction of the city, rationalized the territory and established hierarchies using an urban model that excluded from the city center people and activities deemed inferior. According to urban researcher Mario Perilla (2007), social segregation in colonial Bogotá was visible in the quality of constructions. A great difference could be seen between the high stone facades around the square and the lower-classes adobe homes of the suburbs.

Until the nineteenth century the district of Santa Inés was a suburb adjacent to the southern side of the Bolivar square. At this time the district was both rural and poor. When the city started to grow beyond its foundational limits the north-south axis became an important commercial street (what is today *carrera septima*), and mercantile activities expanded to the north, paying little attention to the west side of the city.

Colombia's opening to the international economy at the beginning of the twentieth century marked a moment of important urban transformations. In order to create an image of modernity the city built high standing hotels and public buildings to attract foreign investors. Consequently, as a part of this process the city expelled to the peripheries certain socially unaccepted establishments including brothels and *chicherias*<sup>80</sup>. The city government preserved its official, institutional and commercial area along the *carrera septima*, the historical lumbar spine of the city. While the institutional city expanded from the Bolivar Square to the north, the forbidden practices were pushed to the southeast and west sides of the city.

After the 1948 riots the bourgeoisie definitively left the city center and massively emigrated to *Chapinero*, a new wealthy district in the north. Since then a continued process of deterioration marked the city center. The historically neglected district of Santa Inés became a center for illegal activities and experienced increased rates of violence, homelessness and instability. As a result of this abandonment the entire zone, known as *el cartucho*, concentrated marginal sectors that included poor families, cooperatives of recyclers, and local mafias, and was marked by drug dealing, prostitution and homelessness. At the same time, the zone's public space and buildings became highly deteriorated. This part of the center, just blocks from the presidential palace, was beyond legal control and further reinforced negative perceptions of the city center.

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<sup>80</sup> Alcohol distribution centers usually described as sites of crime and delinquency.

## Recent Urban Transformation



Fig. 7 Solid – Void Plan of the Tercer Milenio Park zone

Fifty years after the 1948 events, which dramatically transformed the centre of Bogotá, the Peñalosa administration launched the most ambitious projects for the centre's renovation seen in decades. One of the main elements of the *Plan Centro* was the creation of a metropolitan park in the Santa Inés sector that implied the demolition of an entire central district of nearly twenty hectares. This demolition involved the subsequent displacement of 3,030 families and 1,620 commercial establishments, in addition to the dislocation of more than 2,000 people considered a part of the zone's floating population (Castro, 2003). Although the project was very controversial, the administration ultimately received the support of both the media and the public. Today city authorities and citizens alike are proud of the disappearance of el cartucho, the most conflict-ridden zone of the central district, and the project is widely recognized as an achievement of Peñalosa's administration. Nevertheless the project had an enormous impact on the sector's former residents,

many of whom did not receive proper compensation. Planning, estimating costs, and determining the social impact of urban transformations is a responsibility of the municipal administration. Nevertheless the Tercer Milenio Project had clear deficiencies and voids in the design, negotiation and execution of alternatives to the identified problems (Castro, 2003).

The Tercer Milenio Project was described by authorities as an integral part of the recuperation and improvement of the zone. (Duran, 2003) The development project would return to the district its urban vitality, habitability, and equilibrium in its use. It would also promote the protection of public space and the preservation of the city centre as economic, social and cultural heritage. According to the official description of the project, in order to mitigate the negative impact of the intervention the urban project would be accompanied by a social strategy to strengthen and create opportunities for the social inclusion of affected residents. It was considered essential for the municipal administration to defend the rights of affected residents in order to protect the displaced population during the city/zone's processes of urban renovation.

Political discourses presented the development of the city centre as an opportunity to increase Bogotá's competitiveness and to improve the city's quality of life; these discourses were largely replicated in the media, emphasizing three elements: insecurity, informality and conflict of public space. In addition to discourses that appeal to the general welfare in order to legitimize development projects regardless of their impact, urban researcher Magali Castro (2003) argues that in the particular case of the transformation of Santa Inés, there was a general consensus that the conditions of marginality could not become any worse. This judgment implied a serious misevaluation of the potential for the community's marginalization to intensify. Today it is difficult to measure the social impact of the Tercer Milenio project on many of the area's former residents because a strategy for the evaluation and monitoring of the displaced population was never implemented.

After the intervention in el cartucho the zone was completely transformed. Of the entire district only one building remains, and along with the physical disappearance of the neighborhood, the social capital represented by the communal networks constructed by residents through the years has also disappeared. What was widely recognized as the most dangerous zone of the city is today a metropolitan park that has visitors from diverse parts of the city, is the setting for cultural and recreational activities, and has even become a stage for social protest.

The park is the heart of a zone of the city centre that has undergone significant transformations that include the renovation of the San Victorino square and the adaptation of the main avenues around it to the RBT system. These operations, along with the construction of the park, have fundamentally reshaped the physical and social dynamic of the sector. The radical change of use and the expulsion of marginal activities from el cartucho have transformed a zone that was a slum area into a landmark of the city centre. As is the case with the Jimenez de Quesada Avenue, the zones adjacent to the park will be the object of important future transformations. Presently a large mall is under construction on the north side of the park, and the entire San Victorino district will be the object of a partial plan of public space renovation. The San Bernardo district, located on the south side of the park



will also be object of a partial plan of renovation that will entirely reconstruct the district's urban fabric. Although this project includes the construction of new mixed income housing projects to allow for the permanence of the inhabitants living in the neighborhood, it is unlikely that the new projects will be accessible to the poorest residents; new displacements can be expected. On the western limit of the park residential operations are projected as well. Once these interventions have concluded/ended an area of more than fifty hectares will have been radically modified.



Fig. 8 Ongoing urban transformations

The conception and construction of the park was difficult and sometimes violent due to the community's uncertainty and a lack of communication between the administration and the community. The process lasted almost seven years from its design and inception until its conclusion. Although most of the home owners agreed to sell their properties and very few homes were acquired through expropriation, it



was not an easy task to evacuate the inhabitants, who were in most cases leaseholders, from their place of residence and work. An even greater challenge was to force out the mafias that controlled a substantial part of the zone. Despite its failures, the project was to some extent coordinated with the community and a social policy was developed to mitigate the impact.

The process represented an advancement compared with other development experiences in Bogotá. However, significant shortcomings in the formulation of the social component were evident. Certain positive aspects of the social management given to the project can be highlighted. A census of the neighborhood was organized and information campaigns were created to contribute to the implementation of the social policy. The social policies were formulated taking into account proposals prepared in negotiation discussions organized with delegates from the neighborhood's diverse social sectors. For the implementation of the policies an office was created to direct the programs in collaboration with diverse municipal institutions, invited organizations and NGOs. The programs formulated included a focus on residents living in a critical social situation social mentoring through the process, as well as strategies for information and economic support. The projects developed include the assessment and creation of an industrial park to relocate 190 graphic arts companies already established in the area, the creation of an association to relocate 1,140 recyclers, a program for the payment of economic compensations and a project of fixed rent prices for displaced families.

Castro (2003) argues that despite those efforts the process illustrated serious failures. According to the author the social policy was miscalculated and the entities responsible for the policy developed an organizational culture that was ineffective in coordinating the process. Castro adds that the state's responsibilities were not clearly outlined, and the slowness and lack of coordination among the municipal institutions negatively impacted the development process in the zone. Other failures identified/mentioned by the author include the administration's disregard for the reestablishment of social and familiar networks, a failure to devise alternative development plans that would reduce the risk of income loss, and a disregard for the emotional and economic costs of displacement.

Even though some sectors received sufficient compensation, due to the lack of information about residents and a failed assessment, many people lost their rights to adequate reparations. The lack of information about former residents made it impossible to locate many of them for inclusion in social programs. This same reason has made it impossible to evaluate the present situation of the displaced population. Castro (2003) estimates that a great number of former residents are in a worse economic, social and housing situation today than before the development of the project. Cernea (1997) explains that when this is the case the consequences of development may be contrary to development's inherent objectives. Hopefully the experience of the social management given to the Tercer Milenio project will prevent future developments from making the same mistakes that led to the heightened marginalization of the zone's residents.

## Tercer Milenio Park Citizen Words



*«Claro, los domingos...si, vienen los aeróbicos, vienen a jugar futbol, viene gente a descansar. La mayoría a descansar. Pasear los niños. Eso. Como cualquier parque. Por la tarde. La mayoría es en la tarde. Después de medio día, los domingos, los días festivos. La gente sale es en la tarde.» (07)*

*"Of course, on Sundays... come those who do aerobics exercises, those who play football, and also comes who wants to relax. The majority come to relax here or to take out their children. Here, as in any other park, the afternoon, the majority come in the afternoons, on Sundays and in holidays. As People usually go out in the afternoons." (07)*

## Sample and survey conditions

The interviews were conducted in early April 2009, on weekdays or on a Sunday, in different parts of the park. 21 persons were interviewed -alone or with their families- in Tercer Milenio Park, in the form of 8 short micro-sidewalk interviews or go-along and 8 longer ones, lasting between 7 and 18 minutes (4 of them where done while walking).



The sample of interviewees reflects the diversity of inhabitants who attend the park as well as the diversity of the offered services throughout the park. Among those who work in the park, we interviewed two street traders, a police officer, two social workers and a bar manager. Our sample also included occasional and regular users of the park in addition to four families who live in the surrounding areas.

In general, the park is widely appreciated no matter how the interviewees use it. In fact, the achievement of the park and its impact on improving security has made it a pleasant and highly frequented place; a place where people come in the daytime with their families. However, the memory of the former Cartucho is still strongly present: the speeches point out, almost systematically, the danger that this area used to represent; they describe it as an area of drug traffic and extreme marginality.

*" A mi me parece un parque amplio, recreativo para los niños en una zona buena. Se compuso la zona porque estaba mal. Claro, al igual allá sigue como un cartuchito, pero al igual esta bueno el parquecito. Esta bien vigiladito." (10 a et B) / "For me, this park looks spacious, a recreational place for the children. It's located in a good zone. This zone has improved a lot because before it was a bad area. Of course, a small Cartucho took place over there, but it doesn't matter as this is a good and well-watched park." (10 a and B)*

*" Para la diversión de los niños muy bonito. Pues bueno porque igual acá era el cartucho. Y esto es un lugar donde por lo menos los niños pueden estar tranquilos. Muchas cosas buenas tiene este parque. Al menos quita*



*peligro. Quita una mala visión (imagen). Porque eso acá era horrible." (12<sup>a</sup> et b) / "For the children's entertainment, it is very good. Well, actually, here was the Cartucho. And this is now a place where children can at least be safe, quiet. This park has a lot of good things. At least, it has removed the danger. It erased the bad image. As before, here, it was horrible. " (12a and b)*

*" Este parque es como histórico... por ser antes el cartucho. Entonces esto es algo... como ya histórico. Acaba esa delincuencia. Esas cosa de droga que había. Y poner algo para la comunidad, para los niños." (12c) / "This park is sort of historical... Due to the fact that it was the Cartucho before ... so it has something historic. It erased delinquency and the problems of drug that existed here before. And turned the place into something useful to the community and to children. "(12c)*

*" Este ha sido un buen proyecto, y hay seguridad. La gente viene se divierte." (14) / "It's a good project, and it is secure. People come here to enjoy." (14)*



### **An appropriated park, "a super park"**

The term "appropriation", in this context, has a double meaning: the park is "appropriated" by people, which reveals how they consider the park as their own, especially when observing the multiplicity of uses taking place in the park. At the same time, Tercer Milenio appears in the interviews as a "suitable" or "appropriate" place for the city that functions on both metropolitan and district scales.

Responding to the question "how do you perceive this place?", answers were quite enthusiastic, especially from families, employing vocabulary like: "great", "fantastic",

"magnificent", "attractive"... These various qualifying terms express the global quality of the park and reflect the pleasure of being there or having a place that can't be found elsewhere.

*"A mi me parece genial!" (03) / "I think it's great!" (03)*

*"Una belleza" (06) / "It's a beautiful park" (06)*

*"Aquí es muy chévere. Por todos lados." (11ª et b) / "Here is really nice, everywhere." (11ª et b)*

*"Yo puedo opinar que el cambio que ha generado este parque en la sociedad actualmente ha sido asombroso [...]. Entonces ha sido grandioso." (15) / "I think that the change generated by the park in the society has been surprising [...]. Since that moment, it has been great." (15)*

*"Vamos a volver mas seguidito. Y sabroso, aquí chévere! Y el día se prestó, hoy día de ramos." (15) / "We are going to come back more often. It's nice here, very nice. Today, Palm Sunday, was a suitable day," (15)*



Tercer Milenio Park is also described as a place designed for relaxation, entertainment and recreation. It's a place well suited to "dominguear" ("sundaying").







It is a place where one feels “in peace”, away from the bustle and noise of downtown streets, especially along Jimenez Avenue.

*"Es... el sitio muy agradable. Cuando he tenido tiempo para estar aquí en el parque, se siente uno como una paz, fuera de todo el ruido y de cosas que uno ve en la calle." (09) / "It's... a very pleasant place. When I have had time to be here in the park, I feel peaceful away from everything and the noise and the other things that we see in the street." (09)*

*" lo aísla del caos de la avenida. Esa es una de las avenidas mas caóticas de la ciudad, usted sale allá y observa niveles terribles de polución y de ruido." (02) / "The park Isolates you from the chaos of the street. This avenue is one of the most chaotic streets of the city. You can go down there and you will observe terrible levels of noise and pollution." (02)*

In addition to being crossed by those who work in the area or go shopping and those who take public transport along the Décima Avenue, the park also offers the opportunity to come during the week and take a break, read a book, eat a sandwich...

*" Eso lo hace mucha gente, este recorrido, porque la gente que trabaja allá... esto es un centro comercial, algunos utilizan el sistema de transporte Transmilenio. Entonces lo que hacen es atravesarse el parque para venir hasta la estación. Y pues los que trabajan en esta estación y necesitan coger bus ahí en la décima atraviesan el parque también." (03) / "It's visited by so many people. This path is used by those who work around here... Over there, there is a mall. Some use the Transmilenio transport system. So what they do is to go through the park to the station, as well as those who work in this station and those who need to take the bus in the "Décima", they also cross the park. " (03)*



*" Trabajo cerca. Entonces cuando llego temprano vengo a leer un poco." (02) / "I work nearby. So, when I arrive early, I come here to read a little." (02)*

*"Es muy común ver a veces las personas traer, sacar su sándwich, su gaseosa o las papitas, lo que traigan para comer, a medio día en la época bonita." (03) / "Sometimes it is usual to see people carrying their sandwiches, drinks, chips, what they bring to eat, at noon during the good season." (03)*



These activities and uses are not exclusive: some people who go through the park during their working days come back in the weekend to recreate.

*"Porque yo vendo ropa y siempre cojo ese trayecto de allá para acá. Y voy allí a la tercera donde que me gusta comer fritanga los sábados que es una fritanga barata y rica." (06) / "Since I sell clothes, I usually take this way, from here to there. And I go to eat in the 3rd where I like to have "Fritanga" on Saturdays, it is cheap and very good." (06)*

"Practicing sport", "playing football", "walking their dogs" ... the interviewees list their own activities while inviting us to share it with them ("Look!"); it is like a spectacle, especially on Sundays when multiple possible activities take place in the park; people lying on grass, small peddling kiosks, children biking or skating, "tumbling down slopes", "rolling on the grass" or playing in the cold water even though swimming is banned. These are common scenes that the interviewees indeed appreciate.

*"Se pasa rico acá. Va uno y almuerza, vuelve y viene. Anda por todos lados. Por todos los alrededores. Anda uno y mira todos esos quioscos que pusieron por ahí. Mira uno cachivaches. Se divierte uno por acá. En lugar de quedarse uno en la casa se viene por aquí." (11b) / "It's amusing here. One goes to lunch, and comes back. One goes all around, to have a look at the kiosks that they set up here, and to have a look around the flea markets. It is fun here. Instead of staying at home, one comes here." (11b)*

Referring to the coming and going of people, the liberty of choosing the path or the mixing of generations, the interviewees express an "ease of appropriating" the space, which is particularly illustrated by children.

*" nosotros venimos a utilizar el espacio para que él monte en bicicleta, patines, para que corra porque los apartamentos de allí son pequeños mas bien. [...] Y los jueguitos... Los columpios, lo normal, y pues para caminar, a mi me gusta aquí, hay caminos... aquí hacen actividades de deporte los fines de semana también. Vienen los de recreación y deporte y hacen aeróbicos y todo." (03) / "We come here to make our child ride his bicycle, skate or run because the apartments over there are quite small. [...] And for the games ... the swings, those classical things, and for walking, I like it here because there are special paths for walking ... Here there are sport activities on the weekends. Then the people from the department of recreation and sport come and they organize aerobics activities and things like that." (03)*

*" Cualquier cantidad de gente tu puedes ver; niños de brazos, madres embarazadas... hasta los mas viejitos, los mas grandes ; estamos echando futbol, recreándonos... un coctel, una agüita. Entonces ha sido grandioso. Igual también hoy no están prendidas las fuentes, y también es cómodo y chistoso ver a los niños empeloticos allá metidos, aunque el agua es totalmente fría, están metidos allá. El parque para mí... [...]. Y son espacios que uno pierde, oportunidades que uno pierde, tanto para ellos que son jóvenes como para uno, para volver a recordar el infancia." (15) / "You can see a great amount of people here. You can see, newborns, pregnant women ... even elderly people and adults... we're here playing football, we are having fun ... we drank a cocktail, an infusion. So, it has been great. Today the fountains are not working, but it's nice and funny to see the naked children who are there in the water, although it's completely cold, children are always there. ... In my opinion, the park for me [...] They are spaces that we lose, opportunities that we lose for both the young and for us, to come here to revive our childhood." (15)*

In general, accompanying children to Tercer Milenio represents an important reason for coming as it's now a relatively peaceful place for them. The park, due to its amenities and its atmosphere, is considered as a place designed especially for children.

*"el parque así es muy bueno, y es muy agradable, se siente mucha paz, mucha tranquilidad y los niños cuando unos los trae se siente mucha seguridad." (09) / "The park is very good, it is very pleasant. One feels peaceful and calm, and the children, when we bring them here, we feel safe." (09)*

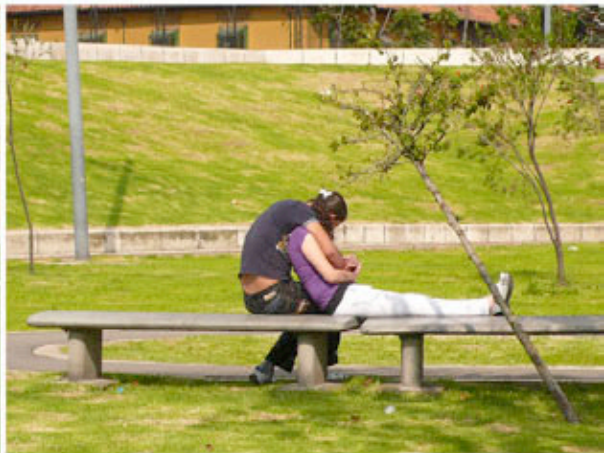
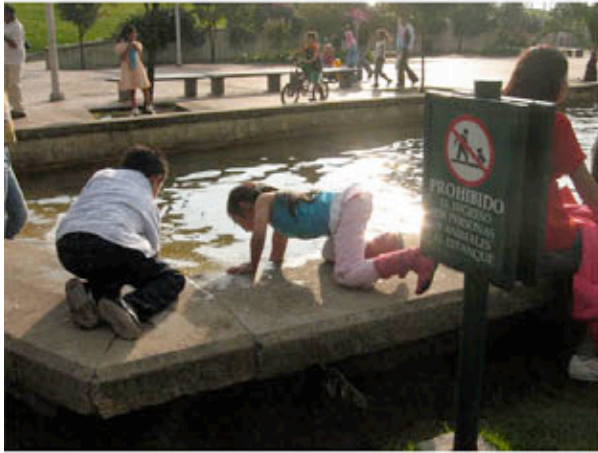
*" Los niños en días soleados se divierten bastante, se meten allí. Mi hijo no, porque pues... (risas). Mira! Si, mira! Ahí, ¿ves? (mostrando los niños en las fuentes)" (03) / "The kids have a lot of fun during sunny days when they get there, unlike my son because well ... (laughs). Look! Yes, look! Here, Do you see? (Pointing at the children in the fountains)." (03)*

*" Además los niños suelen rodarse por las colinas." (02) / "The children use to roll down the hills." (02)*









## A metropolitan space and a district park

Through its different uses, Tercer Milenio Park appears as a place that works on different scales.

Several interviewees described the park as “**a daily life**” place, visited on weekdays by families or employees of the surrounding areas as well as pupils of the nearby schools who come to practice sports. There is also the army battalion or the nearby police office who come to the park for training.



*"Entre semana tengo entendido que los de recreación y deporte estaban haciendo unos cursitos de patinaje, de fútbol. Igual ahí está el servicio. En semana funciona igual. Pues los niños aquí del colegio...aquí al lado hay un colegio, los traen ahí para hacer deporte. Los de la banda, del ejército... ¿Cierto? También ensayan aquí. La policía también." (03) / "During the week, I heard that the people from the department of recreation and sport are organizing skating and soccer courses. In any case there is the service. During the week it works the same way. Well, the children in the school,... there is a school next to here, they come to practise sports. Those in the band of the army ... is not it? They also rehearse here. And the police too. (03)*

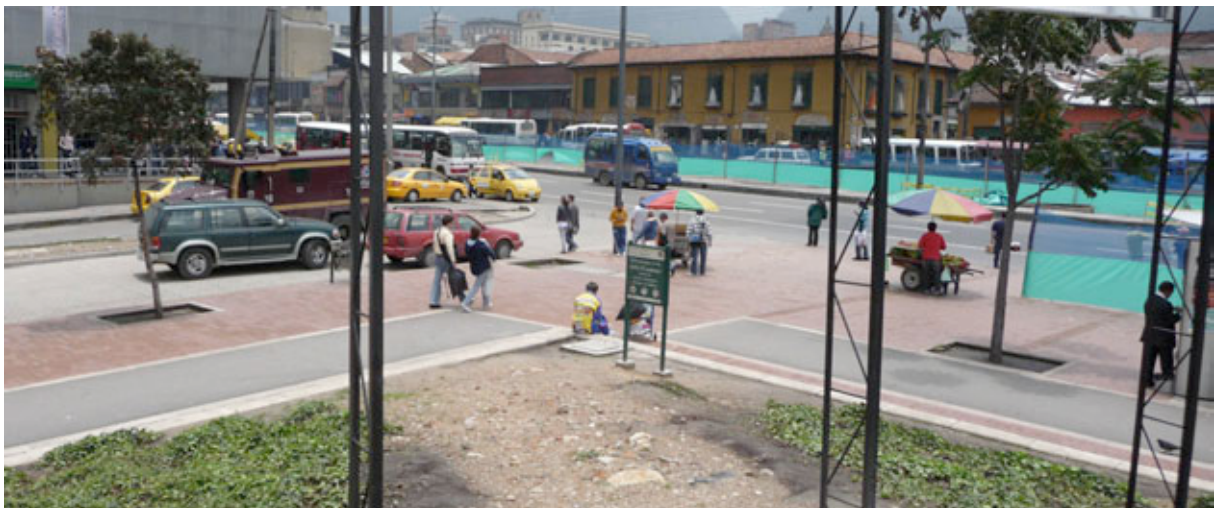




In general, for those who come regularly, Tercer Milenio is described as a place where one can recognize some familiar faces of inhabitants living in the surrounding areas.

*"Amigos se encuentran por acá. Vienen hartos. Por aquí me encontré varios compañeros que estaban por aquí dando vueltas con la familia." (11b) / "Friends gather here. They are many to come here. I just met some of them who were around here walking with their families." (11b)*

*"En este parque lo distingue (conoce) mucha gente a uno. Gente del barrio. Del Eduardo Santos, de San Bernardo." (12 a et b) / "In this park I meet a lot of people I know; people from my neighborhood, from Eduardo Santos or San Bernardo." (12 a and b)*



Besides being considered as a place of interrelationship and neighborhood, Tercer Milenio also functions at **metropolitan scale**: crossing through the park, using it as a shortcut to get to the bus station or to get home. The park belongs, from the interviewees' point of view, to an urban territory spreading over the neighborhood boundaries. In addition, while referring to the project's history, not only did they mention the local context of the ancient Cartucho but they also linked it with other public spaces projects realized throughout the city, such as the Transmilenio.





Despite being hardly known to some people, the park is perceived as an open space that serves the entire city, currently frequented by other neighbourhoods dwellers and attracting “people from all social classes”. (03)

*"De toda clase...viene gente de otras partes" (03) / "Of all classes...Here comes people from other parts of the city"(03)*

### **Memories of Cartucho: the « Famous Potful »**

The memory of "famoso Cartucho" (08) is still alive in the mind of the interviewees. If some of them qualified the ancient neighbourhood in a prudent and allusive way as a “relatively hard zone”, (“zona bastante dura, 07), others remembered it as a “very dangerous” zone (eso era muy peligroso “16), as “one of the worst street regained by the city of Bogotá” (14), “a place of absolute misery” (02). It was common to call it “a potful of bad life”, (“Esto era como quien dice aqui una olla de mala muerte”, 08), too dangerous even to cross.

*" Yo ya trabajé aquí en este sector cuando era el cartucho. Esto no se podía transitar, aquí no se podía caminar, uno podía entrar pero de pronto salir...como difícil. (13 b) / "I worked in this area when it was el Cartucho. We could not walk here, we could get in but to go out after that was may be...quite more difficult. (13 b)*

*"De la sexta hacia acá nadie pasaba porque era un atracadero." (15) / "From the 6th until here, nobody could pass as it was a place of aggression and theivery." (15)*

*" porque eso antes no podía uno caminar por acá. [...] eso era muy peligroso anteriormente, nadie iba por acá para coger el bus." (16) / "Before, we could not walk around here. [...] It was very dangerous, here nobody used to pass by to take the bus." (16)*

The Cartucho was “like another city” (“Era como otra ciudad”, 08), assimilated to a concentration of various forms of crime: aggression, murder, robbery, drugs (“ladronismo,” 14; “droguadiccion”, 02), and arms traffic. As a symbol of violence that

prevailed there, several interviewees mentioned a rumor telling that thousands of people might have been left dead and buried there (*los muertos Tirados ahí*", 15), (*"La cantidad de la esta gente sepultada acá ...*, 12b).

*" Yo no me imagino cuantos muertos habrá debajo de esto. Millares, millares de muertos hay. Porque esto era terrible... en la época del cartucho que llamaban esto." (06) / "I cannot imagine how many dead people are buried here, there are thousands and thousands. Because here it was terrible ... at the time of el Cartucho [...]" (06)*



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In addition, the interviewees immediately link the ex-Cartucho with marginal populations who were concentrated there; a population of homeless people (03), "indigent", street children ("gamines") and beggars...

*" Pero igualmente era inseguro, porque ahí se la pasaban una mano de gamines (SDF) drogándose y lo atracaban a uno." (04) / "But it was also insecure because there was a huge number of homelesses taking drugs, stealing, and aggressing people." (04)*

*" [Había exclusivamente indigentes que vivían en esta zona?] Si. Indigencia, jibaros, de todo. Había traficantes de armas." (08) / (08) "[They were only indigent people who lived in this area?] Yes, the indigent, drug dealers, everything. There were also arm dealers." (08)*

The vocabulary used to designate the inhabitants of former Cartucho is sometimes very hard, like "jibalos" (drug dealers) (08), "desechables" (rubbish) (14), "people of the worst kind that could be found in the city were gathered in this area" (*"La peor calana que podría haber en la ciudad se reunía en ese punto."* 02)

*" era lamentable porque no había un orden público." (04) / "Well, it was a shame because there was no public order." (04)*



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## Testimonials

Several interviewees, who used to live or work here shared the daily life of Cartucho. Since the interviews were not focusing on the past of the place, the quoted memories are scattered and hardly linkable but interesting as a testimony value: mainly about the activities and occupations of the former Cartucho, about the attachment to the place, and the demolition process that was predictably confrontational.

Two employees of a social economy organism, who are currently working for the integration of street vendors and displaced people (13), evoke the process of demolition, dispossession and relocation of residents of Cartucho -a process that lasted for eight years- in which they have participated:

*"La gente que quería afiliarse al los proyectos del distrito lo hizo. Hubo mucha gente a los que les dieron casa en otros sectores de la ciudad. Les dieron subsidio de vivienda y los reubicaron. Otros pasaron aquí a este barrio (San bernardo). Otros se bajaron aquí a lo que es 5 huecos, ese espacio que queda atrás del batallón. Porque hay una calle que es básicamente de consumo. La gente se desplazó pero difícil sacarlos a todos.*

*Empezaron por tumbar. Empezaron por todo lo que era la calle sexta. En ese sector era mucho mas fácil negociar porque de la séptima hacia allá, había mas que todo industria. Negociaron los predios y los negocios que funcionaban ahí, los fueron sacando poco a poco. El punto conflictivo era aquí.*

*Las industrias se ubicaron en otras partes, simplemente los compraron los predios y ya. Como esto era un proyecto de interés social, eso prima y si alguien no vende, es expropiado, que es lo que toco que hacer con muchos de los predios de acá. Todo eso (zona norte del parte) va ser un centro comercial, grandísimo. Y ahí van a ubicar vendedores informales también, en ese centro comercial. Pero fue un proceso como de 8 años.*

*La gente que vivía acá [y que se oponía al proyecto] ? los mismos lideres. Acá se comercializaba... dicen las malas lenguas que vendían cerca de 50 millones de pesos diarios comerciando armas, drogas, y todo lo que se quiera. Todo el mercado negro. Entonces, pues, obviamente eso no le convenía a los que estaban aprovechando eso." (13b)*

*"People who wanted to participate in the projects of the district, they did it. There were many people who received a house located in another part of the city. They gave them an allowance for their domains and they were replaced by others. Others came here to this neighborhood (San Bernardo). Others went to what is called "cinco huecos", the street behind the battalion. Because there is a street that is basically for consumption (of drugs). The People moved, but it is difficult to evacuate them all (they make reference to homeless people formerly living in the sector that was known as "el cartucho")."*

*"They started with the demolition. They started by the 6<sup>th</sup> street. In this area, it was much easier to negotiate because at the 7<sup>th</sup> street, there was a concentration of industries. They negotiated the land and the businesses that were there. They bought properties step by step. The point of conflict was here."*

*"[Industrial activities] have resettled in other zones. They simply bought their domains and that was it. Since this was a project of social interest, social interest must prevail. If someone did not sell his property, he was expropriated, which happened with several properties here. All this area, located at the north part of the park, will be a mega shopping center. And there, they will also move the informal vendors into the mall. But it was a long process of eighth years."*

*"People who lived here and opposed the project were the leaders themselves. Here it was a place of illegal trade... It is said that in this place were sold nearly 50 million pesos everyday in arms, drugs and anything you want. It was the black market. So, well, obviously this project did not suit those who profited from such activities." (13b)*

Another interview shows the point of view of three elderly inhabitants interviewed together (10, see frame) who lived in rented apartments; one of them was selling takeaway food, and another one was part of a car mechanics family. Their testimony reveals how important the mechanical workshops have been, describing it as one of the main activities in the area that used to function night and day.

The demolition of the neighborhood caused them to lose their jobs. They also regret leaving the neighborhood where they were born and to which they were attached and that everyone wasn't relocated with the same criteria.

## Testimony of Cartucho's former inhabitants

*Señora 1 : A mi me parece un parque amplio, recreativo para los niños en una zona buena.*

*Señora 2: Se compuso la zona porque estaba mal.*

*Señora 1 : [...] esta bueno el parquecito. Esta bien vigiladito. [...]*

*Señora 1 : Nosotros vivíamos acá en este parque. Nacimos acá, todo esto eran casas. Las tumbaron y hicieron el parque. [...] Vivíamos en arriendo. [...] Pues a mi me parece bueno lo del parque. Pero al igual deja mucha gente sin trabajo. Sacan mucha gente. Los que se rebuscan se quedan sin trabajo.*

*Señora 2 : Quedamos*

*Señora 1 : Quedamos, si. Porque esto era lleno de gente que trabajaba.*

*Señora 2 : Yo vendía tintos, empanadas. Todo eso, hacia. [...] Si porque debido a la acabada yo quedé sin trabajo. Me toca vivir de la caridad de mis hijos, porque a uno mayor ya, no le dan trabajo en ningún lado.*

*[...] [¿Y ustedes que hacían acá ?]*

*Señora 3 : Monta llantas.*

*[...] [¿Y encontraron fácilmente otra casa para vivir ?]*

*Señora 1: No, nos toco irnos a vivir en arriendo. Nosotros todavía vivimos en arriendo. Acá dicen que dieron casas pero a unas que a otras personas. No les salió a todas. A mi hermana, si le salió casa. [...]*

*[¿Eso de que dependía ?]*

*Señora 1: Yo creo que de la zona o la pobreza, algo así me imagino. [...] Queríamos quedarnos, porque igual uno criándose por acá, que se va querer uno ir. Pero ya era obligación irse. Compraron las casas y las iban tumbando.*

*[¿Los propietarios de esas casa vivían en ellas?]*

*Señora 1 : Algunos. Otros viven en otro lado*

*Señora 2 : Otros no tenían, sino su taller. El que tuviera su taller trabajaba de día. Y por la noche llegaba otra gente y los de la noche les pagaban un arriendo. Hombres jóvenes trabajaban en la noche. Todo esto fue talleres de monta llantas.*

*[...]*

*Señora 1 : Acá hay mucha gente que se crió, y ha salido adelante. Esta zona la tienen muy estigmatizada.*

*Woman 1: For me, it looks like a spacious park, a recreational for children in a good area.*

*Woman 2: The area has improved because it was bad before.*

*Woman 1: [...] It is the same. This park is very good. It is well monitored. [...]*

*Woman 1: We lived here in this park. We were born here, in all this area there were houses. They destroyed everything and built the park. [...] We lived in a rented house. [...] Well, this park seems good to me. But at the same time many lost their jobs. Those who made a living here are now out of work.*



Woman 2: We also lost our jobs.

Woman 1: Yes, us too. This place was full of working people.

Woman 2: I used to sell coffee and empanadas. I did all that, until ... [...] Yes, because I became, after the demolition of the neighborhood, unemployed. Now I'm living on the charity of my son, because as an elderly person, we don't have work anywhere.

[...] [And you, what did you do there?]

Woman 3: Car Mechanic.

[...] [And, did you find another house to live in easily?]

Woman 1: No, we still rent a house. Here it is said that people was compensated, but just certain persons were compensated. [...]My sister, she received a house. [...]

[And, on what did that depend?]

. Woman 1: I think, on the residential areas or on the poverty level, I imagine something like that. [...] We wanted to stay because certain people had grown up here. It created relationships between us and the place, while others left. But it was an obligation to leave. They bought the houses and destroyed them.

[Did the homeowners live there?]

Woman 1: Some of them. Others lived elsewhere.

Woman 2: Some people only worked here, in their garages. Those who had a workshop worked at daytime. The night-time arrived other people who paid them a rent. Young men worked at night. All these were repair shops.

Woman 1: There are many people who grew up here, and they have prospered. The area has always been stigmatized.

Despite being patchy, these few elements of the neighborhood's memory - including its destruction- seem valuable mainly because they show, as clarified in other interviews, that the fate of the previous inhabitants of Cartucho remains hardly known.

*" No sé que ha pasado con esa gente, no sé cual sería el plan del gobierno, hay algunos que se concentraron en otras ollas de Bogota, porque hay bastantes. Otros habrán vuelto a la normalidad, habrán dejando la calle. O se irían para otra ciudades." (08) / "I do not know what happened with these people. I do not know what the government's plan was. Some have gathered in other run down areas of Bogotá, there are many. Possibly there are others who returned to a normal life and left the the streets. Or may be they moved to other cities." (08)*

*"esto también genero que los antiguos habitantes del Cartucho emprendieran un éxodo hacia toda la ciudad." (02) / "This also forced the old inhabitants of el Cartucho to undertake an exodus through the entire city." (02)*





Demolition of Cartucho – Copyright reserved – Source Internet

**Salvaged (Recuperated) space, standardized space?** (\* References to the Rehabilitation Policy)

Even among the interviewed inhabitants who had to leave the neighbourhood, the creation of the park is positively perceived.

*" Es un parque que lleva mas o menos siete años de construido. Esto fue obra del alcalde Enrique Peñalosa. El empezó, el señor Mokus terminó." (07) / "This park was built more or less seven years ago. It is a work of Mayor Enrique Peñalosa. He started the work and Mr. Mockus finished it." (07)*

*" el alcalde en esa época, Peñalosa lo recuperó y se lo entregó a la ciudadanía para este tipo de eventos... para disfrutar del parque; Lo que ha sido una excelente opción. El sitio es muy bueno. [...] Porque eso era la famosa olla .Y allá creo que van hacer ... va quedar bueno el sector porque van hacer un centro comercial "el gran San Victorino" y va a quedar bueno eso. Ese proyecto que van hacer ahí van a ser edificios y locales comerciales." (14) / "The mayor at that time, Peñalosa, recovered this space and gave it to the citizens to make this kind of activities...to enjoy the park, which turned out to be an excellent option. The site is very good. [...] Because this was the most famous run down area of the city. Over there I think they'll do ... the area will improve because they will create a mall "the great San Victorino," therefore the zone will be better. The project that they are going to construct here will be commercial buildings and locations. "(14)*

It is frequently reported that the project was realized according to the will of the previous mayor Peñalosa and to the urban salvage "recuperación" policy of Bogotá public spaces. Even though the word "recuperación" was not always mentioned during the interviews, the context of Tercer Milenio project remains well known to everyone. Correspondingly, knowing about the ongoing project of the "Gran San Victorino" shopping center, which was mentioned as an extension to the park, indicates a relatively high media coverage.



It's worth saying that the new park is evaluated with respect to the ancient Cartucho, its reality and symbolism. According to some people Tercer Milenio brings a gradual improvement (04, 08), while for others it gave a "new life" to the neighbourhood (07).

*"Hoy en día ha cambiado bastante. [...] Y creo que con el tiempo va a quedar muy bien este sector, va mejorar bastante." (04) / "Today, it has changed a lot. [...] And I think, with time, this space will become very good. It will improve." (04)*

As being a "Project of social interest" (proyecto de interés social, 13b), with "strong social impact" ("impacto social muy fuerte", 15), the park is described as a place given back to the inhabitants, to the citizens ("se lo be entrego a la ciudadanía", 14), and as "a point of reconciliation with the city" ("Y pues ahora **como es ese punto de reconciliación de la ciudad**", 02).

The case of Tercer Milenio salvage policy is clearly a synonym for greater security. For the interviewees, the destruction of Cartucho and the construction of the park in its place, helped reducing the crime level in the area by removing the marginal population of the sector and giving the place back to "supposedly good people" (03).

*"pues el distrito tengo entendido que eso fue como recuperación del espacio para darlo a las personas supuestamente de bien, ¿no?" (03) / "Well, the district, I heard that this was a kind of a rehabilitation of the public space to give it back to respectable people, right?"(03)*

The massive presence of the police was also mentioned during the interviews.

*"Ahora si porque pasa gente, la policia...el ejercito pasa por acá, entonces esta mas segura la zona. [¿Ahora le parece que es un sitio seguro?] Si, claro ahorita esta muy bueno. Acá también uno coge el bus cuando va a ir a Guadalupe... entonces es muy seguro este pedacito." (16) / "Now yes, because people pass by, the police... the military also pass by, so the area is safer. [Does it seem to be a safer place now?] Yes, of course, now it very good. We also take the bus here to go to Guadalupe ... this is a very safe place."(16)*

In an indirect way, it seems that Transmilenio transport system played a role in creating security in the area: several interviewees described the congestion that formerly prevailed around the public transport stations as a favorable environment for aggression and thievery.

*" antes era la Avenida Caracas cuando no había Transmilenio. Entonces uno pasaba en las busetas y veía como atracaban la gente y todo hacia este sector. [...] Pero igualmente era inseguro, porque ahí se la pasaban una mano de gamines (SDF) drogándose y lo atracaban a uno. Uno pasaba ahí... le tocaba andar con cinco ojos, porque por todos lados estaban pendientes de a quien robaban.." (04) / "It was the Caracas Avenue when Transmilenio did not exist. So we passed by in the bus and we could see how people were being attacked in this sector. [...] But it was also unsafe because there were permanently lots of indigent people taking drugs and stealing, assaulting people. When you passed by... you had to be very careful because everywhere they were waiting for someone to rob...then (the bus) turned around San Victorino". (04)*

*" Hay mas presencia de la policia. Hay mas accion de la policia. No hay tanto robo. Los gamines ya no se roban los espejos; Porque antes eran decarados, esa Caracas era intransitable. Primero porque no existia transmilenio, y eso era infestado de buses. Entonces habia mucha oportunidad de que el delincuente huyera, pero a raiz de que quitaron el famoso Cartucho y montaron el transmilenio, ha cambiado bastante." (08) / "There is more police presence. There is more police action. There is not much robbery. The tramps do not steal the car's mirrors anymore, because they were shameless before. The Caracas Avenue was impassable. Firstl, because the Transmilenio did not exist and the space was congested with buses. So, there were many opportunities for the thieves to escape. But as they destroyed the famous Cartucho and the transmilenio was built, things have changed substantially." (08)*

## Social Coexistence

However, the experience of insecurity continues to cross the speeches of the park users. The reputation of this zone appears to be tenacious. According to some interviewees, residents of Bogota still hesitate to visit the new park and, somehow, they make themselves this bad reputation. Many of them know someone who has been aggressed, so the park doesn't seem like a safe place. **No one** dares to cross it at night for the fear of aggressions.

*"[Le parece que es un sitio inseguro?] No, pues... Es que ya yo he visto a alguien que lo han robado, y entonces me pareció que sí." (03) / [Does it seem to you as a dangerous place?] No, well... Indeed I've seen people who were robbed here so it seems so. " (03)*

*[Le parece un buen sitio para descansar?] Claro, si, aunque dicen que por aquí le roban a uno las cosas, pero yo cuanto llevo acá, y no me han robado*

*nada. (01) / [Does it seem a good place to rest?] Of course, although some say that they were robbed here. But I've never been mugged when I come here. (01)*

*" Por aquí hay mucho ladrón. [¿A usted la han robado acá ?] No a mi nunca." (06) / "Over here, there are many thieves. [Have you ever been robbed?] No, never" (06)*

This feeling of insecurity is less related to the park itself than to its surroundings. In this sense, the proximity of "the Bronx" which is located just on the other side of Decima avenue and known as a "small Cartucho" where crime has been shifted, have crossed for several times the speeches of interviewees. Despite its location at the back of an army building whose access is watched by the police, "the Bronx" is described as a completely closed, "trapped" area, surrounded by arm and drug traffic and where mob and mafia prevail.

### **"The Bronx", "The Small Cartucho"**

*" Si, si, personas con problemas de drogas y alcoholismo. Indigentes. Eso era lo que habitaba aquí. Y pues, que si lo recorren todavía... porque ellos se fueron muy cerca de aquí. Aquí atrás hay un batallón...detrás del batallón. [¿Como se llama este sitio?] El bronx.*

*[¿Ustedes nunca pasan por ahí?] Yo, a veces paso porque voy a algo, pero pues ellos tienen como su espacio, esta cerrado y todo ¿cierto? Y la policía permanece como en las entradas. Ellos, no. No molestan. De pronto que no le roban a uno por ahí. Pero, no. Vienen a... porque aquí hay cosas de reciclaje cerca, entonces vienen a dejar sus productos. [¿Y a usted le a miedo cuando pasa por ahí?]*

*Si, claro. Nunca paso sola. Si paso por ahí es que voy con mi esposo, de resto nunca paso sola. Porque si, pues una mujer es como mas ... (03)*

*"Yes, people with drug and alcohol problems and homeless people. It was like that the people who lived here. And they are still around here... because they are very close. Behind the place, there is a battalion ... Behind the battalion. [What is this place called?] The Bronx.*

*[Have you ever passed by there?] Sometimes I go when I search for something there. But, they own their space, everything is closed. Isn't it? And the police are always in front of the entrances. They do not. They do not bother anyone. May be they rob someone eventually. But no. ... They come here because there are recycling centres around, so they come just to put their products. [And do you get scared when they pass by here?] Yes, of course. I never come here alone. I come only with my husband, I never come alone. Because yes, a woman is quiete more ... "(03)*

*" Si detrás de ese edificio, hay una olla, el mal llamado "bronx". Pero allá es muy pequeño a comparación de lo que era esto. Esto era una cuadra completa, allá son dos callecitas, mas pequeñito, pero igual es un problema para la ciudad porque ahí va el delincuente y es muy difícil sacarlo de allá, se escabulle, entre toda esa gente, y si un policía entra hasta lo matan, lo roban, lo pueden hasta matar allá. [¿La policía nunca entra a ese sitio?] Si han entrado, pero con bastantes medidas de seguridad, con grupos especializados, y se han hecho abatidas se han quitado drogas, se ha judicializado gente, eso sale mucho en televisión cuando se hacen operativos ahí." (08)*

*"Yes, behind that building there is a run down area, the so called "Bronx". But that is too small compared to what el Cartucho was. This was a whole district, but here, it is only two streets, much smaller, but it is also a problem to the city because the criminals are there and it's very difficult to take them out. They vanish into the crowd and if a policeman*

enters, they kill him, steal from him. They may also kill him there. [Do the police ever go in there?] Yes, they have been there, but with severe security measures, with special groups and they have made raids, they have seized drugs, they arrested people, when operations like this happen, it is often presented in the television. " (08)

" Toda esa gente que vivía acá se fue a vivir allá a la cuarta, yo creo. ¿no Sonia? [Otra mujer] : Si, allá en la calle del Bronx. Allá están todos metidos." (12 b et c) "All the people who lived here went to live to the fourth street, i think, isn't it Sonia? [The other woman]: Yes, they are over there in the bronx. They all went there." (12 b, and c)

Marginal people continue frequenting Tercer Milenio Park as it is "open" to the surrounding areas. For some, "it remains a place of conflict" (02), while for others, such as the manager of a bar at the park (07), it creates only "minor problems". Despite remaining quite silent throughout the whole interview, the latter referred primarily to the "inconvenience" happening to his customers by the practices of begging, while evoking at the same time, the recourse to the private security guards of the park provided by "the Institute of Sport".

"[¿Cómo es posible no tener problema en un parque abierto?] Si. Es difícil que no suceda algo ¿no?. Pero...como de pronto ustedes se dan cuenta desde hace un momento que están acá...así...{...} [Entre los visitantes del parque con los que usted habla ¿hay antiguos habitantes del cartucho?] Ellos no se acercan acá. No porque no se les permite. [¿La policía? ¿la seguridad?] Si, o uno. Pasan, si. Suben, bajan. Pero si llegan a molestar aquí toca llamar a seguridad. Porque hay personas que son bastante problemáticas. Bastante tercas. [¿Qué hacen?] A ver, por ejemplo si llega un personaje de esos y le dice uno "por favor aquí no pida limosna" porque no es permitido. Entonces se "embejucan". Se ponen bravos y son groseros. Entonces en ese momento ya le toca a uno actuar hacia la seguridad. [...] Para que el turismo cuando llegue se sienta seguro. Para que ustedes cuando vengan se sientan seguros. Si se sentaron ahí un rato se sintieron seguros. Porque yo por ejemplo aquí estoy pendiente. [Pero quizás también hay una diferencia entre la tranquilidad que es lo que describe usted y la seguridad. Que ocurre ¿esta gente es peligrosa?] Uno en estos sitios conoce mucha gente. Unos de mala forma, otros de otra. Gente muy decente, gente muy amargada, gente muy buena, gente muy regular. Uno tiene que acostumbrarse a todo. [¿Pero usted es capaz de ver quien puede ser peligroso?] Ya uno mas o menos...porque los que suben son prácticamente los mismos de siempre. Ya uno los conoce. Y ya no se arriman acá porque saben que no se les permite... [...] Si yo no trato de cuidar mi clientela...Tengo que poner yo de mi parte y decir, bueno aquí se respeta. Estamos para cuidar a la persona que viene, que se sienta tranquila. [¿Quién paga la seguridad?] La seguridad privada ...el instituto de deporte." (07)

[How is it possible not to have problems in an open park?] Yes. It's hard that nothing happens, no? [...] [Among the park visitors with whom you have speaked, are there ancient inhabitants of el Cartucho?] They do not come here. No, because they are not allowed to come. [...] They only pass by. They go up and down. But if they make problems here, we call the security because there are people who are quite problematic and quite stubborn. [What do they do?] Listen, for example,if one of those persons come here and I tell them "please do not beg here" because it is not allowed, then they get angry. They become wild and rude. So, in those moments, we ask the securiy guards to come. [...] So that the tourist when they come can feel safe, so that when you come, you can feel safe. If you were here for a while and you felt tranquil it is because I take care of this place. [But maybe there is a difference between what you describe as tranquility and the real security. What happens then? Are these people dangerous?]/ "In this kind of

*place one knows many people, some of them in bad ways, others in other ways; very decent people, very embittered people, very nice people, and very suspicious people. One has to get used to everything." [But are you capable of seeing who can be dangerous?] Yes, more or less ... Because those who come here are always the same. We know some of them and they do not come here because they know it is not allowed ... If I do not decide to protect my clients ... I must take it upon myself and say that here there must be respect. [...] [Who pays for security?] The private security... the Institute of Sport. "(07)*

In this sense, it is through the topic of security that the issue of actual coexistence between people of different social backgrounds at Tercer Milenio was mentioned in the interviews. The conflictual dimension has probably been minimized by the interviewees during the investigation as suggest their hesitations, allusions and unspoken.

More specifically, if the words of family fathers and marginal population reflect obviously different social realities and representations, the survey sample itself indicates a certain social diversity. And the Park is rather considered as a relative tolerant public space, in particular toward the "displaced" as it provides them a temporary home.

*" Uno en estos sitios conoce mucha gente. Unos de mala forma, otros de otra. Gente muy decente, gente muy amargada, gente muy buena, gente muy regular. Uno tiene que acostumbrarse a todo." (07) / "In this kind of place one knows many people, some of them in bad ways, others in other ways; very decent people, very embittered people, very nice people, and very suspicious people. One has to get used to everything." (07)*

*" Aquí en ese parque se refugia la gente, mire los desplazados... mire los niños, y a pesar de que hay droga y delincuencia hay alegría." (05) / "Here, this park is a refuge to certain persons , look ... look at the displaced, at the children. Despite the fact that there are drugs and crime, there is also joy." (05)*

*"Nosotros llegamos esta mañana acá y nos enteramos que son desplazados, pero es lo está manejando el parque. El parque los dejó instalarse acá. Como ven, en camping. Tengo entendido que hay un líder, que es la persona con la cual yo conversé. Son personas que vienen de otra ciudad, aunque ya veo personas que yo conocía del cartucho que se hacen pasar por desplazados. Yo ya trabajé aquí en este sector cuando era el cartucho." (13 b) / "We arrived here in the morning and we were informed that they are displaced people, but this situation is managed by those who administer the park. The park allows them to settle here as you can see this campsite. I understand that there is a leader, which is the man with whom I had a chat a few moments ago. They are people who come from other places, although, I have already seen some persons that I know from el Cartucho that are pretending that they make part of the group of refugees. I worked in this area when it was el Cartucho. " (13b)*





*The situation of the first refugees - April 2009 - during our inquiries*



*The situation of the refugees – 3 months after (July 2009)*



## A press article about the situation of the refugees- 3 months later

### **Colombia needs refugee camps to deal with displacement: Bogota**

By Katharina Wecker, the 24 July 2009 for Colombia Reports



*Bogota authorities are expecting 1200 displaced families from Tolima to arrive in the city this weekend. The capital fears that it is unable to take care of more refugees and demands that the national government recognize the gravity of displacement and establish refugee camps.*

*Bogota has neither the space nor capacity to deal with the expected 1200 displaced families, Health Secretary Hector Zambrano told local Caracol Radio. He said that the government of Alvaro Uribe refuses to accept the problems that exist with displacement.*

*"We do not share what some top government officials say. The issue of displacement is not about the occupation of public space. This is a very short-sighted and limited view of the problems of displacement in Colombia," Zambrano said.*

*The Health Secretary urged the government to consider what other countries in war are doing, to recognize the problem of displacement and to create refugee camps.*

*"What is happening in Colombia is that the government did not take that decision and the problem of displacement is treated like dirt that is hidden under the carpet," Zambrano added.*

*More than 1000 displaced families are already living in Bogota's Parque Tercer Milenio where authorities declared a health alert on Thursday after the District Emergency Committee examined the medical condition of the displaced who have been living in the park for more than four months.*

*The examination revealed that 131 people show symptoms of the AH1N1 virus, three are infected with HIV and others have tuberculosis and cancer.*

*According to the newspaper El Tiempo, authorities started to evacuate the ill and sick from the Parque on Thursday afternoon. Only 28 left the park voluntarily.*

*The displaced gather in the Parque Tercer Milenio to protest against forced displacements and insufficient aid from the government.*

*A representative of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) will visit Bogota in the next few days in order to mediate between the displaced and the Government, El Espectador reported. There are currently between three and four million displaced people in Colombia because of the country's 45-year long violent conflict.*

Finally, the question of coexistence -and conflict- is directly mentioned in the interviews only by street vendors. The collected remarks about this subject were related to the activity of the interviewees themselves: an ice-cream seller (09), a policeman (08) and two social workers (13). All of them work in the park but their words go beyond the particular uses of the place, in order to underline the more general issue of peddling in public spaces:

- Job insecurity of the street vendors, whose activities are prohibited: they did not find other options ("I was searching for a work as a cleaner", 09) and they are regularly dislodged by the police who confiscate their working tools and goods (procedure explained by the police officer);
- Issue of public space control: the density of pedlars is particularly mentioned by the police officer as a favorable factor to thievery and criminality;
- Integration policy, supported in the park by the "Social Economy Institute (IRDR) formerly "Popular Trade Funds". Its responsibility is to meet pedlars, make a census of them, help them to get organized (into associations), get them a -temporary- permission to practice trading or inform them about training courses.





### 3 different points of view on street trading

#### **An Ice-cream Street Vendor**

*[¿Es fácil trabajar en este sector?] Un poco complicado porque la policía lo molesta a uno mucho. Lo corretea, a veces le quitan a uno los carritos, queda uno sin trabajo, porque la gente de ver que le quitan a uno no le da mas trabajo. Pero si uno no se viene a arriesgar.... Les iba comentando que uno no consigue trabajo, el desempleo es mucho, también trabaja acá el esposo de mi hija, también vende "bon ice", igual que yo. Y el también ha trabajaba en construcción y todo esto pero tampoco le ha resultado trabajo. Si, por lo menos ahí están ellos los policías entonces, ellos no lo dejan acercar allá... pero yo hay veces cuando voy por allá, digo que voy a buscar a mi yerno, para que me dejen pasar." (09)*

*"[Is it easy to work in this area?] A little bit complicated as the police bother us much. They come after us; sometimes they take someone's chariot, leaving him without work. As people know that the police confiscate the merchandise, they do not give us the opportunity to work anymore. But if one does not take the risk... I would say that it is difficult to find a work as the unemployment rate is high. My daughter's husband works here too. He also sells "Bon Ice» like me. He used to work in construction but he is also unemployed. If the cops are around they do not let us come here... But sometimes when I go over there I say that I'm looking for my son in law so they let me pass. 09)*

#### **A Policeman**

*" Lo que nosotros hacemos una labor de prevencion estando ahí presentes. Y lo otro es efectuar decomisos. Incautaciones. Esas incautaciones se hacen con la compañía de la personería y un delegado de la alcaldía. Se incauta la mercancía, se hace un acta, un inventario de lo que se le quita a la persona. De ahí se lleva para las bodegas de la alcaldía y se le entrega a la persona siempre y cuando no haya sido reincidente en 15 días hábiles. Si es reincidente no les devuelven la mercancía. Las ventas ambulantes estan*

prohibidas. [Sin embargo hay mucha gente que uno ve en el parque...] Si, lo que pasa es lo siguiente: la policía, por mas que se hagan esfuerzos no se alcanza a cubrir toda la ciudad. Son pocos los policías que hay para el espacio publico y son mas los vendedores. Le queda muy difícil a la policía controlar toda la ciudad y el espacio publico. [...] O sea, el espacio publico debería ser espacio publico ¿no?. Que no lo ocupen los vendedores ambulantes. Usted va a pasar y tiene que bajarse a la calle... O... eso son focos de delincuencia ¿cierto? Porque como hay espacio para que la gente transite entonces se... la gente se acumula y ahí es donde el cosquillero aprovecha y saca la plata, saca el celular, roba y se escabulle entre la gente. Ese es el problema, a uno como policía de civil le suele suceder tambien. A uno como policía de civil tambien lo roban, o algo así. Siempre es mas comodo transitar por una calle donde no haya vendedores, donde no haya mercancía fregada, que una calle donde solo esten los peatones. Esa es mi percepción como usuario." (08)

«What we are doing in this area is a disuasive work by being here. And the other function is to make the confiscations. These confiscations are made with a legal representative and a delegate from the city administration. The merchandises are confiscated; an act is done with an inventory list of what is seized from the vendor. The merchandise is taken to a warehouse, and it is given back to the vendors, if they are not reoffenders, within 15 working days. If someone is a reoffender the goods will not be given back to him. Street sales are prohibited. [However, there are many of them in the park ...] Yes, this is how it works. The police, despite all their efforts, can not cover the entire city. Police officers who are present in the public space are fewer than the number of sellers. It is very difficult for the police to control the whole city and public spaces. [...] Look, public spaces should be public spaces, right? That means not occupied by vendors. Sometimes to pass you have to get down the sidewalk ... Or ... there are homes of delinquency, is not it? Because there is no space for people to pass, so ... people accumulate here and that is where the "thieves" approach and steal money, steal mobile phones, steal and disappear in the crowd. That's the problem. It can also happen to a policeman during his free time, he can be robbed or something like that. It's always easier to circulate in a street where there are no street vendors, where this intrusive commerce does not exist, a street where one can find only pedestrians." (08)

### **An employee at the Institute of Social Economy**

"[¿Como funciona actualmente? Porque las ventas ambulantes siguen siendo prohibidas.] Si, claro. Por ejemplo, ¿que sucede allí? Donde estan las carpas el espacio... ese espacio es del IPES. Se le pidió permiso al IDR D para que dejar ubicar a las personas y que esas personas vendieran ahí. Pero a todos los otros que hay allá (ceux qui sont installés de maniere informelle dans l'espace non autorisé) a ellos podrían hacerles un operativo... les levantan la mercancía y los quitan de ahí porque ellos están en el espacio público. Las personas que están en las carpas (sous les tentes) están atrás de un convenio y tienen un permiso provisional, eso solo funciona los domingos. Las carpas se instalan el sábado en la noche, la gente trabaja los domingos y a las cuatro, cinco de la tarde se levantan y se van. (13 a) Y los que se queden, quedan expuestos a abusos de autoridad y en ese caso, nosotros no podemos defenderlos. Lo que nosotros hacemos es: vamos al instituto, usted hace un registro de que se quiere vincular al programa y nosotros empezamos a generar un espacio para que tenga su ingreso. (13b)

"How does the IPES work? Because street sales are still forbidden ... Yes, off course. For example: what happens here? Over there where the tents are installed... this area belongs to the IPES. We asked the permission to the IDR D to let people install here. But all those people who are there (those who are settled informally in the space), the police could bother them...their merchandise can be confiscated and they can be expelled from here because they are in a public space. The persons who are under the tents have an agreement and hold a provisional license which permits them to work only on sundays. The tents are set up on Saturday night and people can work on Sundays untill 16/17h and then go." (13a) "If they stay in the space they are exposed to an abuse of authority and in that case we cannot defend them". (13 b) What we do is: we go to the institute, we



*register those who want to participate in the program and we begin to create a space for them to work and have an income. (13 b)*

So Tercer Milenio appears finally as a space both part and apart of the city, a “different” space.

*" Aquí dentro del parque es muy poco lo que ocurra así anormal. Alrededor es diferente. Esto por ser un parque abierto..." (07) / "Here, inside the park, there are very few things that seem abnormal. Around is different. This is because it is a park ..." (07)*

If gardens are by nature considered as "elsewhere", this figure is taking a particular sense in the case of Tercer Milenio park: perceived as a place of appeasement, it is at the same time an open space which carries the memory of the neighbourhood on which it was built, a memory that symbolizes the hardness and violence going through Colombian society. An interviewee also points out that Tercer Milenio “is surrounded by power, all sorts of power; the power of nature, the ecclesiastic power, the power of the sky, the police power, everything is here... Unreal." ("Esta rodeado of poder, de todos los poderes, poder del the naturaleza, el poder eclesiástico, el cielo, el poder the policía, esta todo. [...] Ireal." (05)



## 6 - The Tintal Zone



**Fig. 9** Localization plan of the Tintal zone

The Tintal zone borders the recently constructed public library *El tintal*. One main interest in studying this area is that it is one of the peripheral zones in Bogotá that has experienced significant transformations in recent years. A formerly illegal urban development has been radically transformed by the construction of public infrastructure; these new conditions have sparked a changed urban dynamic marked by the appearance of important real estate operations. The area includes part of the district *Patio Bonito*, a self constructed working class neighborhood built in the 1970s, and the newly developed neighborhood *El tintal*, founded in 2002. The district is part of the locality known as Kennedy and is situated ten kilometers west of the city center neighboring a zone of marshes, a natural area essential to the balance of the local ecosystem.

By the early twentieth century the locality, which today is Bogotá's most populous with nearly one million inhabitants, was a rural area where residents were engaged mainly in agricultural activities. The process of urbanization in the area began in 1938 with the construction of the city's first airport, which was soon followed by the appearance of working class self-constructed neighborhoods. Due to the massive migration of rural inhabitants during this period, Colombian urban centers experienced rapid population growth. An increased demand for housing among the poorest residents was satisfied by the offer of land by illegal urban promoters.<sup>81</sup> Despite recent efforts informal urban developments are still constructed in Bogotá. Illegal promoters sell land, usually found in high-risk areas, on unstable ground, or

<sup>81</sup> Illegal urban promoters are known in Colombia as "urbanizadores piratas" or pirate urbanizers.

land that includes illegal urban developments. These zones generally lack public services and infrastructure. The neighborhoods are not planned or properly designed for the provision of public services, and due to their illegal status, they only receive support from the state after a long legalization process. The formation of these kinds of settlements significantly shaped Bogotá's urban development in the second half of the twentieth century, and today, they continue to represent the only housing options for many urban habitants.

During this same period the state promoted the construction of low income and middle income housing projects in the zone in conjunction with the ICT (Institute of Territorial Credit). Despite the state initiative, the offer did not provide housing solutions for the poorest social sectors, and the process of self-construction on land sold by illegal promoters continued. With the passage of time these kinds of developments revealed social and environmental problems that illustrated the necessity of improving the quality of life of the zone's inhabitants and the provision of public services. However, until the end of the twentieth century, during an important process of periurbanization and in the absence of strong territorial regulation and proper housing solutions, the city grew through a process of low-density urbanization. This process led to the illegal occupation of high-risk areas, which include zones adjacent to marshes and the Bogotá River, and continues to have significant social and ecological implications for the district. A prime example of this development is the urbanization of the Patio Bonito district.

Patio Bonito was born as what is known in Bogotá as a *barrio de invasion* or *urbanizacion pirata*, names that correspond to the previously described process of informal urbanization. The neighborhood is the result of the urbanization of an ancient *hacienda* in 1974. Because the terrain in question was two meters below the elevation of the Bogotá River it was not simple to legalize. As a result, it was not easy for the inhabitants to immediately acquire public services. Their struggle to attain legal recognition for the neighborhood along with basic services lasted for years. During this process they were struck by numerous natural disasters. Like many peripheral areas located along the borders of the river, flooding has been a serious problem for the community of Patio Bonito. Just a few years after the arrival of the first residents the district was inundated. The flood forced the inhabitants to leave their homes and for several months they lived in temporary shelters while the water was drained from their houses. This kind of periodic disaster is a reminder that the district is located in an inundation zone and has created an awareness of the ecological impact of urbanization. Even though recent administrations have made efforts to improve the area's drainage system, the floods still represent a serious problem during Bogotá's winter months. At the same time, the administration's inability to find solutions to the city's housing problems has accordingly implied a failure in preventing the formation of illegal settlements in high-risk areas.

In addition to the struggle to obtain access to public services and the constant threat of natural disaster, the residents of the area had to deal with insecurity problems caused by the displacement of the emergence of the conflict to urban areas. Although in general terms security has improved substantially in the city, including the Tintal zone, the district continues to be affected by the presence of different actors of the national conflict.



**Fig. 10 Solid – Void Plan of the Tintal zone**

### **Recent Urban Transformation**

In recent years the administrations have placed an emphasis on the construction and renovation of urban infrastructure in peripheral and marginal areas, a strategy of social inclusion that aims to integrate the poorest districts in the urban development of the city. Along with the social programs of the Garzón administration, the recent interventions have directly affected many Patio Bonito residents and have sparked a new urban dynamic. Our zone of study has experienced important transformations that include the construction of public infrastructure and the foundation of a new residential neighborhood.

The zone was the object of noteworthy urban interventions: the district was connected to the city through the BRT system, bicycle paths were constructed, many public spaces were renovated, and new educational, social and cultural centers have been constructed. More recently, the social programs of the Garzón administration



have directly addressed the needs of many of the district's residents. The most visible intervention, which has had an important impact in the urban dynamic of the sector, was the construction of a metropolitan public library and a park on the site of a former city dump and garbage treatment plant. The transformation of a garbage treatment plant into a pleasant and accessible public library symbolizes the radical change of the zone; the project is greatly appreciated by the district's inhabitants. The library today is a landmark of the city as well as a meeting point for people of diverse social backgrounds. Just ten years ago the place represented the opposite, a symbol of segregation and social exclusion.



Fig. 11 RBT system and renovated public spaces





**Fig. 12 Ongoing urban transformations**

As a consequence of the developed projects the zone has undergone many important changes that include social, economic and physical transformations. What was formerly a poor residential and disconnected area is today a dynamic zone connected to the development of the city. Patio Bonito residents now have access to quality public services that include parks and public spaces, schools, transport as well as social and cultural resources. Access to new public services, along with the social policies of the Garzón administration, represent important improvements in the quality of life of the area's inhabitants.

Furthermore, the new urban dynamic has sparked significant residential and commercial operations; the area where the library is located has become the center of a sector composed of neighborhoods of informal origin and a recently created middle income locality that was the result of projects developed by the municipality. It is also possible that the transformation of the zone responds in part to economic interests. It is likely that the pressure of powerful landowners, who needed public

investments in public infrastructure in order to promote their ongoing real estate operations, played a role in these decisions. In any case, the construction of public infrastructure has clearly benefited the majority of the working class residents of Patio Bonito.

In addition to an increase in the provision of public services in the zone, a new urban dynamic marked by the emergence of residential and commercial real estate operations is possibly the most important consequence of the area's transformation. The appearance of new projects has implied essential changes in the socioeconomic dynamic of the zone, and a radical change in the form of the area's urban development.

The new neighborhood *El tintal*, contrary to the case of *Patio Bonito*, is a planned district where significant middle income housing projects have been developed. The morphology of big blocks proposed by these new operations is unfortunately a model that has proven to have undesirable effects on the city. In addition to cultivating a poor connection with urban space, the typologies of big blocks produce isolation and reinforce social segregation.

Beyond the inconveniences of the urban model proposed by the new operations, the emergence of a new urban dynamic can bring benefits for the demarginalization of peripheral areas. Independent from the architectural and urban qualities of the developed projects, the emergence of a new dynamic can help to consolidate the offer of high quality public services for poor districts like Patio Bonito. In contrast to the renovation projects in the city centre, the results of this kind of urban transformation can have a greater positive impact on the poor. In terms of the displacement of residents, the construction of infrastructure or development projects in peripheral areas can certainly have the same negative effects on inhabitants as the renovation of central districts. Residents settled in high-risk areas frequently face displacement because prioritized projects are often underway in illegally occupied areas or simply because by legal mandate the city is compelled to do so. However, demarginalization projects are less exposed to the particular interests that drive the renovation of urban centers. While the renovation of the central districts, where the outcome of development projects can threaten the situation of the poorest residents due to subsequent gentrification processes, in this particular case public interventions have presented better opportunities for communities cut off from the development of the city for years. Although an important component of the urban transformation of the zone was the emergence of real estate operations, the negative consequences of such operations on the community have been limited. Some years after the interventions it is possible to say that the development projects in the Tintal Zone have helped to consolidate the urban development of a sector whose residents, thirty years ago, were still fighting for the right to basic services.

## The Tintal Zone

### Citizen words



*" Esto ha cambiado el 100%, porque como le digo eso era el botadero de basura todo esto, aquí lavaban los carros, aquí llegaban todos los carros de Lime, que las oficinas eran acá, y allá en la esquina, allá a aquel lado donde esta el "romboi" era la emisora Mariana. Imagínesse como son los cambios que allá donde era la emisora Mariana esta lleno de apartamentos. Y cuando eso era un potrero grande lleno de ganada estaba la emisora. Cuando llovía tocaba ponerse botas para poder pasar. Esto aquí era puro barro lo que es la avenida Cali. Para usted coger hacia allá tenia que ponerse botas. Entonces eso es lo que digo yo, que ha habido unos cambios, pero bastantes. [...] Eso eran haciendas que ahí llegaba ganado de China. Se traían 70 reses, caballos finos, y llegaban ahí. Ya ahora a donde les van a meter si todo esto esta llena de apartamentos, a donde van a meter estos caballos. [...] Ya no esta [la humedal] sino este pedazo de humedal porque hicieron rellenos. Todo eso era mero humedal, allá donde están los apartamentos. Y eso lo rellenaron, eso allí todo era potrero donde esa colegio, vea el cambio." (32ª et b)*

*" It has radically changed, because as I said, here was the garbage dump, cars used to be washed here, there arrived all Lime's cars because their offices were there. Near the roundabout, there was the*



*Mariana station. Imagine the changes, where the Mariana station used to be, there are now apartments. And when there was the station, it was here a large meadow full of cattle. When it rained, one had to wear boots to be able to pass. It was here pure mud before the Cali Avenue. For you to come here, you had to put boots on. This is what I think about it, there were lots of changes. [...] It used to be ranches where cattle arrived from China. They brought 70 heads, horses, and came here. Now where would they put them if all this becomes apartments, where will they put these horses. [...] No they are no longer [wetlands], from the wetland are left only pieces because they have been filled. All this was wetlands, where now apartments are. They have filled it all, where the school is located, there used to be a pasture, see the change. " (32 a and b)*

### Sample and survey conditions



The survey was conducted during the week, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of April 2009. 13 interviews were conducted with 19 people at the library and its surroundings (several interviews were conducted with 2 or 3 people who happened to be together).

Most of them are micro-interviews, yet two long commented walks (nearly 2 hours) were led with a resident of Patio Bonito, through her district (first walk) and from Patio Bonito to the Tintal library (second walk).

5 people have been interviewed inside the library, 8 on its front esplanade, one in the park, one in Patio Bonito (with a part of the walk inside the library) and 4 near the new secondary school (two interviews).

Among this sample, three people were interviewed on their workplace: a pedlar woman and a road-mender in front of the library, a security guard of a residential complex near the new secondary school as well as a student teaching at the library.

### "100%" changes



" Este era el acceso de los camiones con la basura. Entraban y la descargaban acá. Adentro la procesaban. El parque era potrero. [...] [¿Ha cambiado mucho el barrio?] Claro...con todo esto ha cambiado mucho. Yo me atrevería a decir que el cien por ciento. Por todo. Porque por este sitio caminar era terrible. Uno por este lado no se atrevía a venir. Primero porque no había acceso de entrada. Eso eran potreros. Pero por ejemplo ahora... uno divinamente se puede ir de aquí a pie hasta la 13. Ciclo ruta. Todo, todo alrededor. La calidad de vida para mi ha cambiado demasiado. Con sus problemas y todo pero..." (40) / " This was the garbage truck access. They entered and unloaded there. They were treating inside. The park was a pasture. There was nothing, just a pasture. [...] [Has the neighbourhood changed a lot?] Of course with all this, it has changed a lot. I dare to say to a hundred percent. And for everything. To walk here was terrible. Nobody dared to come this way. First of all because there was no entrance, these were pastures, but now ... you can for example go quietly by foot from here to the 13th. The cycle lane, everything around here... The quality of life for me has changed greatly, with its problems and all but ..." (40)

"Esto es zona recuperada, todo este sector, todo lo que esta en ciclo ruta, por ejemplo esas son zonas recuperadas. Antes eran andenes, ahora ya no son andenes sino ciclo rutas, esas son las zonas recuperadas, todo eso



*espacio es zona recuperada." (32a) / " all this is a salvage zone, this whole area, for example all along the cycle lane. Before these were pavements, now these are bike paths, this is salvage land, all that space is salvage zone." (32a)*

Surveyed who knew the Tintal area before its transformation, remember it as an "unpleasant" and "desolate" area (35), where "there was nothing" ("No habia nada", 33, 40), where no one dared to come (40).

*" Este espacio era muy desolado. [...] No existía ni nada de esto. Los apartamentos de allá no existían. Eso se veía desolado. Eso se veía como sin fantasía, si magia." (35) / " It was a desolation. [...] Nothing of all this was existing. The apartments over there did not exist. It was a desolation. it looked like without fantasy or magic." (35)*

These memories decline more precisely through the evocation of former important entities that composed El Tintal.

The "pastures" associated with the wetland marked the landscape. The area seems to have been occupied at the same time by a horse-breeding ranch and a military reserve where soldiers used to train. This explains the name "soldiers park" given to a part of the area.

*"Todo eso era potrero" (30b) / " all this was pasture" (30b)*

*"Todo eso que ven allá edificado, todo eso eran potreros. Eso mantenía lleno de ganado, eso era una hacienda, una hacienda muy grande. Y por eso que aquí no existía la avenida Cali, y por ahí era por donde entraban los caros a esta hacienda. Que dicen que estas haciendas eran de Pastrana (hijo de un ex presidente)." (32a) / " All this built area you can see, was pasture. This was full of cattle, it was a ranch, a huge ranch. That's why Cali Avenue did not exist and this is where vehicles entered into the hacienda. We used to say that these properties belonged to Pastrana (a son of a former president)." (32a)*

*" ese parque se llama parque de los soldados. ¿Por qué tiene ese nombre? Porque aquí en esta parte de acá, hace muchos años había un resguardo militar. Porque como todo esto era potrero...acá los traían a entrenar...se prestaba el sitio para entrenarlos. Entonces cuando les daban salida de poquito tiempo...el parque era ahí...Y ahí se venían todos los soldados a jugar futbol. Y por eso se llama el parque de los soldados. Si usted pregunta...cualquiera le dice...usted llega acá porque la gente sabe que ese es el parque de los soldados." (40) / " this park is called "soldiers park". Why? Because several years ago, in this part over there was a military reserve. Because like everything that surrounds us, this was pasture. There, they were practising. So when they had to get out... the park was here... and all the soldiers came here to play football. That's why it's called the soldiers park. If you ask ... everyone tells you ... you get here because people know that this is the soldiers park." (40)*



Before being rehabilitated as a library, the waste treatment plant is another great figure in the past identity of the territory in the eyes of the surveyed: described as an enclosure surrounded by walls, however, its activity was visible through the ballet of garbage trucks that also determined the circulation in the area.

*" Todo esto era cercado. Todo alrededor era un muro. Muro. esto aquí era donde llegaban todos los caros de Lime (empresa basuras) o sea que mire usted de ahí ve el puente. De ese puente ellos tiraban ...eso fue todo un como es el relleno de Doña Juana si lo ha oído nombrar esto aquí era relleno. Todo esto venía los carros de la basura y tiraban la basura en todo esto. Este sector aquí pa'lla eran los patios de la circulación. Y esto era cerrado como lo digo, era un muro." (32a) / " All this was enclosed by a wall all around. A wall. This is where all the Lime trucks [the garbage company] arrived, what you see here is the bridge... That is from this bridge that they unloaded ... All this was like "Dona Juana dump" if you've heard about it, it was top-full here. Garbage trucks came and threw everything around here. On all this area here, there were roads. And this was closed, as I have said, there was a wall." (32a)*

*"[¿Que imagen tiene de este sitio antes?] Pues un sitio desagradable, porque esto era un basurero, eso es un lugar por donde subían los camiones de basura y la volcaban dentro de ese lugar. Eso fue hace ya como 8 años, no me acuerdo muy bien, hace mucho tiempo que la construyeron, el sitio cambio para beneficios de todos." (35) / " [What images of the former site do you have?] Well, a rather unpleasant because it was a garbage dump. It is a place where garbage trucks came and that is the place where they unloaded the garbage. That is 8 years ago, I do not remember well, it is a long time ago that they built it, the site has improved for everyone's enjoyment." (35)*



In this sense, through the precise description of the garbage trucks route in the interviews, a main element of the architectural rehabilitation project, namely the conservation of the plant access ramp, seems to have acquired its symbolic force.

### **A new urban status**



This symbolic power is more widely reflected in the expression of contrast between the past of a territory both rural and relegated to the margins, and the present of a new piece of city.

The “there was nothing” crystallizes particularly in reference to the ground: the rubbish heap left by the plant on which the district was built; the memory of the muddy Cali Avenue left long without tar.

*"[¿Como ha cambiado el barrio?] El barrio todo el Tintal, es relleno sanitario, el Tintal esta construido sobre un relleno sanitario, toda la basura, que no servia para nada iba para atrás. Antes de ser un relleno sanitario era un humedal, y los secaron a las malas, entonces los secaron para echar las basuras, y simplemente pusieron capas de pasto para tapar esto, pero yo*

*me di cuenta que cuando abren hueco para sembrar los árboles se ve el relleno sanitario." (36b) / "[How has the neighbourhood changed?] The neighborhood is a rubbish heap, Tintal is built on a rubbish heap, all the garbage that did not serve went behind. Before being a rubbish heap it was a wetland, but they have dried it up to throw rubbish and they just put layers of pasture to cover it. But I tell myself that when they dig a hole to plant trees, the rubbish heap shows out." (36b)*

*"Cuando llovía tocaba ponerse botas para poder pasar. Esto aquí era puro barro lo que es la avenida Cali." (32a) / "When it rained, it was necessary to put boots to pass. It was pure mud here before Cali Avenue." (32a)*

*"La avenida Cali era como un camino por donde pasaban los buses eso era destapado." (32a) / "Cali Avenue was a path that buses used, without tar." (32a)*

Described as incomparable with the past ("*From that time to today there is no comparison.*" (32a)), the situation is perceived as linked to the creation of the park and library, but also to the infrastructure provision: again, the setting-up of Transmilenio, the rehabilitation of roads and the creation of cycle lanes are compared in the interviews with the enclave which represented the plant and the with difficulty passable pastures

*"Como que haya impedimento, de venir de allá acá no lo hay [Patio Bonito]" (32) / "As there were obstacles, there was no connection between over there and here [Patio Bonito]." (32a)*

Similarly, the district "development" and "modernization" (37) are associated with the construction of new housing. In this sense, the salvage land of El Tintal has, already as a construction ground, become an incentive argument for future residents who have since bought an apartment.

*"[¿Porque escogió este barrio?] ha tenido mucho progreso, porque se veía como futuro y la verdad se ha valorizado arto. El sector es bueno. (37) / "[Why did you choose this neighbourhood?] It has improved a lot, because they saw the future in it and the truth is that they gave it much value. The area is fine." (37)*

*"Es muy chévere porque cuando a nosotros los de practica social nos explicaron como se recupero todo este espacio, que este espacio antes era una planta de tratamiento de basuras y era del estado, y no se por que motivo se cero, y la decidieron recuperar, dejaron la estructura vieja y la añadieron cositas nuevas y hicieron la biblioteca, y pues crearon a este parque alrededor, y esto cambio si el área totalmente, porque antes aquí no había nada, no había ni vivienda de interés social, no había nada. A mi me parece que quedo muy bonita, tomando en cuenta que no la hicieron desde cero, me pareció que quedo muy chévere, y creo que se gano un premio de arquitectura." (33) / "That's great, because we were told during the class of social practice how land, where before was a waste treatment plant belonging to the state, has been salvaged. I do not know for what reason they stopped the plant's activities, they decided to salvage it, the old structure was kept, new things were added and the library was done, finally a park around was created. They have changed everything because before there was nothing here, there was no social housing, nothing. I think it got very nice, if you consider they started from scratch, it got very good and I think they have won an architecture prize." (33)*





The radical transformations of the territory and the following improvements are therefore broadly described as a result of the new urbanization.

As summed up by a laughing pedlar living in the Patio Bonito neighbourhood, "we somehow entered civilization" ("Por una parte salimos a la civilización (laughs)", 32<sup>a</sup>).

Without sending back to explicit quotations, the comments of the interviewees imply the idea which the realizations of Tintal, by giving a "urban" status to the whole sector, testify of a new attention carried on the inhabitants.

*"Los problemas típicos de que se ha luchado, se luchó mucho para que la recolección de basura fuera exactamente los días estipulados. A veces no venían sino una vez a la semana a recoger la basura. Ahora recogen los*



*tres días a la hora que es. Por ejemplo con el servicio del agua, con las pavimentadas, todo eso. Pero se ha ido superando a medida que ha pasado el tiempo se ha ido superando mucho... Con la policía mas que todo ha habido... Por ejemplo antes aquí en patio bonito no había CAI y era terrible porque mientras venia la policía de Kennedy aquí a patio bonito la desgracia era mayor. Ahora están controlando mas seguido, en las motos... andan mucho las motos, las patrullas. Entonces es un poquito mas controlado, los ladrones no se echan tanto al agua." (40)*

*"Typical problems for which we fought is for rubbish collection to take place on the specified days. They sometimes would come only once a week to collect the rubbish. Now they collect every three days. For example for water services, for paving, all this. But all this has improved over time... Specially through what has been done by the police. Before in Patio Bonito for example, there was no CAI and it was terrible because while the police would come from Kennedy, here in Patio Bonito, misfortune spread. Now security control is steadier, on motorcycle ... they patrol a lot on motorcycle. It is a little more controlled, so thieves do not take the plunge as much." (40)*

As such, the security topic is less directly brought up than on Jimenez avenue and Tercer Milenio park. Its evocation also refers less to the surroundings of the library than to the further surrounding areas:

- A security guard of a gated community located across the new secondary school, whose emphasis on the lack of security we can expect because of its function, deplores robbery problems and lack of police presence especially at night;

*"hay muchos delincuentes. [¿aquí en el barrio?] Si, muchos delincuentes. [¿Hay problemas de que tipo?] Se meten a los apartamentos y a los conjuntos a robar. Se infiltran como los conjuntos son muy grande, son casi 80 apartamentos. Como el conjunto es muy grande hay delincuentes e infiltrados. [...] De otra parte vienen." (42) / "there are many offenders. [Here, in the neighborhood?] Yes, many offenders. [What kinds of problems?] They go in apartments and houses to steal. They seep into apartment blocks that are huge, with approximately 80 flats. As housing complex are very large, there are offenders and thieves. [...] They come from elsewhere." (42)*

- Patio Bonito also seems to have bad reputation: this was quoted by a library maintenance officer, whereas the district inhabitant we made two commented walks with, observing the improvements after the provision of a police station, yet confirms the existence of theft and drug problems as well as threats of "social cleansing" (see the transcription of commented walks).

*" El sitio en particular, si es chévere. Como que atrae para de pronto venir a observar. Yo vivo en San Jorge, eso es por la Caracas, hacia al sur. La diferencia siempre es harta porque los sectores son muy diferentes, en cuanto a la seguridad, es mucha la diferencia que hay. Porque este sitio de por si ... la inseguridad... [¿Le parece que es un sitio inseguro?] Si, esta zona, si. Porque aledaño acá, si es feo el panorama a los alrededores es bastante crítico. Atracan mucho a las personas hasta durante el día. [¿En que lugar en particular?] En la zona de Patio Bonito. Lo que es Tintal, Patio bonito es feo." (31) / "The site in particular is great. It is fascinating to watch; I live in San Jorge, by la Caracas. The difference is always significant because the districts are different in terms of security. Because here yes ... insecurity ... [The site seems insecure to you?]*

*Yes, this area. Because the surroundings are rather critical. There are many aggressions during the day. [In which area specifically?] In the district of Patio Bonito. In respect of Tintal, Patio Bonito is ugly." (31)*

*[¿Siente que en seguridad también ha mejorado? ] Si, en seguridad también. Por lo que le digo. El nuevo CAI tiene como diez motorizados y el de abajo también, siguen siendo muy pocos para toda la cantidad de gente. "[¿La comunidad ha hecho algo respecto a los panfletos?] La verdad es que no, no creo. Pues lo que inicialmente les dicen a los muchachos en el colegio es que no les presten atención. Y que denuncie uno la gente que esta reproduciendo. Por ejemplo a mi sobrino le dieron un panfleto de esos. Y ellos vieron quien. Pero es que ellos no se pueden poner a denunciarlos porque ellos corren peligro. Entonces la policía dice: "denuncien". Yo por ejemplo no voy a denunciar a nadie porque yo estoy pensando en mi hijo. Siempre hay el temor de ir a denunciar. Yo personalmente no lo haría. Yo pienso en mi hijo y en mis sobrinos. Lo único que han dicho es que denunciemos. Y que no los reproduzcamos. Porque como...dicen al pie de pagina que reproducirlo. Que no, que simplemente romperlos, no hacer caso." (40) / "[Do you feel that security is also better?] Yes, the security as well. As I said, the new CAI has about ten bikers and those below as well, but it is little for the amount of people. [Has the community done something about the pamphlets?] Actually no, I do not think so. What was initially said to the youth at school is that they should'nt pay attention and inform on those who imitate. That's what they told my nephew. But they can not denounce otherwise they would run a risk. So the police say "denounce". I, for example, wouldn't denounce anyone, because I think of my son. There is always the fear of going to denounce. I would not do it, I think of my son and my nephews. The only thing they have said is that we must condemn and not imitate them. Because as they say literally... do not reproduce. They say it has to stop, and one shouldn't make a big deal out of it." (40)*

## A place of convergence more than a full-fledged district



Contrary to the investigation held on Jimenez Avenue or Tercer Milenio Park, where the collected comments over-all describe the uses of public space itself, the interviews mainly refer here to the daily life within a nearby urban space.

On that account, although El Tintal may spatially be identified by the surveyed, it seems to be for the moment rather a place of convergence among districts than a full-fledged district.

This is what the survey sample itself reflects at first. While four persons were interviewed near the new school rather than near the library, and the two commented walks were deliberately conducted from the Patio Bonito point of view, our survey sample still shows a diversity of residential origins.

Among the 7 interviewees living in the library's neighbourhood, 4 lived in Patio Bonito, and 3 in recent residential complexes in Tintal or the nearby locality of Kennedy. The others live in Bossa, Molinos (34a and b, they have made an appointment with a friend in front of the library), Bocaya or Fontibon popular neighbourhoods.



Overall, 3 interviewees belong to the working class, 7 to probably very modest backgrounds and 9 to the middle class, mainly represented by students. The sample -though reduced- thus also reflects several social backgrounds, particularly the juxtaposition created by the urban transformations between the popular Patio Bonito and the new housing complexes that attracted a middle class population.

Besides, it is difficult to bring out a particular own identity for Tintal, insofar as interviewees have varied relationships to their neighbourhoods.

For example, a road-mender who only works here expresses a distant relationship to the place:

*" El sector lo conozco muy poco. Nosotros llegamos a trabajar y el turno es adentro, ya salimos en la noche. En la noche rumbo a uno donde vive, de eso no le puedo hablar mucho." (31) / " I know this area very little. We come to work, we go around inside and we get out in the evening. In the evening we go back home, I can't say much about this place." (31)*

A resident of Tintal tells us having a functional relationship to the library's surroundings: she enjoys the area but regrets the difficult circulation since it has become denser; she comes around here only occasionally and declares not knowing it well.

*" Me parece bueno, aunque ahora hay mucha congestión por las avenidas porque por acá por ejemplo pasa mucho trafico. Y pues al principio cuando no hay mucha gente, pues es como rico. Ya cando llega harta gente se convierte todo como muy lleno. [...] porque por aquí abajo esta muy construido entonces es muy dificil para el transporte y vive muy lleno todo. [...] La verdad es que yo vivo con mi hijo y no llegamos sino a dormir, o yo llego mas o menos hasta ahora porque el trabaja y yo trabajo. Vivimos los dos solos entonces así que uno diga tanto como que esta en el barrio no voy al supermercado si necesito [...]." (37) / "It seems good to me, although there is now traffic congestion, for example on the avenues"*



over there where there is a lot of traffic. But initially, when there were not many people, it was good. That's when so many people arrived that it got full. [...] Because here, down here, it is very built, therefore very difficult to circulate and everything functions in a very dense way[...] The truth is that I live with my son and we are not here except to sleep and I just come right now because he and I are working. We live alone together and I can't tell if the neighbourhood is like this or like that, I do not know, I go to the supermarket here only if I need it [...]." (37)



Without being able to correlate it with social backgrounds or years of residence, we can note that the few people who grew up in Patio Bonito express instead a stronger awareness of neighbourhood life: attached to Patio Bonito which they designate as their district -through memories, experiences and habits that they have-, they see El Tintal as an extension or a continuity, both spatial, historical and in terms of personal or family trajectory.

"[Respecto al barrio [Patio Bonito], antes que hicieran la biblioteca, ¿que recuerdos tienes?] Mi barrio, pues algo vacano, allá fue donde viví y donde crece la mayor parte de mi vida, y es bueno encontrar esos lugares que lo acoplan a uno. Como la pizzería a donde siempre voy, o el señor de los pollos, o la señora de la panadería que esta hace mas de veinte anos, que a uno le recrea como esos momentos. Es bueno estar en mi barrio. [...] ¿Y esto lo consideras como tu barrio también?] Pues si forma parte de lo mismo." (35) / " [What are your memories from the neighbourhood before the library?] My neighbourhood [Patio Bonito]... well indeed something great, this is where I lived and spent most of my life and it's nice to find these places that they created for us. Here is the pizzeria where I always go or the chicken shop or bakery that have been here 20 years and where we enjoy ourselves at times. It's good to be in my neighbourhood. [...] [And that you consider part of your neighbourhood too?] Well, yes it is part of it." (35)

"[¿Hay comunicación entre los dos barrios [Patio Bonito et Tintal]? Si, claro. [...] Por ejemplo hay familias de patio que consiguieron...O sea los hijos se



*casan y vinieron a comprar acá. Entonces, los papas de allá vienen acá y los hijos van allá. [¿Hay muchas personas que vivían en patio que ahora viven acá?] O sea, los jóvenes. Los que se han casado. Es que por lo general yo llamo a eso así porque por ejemplo en el caso de nosotros... mi hermano...Nosotros vivimos en patio bonito. Mi hermano compro en el barrio primavera. Es un conjunto residencial. Y la hermana de mi cunada también. Ella vive allí en la parte de la Cali para arriba que se llama "el rincón de los ángeles". Es un conjunto residencial." (40) / " [Do both districts communicate with each other?] Yes, of course. [...] For example there are families from Patio Bonito who make it... You can see the children getting married and coming to buy over here. So parents from out there come here and children go there. [Are there many people who used to live in Patio Bonito and who now live here?] You see, young people, those who got married. Usually I explain it like this because for example in our case ... my brother ... We live in Patio Bonito. My brother bought in Primavera district, in a housing block and the sister of my sister-in-law as well. She lives in the upper part of Cali Avenue called "el rincón de los angeles". It is a housing complex." (40)*

These are the ones who somehow evoke the more explicitly potential links between districts created by Tintal salvage.

*" Esta ciclo ruta, la que queda aquí, o sea la del puente es la que digo que comunica abajo a la central...a la ciclo ruta que va hacia el sur y que va a hacia Fontibon." (40) / " This cycle lane, the one that remains here, or look at that one on the bridge, this is the one that communicates further down with the city centre ... with the cycle lane that goes to the south and to Fontibon." (40)*

### **Zooms on the park and library**



In their way, comments on the park and the library crystallize the main analysis elements developed above. The diversity of experiences of the neighbourhood is in particular reflected in the various uses that are made of the area.

The park, sometimes described as "peaceful" ("Vacano", 34a) but addressed rather rarely as such, implicitly takes part in the -positive- perception of the site and its transformations.



Only three interviewees say that they come regularly, either in the extension of other activities (30) or, on the contrary, to get out of the everyday life. In both cases, the visits of the park are correlated with the visits of the library.

*"[¿Qué piensan de este espacio del parque , de la biblioteca?] Es una cosa perfecta. Nosotros venimos con mi esposo a caminar por las mañanas. Nosotros quisiéramos envejecer activas. En vez de quedarnos durmiendo, nos venimos por acá. Salen también paseitos, nos llevan a los museos. A veces nos llevan a los museos, a las bibliotecas, mas que todo en agosto. A los museos de arte, a los museos nacionales conocer todo esto. Cosas que no podemos hacer, cosas que cuando éramos jóvenes no pudimos por estar trabajando." (30 a et b) / " [What do you think of this space, of the park, of the library?] It is perfect. We come to take a walk with my husband in the morning. We wanted to remain active while getting old. Instead of sleeping we come here. We walk, they lead us to the museum. Sometimes they lead us to museums, libraries, especially in August. To national art museums to get to know all that. Things that we can not do, things that we could not do when we were young because we were working." (30 a et b)*

*" El lugar en el que me encuentro, es un lugar muy acogedor. En este lugar tuve muchos recuerdos. Vengo a este lugar porque es un lugar muy bueno. En el que tu puedes pensar, te puedes desahogar de lo que sientes, liberar muchas cosas. Talvez ensayar un poco de gnosís. En este lugar viví buenos recuerdos, vengo a este lugar cada vez que me siento "down". Si, porque el lugar me trae muchos recuerdos. Y es un espacio muy bueno, se ve mucha gente. [...] [¿Y viene a la biblioteca?] A la biblioteca, si casi todos los días. A leer, leer, y leer." (35) / "The place where I am is very welcoming. It is a place where I have many memories. I come here because it is a fine place. You can think here, you can let your imagination run free, free lot of things. Maybe try a bit of gnosís. In this place I had good experiences, I come whenever I feel down. Yes, this place brings out*

great memories in me and it's a very good space, we see a lot of people. [...] [And you come to the library?] To the library almost every day to read, read and read." (35)



Several interviewees come to the park only occasionally, to walk through, for a specific purpose (to feed stray dogs), because they prefer other places for promenades. Yet they acknowledge its popularity, particularly on Sundays.

" [¿Viene aquí todos los días?] No, por lo general día por lo medio o cada cuatro día. Solo para darle comida a los perros porque me dan a pesar. [...] son perritos callejeros que nos da pesar... entonces algunos les colaboramos al menos dándoles comida. [...] y de resto no, que yo venga al parque hacia salir, no." (37) / " [Do you come here every day?] No, usually mid-week or every four days. Just to feed them because they make me feel sorry. [...] These are street dogs that sadden us... so we are a few people to give them something to eat. [...] And besides no, I don't come to the park to go out." (37)

"[¿Ustedes vienen a este parque?] Venimos en diciembre. Es que yo personalmente no soy persona de parque. Yo no le hallo la gracia a venir a sentarme en un parque. Yo soy mas bien de andar. A mi me gusta andar mucho. [¿Cuándo sale a caminar a donde va?] Cuando salgo a caminar... Por esto así..pero no... O me voy para donde mi hermana. Al frente de donde mi hermana hay un parque súper inmenso parecido a este." (40) / " [Do you come to this park?] We come in December. I, personally, do not go to parks. I feel no pleasure to come and sit in a park. I prefer to walk. I love walking. [When you go for a walk, where do you go?] When I go for a walk ... This way, or I go to my sister. In front of where my sister lives, there is a huge park like this." (40)

" Claro esto los domingos se llena de gente. Viene gente a jugar aquí al parque, y aquí se están desde que esté haciendo bueno. ahí la pasan los chinos jugando con los perros. (risas)" (32a) / " Of course, on Sundays it is crowded. People come to play in this park, and that since it was rehabilitated. Here the young people are playing with the dogs (laughs)." (32a)

We can also notice that the park remains associated with old pastures and wetlands. Two interviewees consider the area, then taking part in a rehabilitation program, on an ecological point of view, as a space which is to preserve.

"[¿Para usted es un cambio positivo?] Es positivo por un lado, y por un otro lado siempre da tristeza porque siempre tiene que a ver humedal, si o no? Productivo por un lado pero por otro lado da tristeza porque están acabando



*todos los humedales y eso no debe ser así. Tiene que haber humedal." (32b) / " [Is it a positive change for you?] It is positive in a sense, but on the other hand it is saddening because one would always want to see the wetlands, yes or no? Productive on one side but sad on the other because they have removed all wetlands and it should not be like that. There should be wetlands. (32b)"*

*" Se esta haciendo un proyecto para salvar los humedales, por esto del caliente global, y a los estamos cercando, somos un grupo de jóvenes que estamos trabajando con la universidad UDCA y se esta dictando unos diplomados, unos talleres, para que la gente se "conscientise" que estos humedales hay que salvarlos porque pueden servir como una fuente de agua para el futuro." (36ª) / " There is a project to save the wetlands, because of global warming, we enclosure them. We are a youth group and we work with the UDCA University, there are degrees, workshops for people to realize the need to preserve wetlands because they can serve as a water resource for the future." (36a)*



Similarly, only few interviewees, especially young people, use personally or regularly the library, to read or borrow books of course, but also to surf on the web or, as two retired interviewees, to take lessons as part of wider town activity program (dance ...) to which they participate.

*"[¿Y tu eres usuaria de la biblioteca?] A veces si. La mayoría de veces leer libros, y el Internet." (34ª) / "[And you're a user of the library?] Yes, sometimes. Most of the time to read books and use the internet." (34a)*

*" Y de vez en cuando alquilamos libros para leer, también se puede venir acá a pasar un momento grato, también leer libros aquí mismo." (36ª) / "There are times when we come along to borrow books to read. We can also come along to have a good time, as well as to read books." (36a)*

*[O sea que usted también usa la biblioteca...] No, los nietos míos sí, ellos vienen ahí hacer tareas." (32ª) / "[And you also use the library ...] No, my grandchildren yes. They come here to do their homework." (32a)*

*"[¿Ustedes van a la biblioteca con frecuencia o no?] No, mire que sabe que nos hemos vuelto flojos. Antes sí. Sino que lo que pasa es que ahora mi hermana...ya va a ser un año que hay Internet allá entonces todos nos volcamos es para allá a meternos a Internet a...estos (los niños) mas que todo a chatear allá con sus amigas. Y pues uno que de vez en cuando también mira su correo a ver si alguien se acuerda de uno. Y entonces...para una tarea...a Internet." (40) / "[Do you often go to the library?] No, as you see we are lazy. Before though yes. But now my sister... it'll be a year that they have internet so that is where we go to surf on the Internet ... children overall to chat with their friends. And sometimes we go to check our emails, to see if someone remembers one of us. And so ... for work ... on the internet." (40)*

*" Venimos aquí a dos horitas los jueves de dos a cuatro la primera hora nos dan como español y la segunda viene una niña y nos enseña canto. Nos sentimos agradecidas porque la gente joven nos tiene mucha paciencia, entonces estamos bien. [...]Vamos a un grupo que se llama "Simeon", allí vamos los lunes, miércoles y viernes. Allá tenemos la rutina de una clase,[...] porque yo fui educador, entonces rezamos, cantamos, lúdicas, los miércoles va un profesor el domingo pasado bailamos. Allá en acción comunal tenemos un grupito, bailamos la contra danza." (30ª) / " We come here for two hours on Thursdays from 2pm to 4pm. The first hour is a Spanish course and the second is a young lady that teaches us singing. We are very grateful because young people are very patient, so we're fine. [...] We go to a group called "Simeon", we go down there on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We have there a scholar routine, [...] because I was an educator. So we do recite, sing, play on Wednesdays, Sundays a teacher comes and we dance. There is a communal action, we have a small group, we dance the « contra danza »." (30a) [¿Que piensas de la biblioteca?] Un espacio de relajación, de estudio y entretenimiento." (34ª) / " [What do you think of the library?] A place to relax, study and entertain." (34a)*

All, however, appreciate the library as a "nice" and "useful" place, which role goes beyond the classical role of a library. The interviewees emphasize the diversity of spaces and offered services, illustrated according to them by the large attendance of children who have specific rooms and supervised activities: computer training, multimedia, free internet, assistance by documents search, games library...

Most interviewees mention coming to the library to do homework as one of the most common uses, emphasizing implicitly or explicitly the role of the library, in addition to schools, for the access to culture and social life, especially for families of modest backgrounds. In other words, all do recognize the educational and animating function of Tintal library and, as noted by a student coming here to give lessons, it exerts its influence on several districts, contributing in its own way to the new urban status of this zone of Bogotá.





" La biblioteca fue muy buena. Porque ahí por ejemplo hay Internet, hay fotocopiadora, hay mucha cosa, ahí usted se va y coge el libro que usted quiera, y lo que quiera investigar, usted ahí lo encuentra." (32<sup>a</sup>) / " The library was a very good thing. Because there is here Internet, photocopiers, there are lots of things. You come in and take a book you like, you find here whatever you seek." (32a)

"[¿Y que ha observado aquí?] Desde el punto de vista de practica social, me parece que espacios así sirven mucho. Digamos en mi caso yo les doy clase de computadores a los niños. Que si no tuvieron esa biblioteca, difícilmente tuvieron acceso a un computador. Generalmente de los veinte niños inscritos en la clase, si a caso uno tiene computador, entonces es otra cosa a favor de la biblioteca. A parte de todos los recursos que tienen de libros y computadores, esta biblioteca atiende a tres localidades, Fontibon, Kennedy y Bosa. [...] No sé, pero uno se da cuenta que los niños se la pasan acá. No sé, porque ellos quieren o porque los papas no tienen donde mas dejan los, y los traen a la biblioteca. Si son niños chiquitos tienen muchas cosas que hacer, aquí hay esos cursos, hay sesiones de lectura en la sala infantil hay una ludoteca, hacen exposiciones periódicamente en todas las redes de bibliotecas de la ciudad. " (33) / " [And what have you observed here?] From a social practice point of view, spaces like this seem to be useful. I give computer classes to children and, from my point of view, if they wouldn't have the library, they would hardly have access to computers. Generally, among the 20 children enrolled in the class, sometimes only one has a computer, so it's a good thing about the library. Apart from books and computers resource, the library exerts its influence over three districts: Fontibon, Kennedy and Bosa. [...] I do not know but we realize that children come here. I do not know if it's because their parents do not know where to bring them and then leave them here. If they are small there are many things to do, here in the room for children are lectures, reading classes, there is a games library, there are regular exhibitions throughout the library network in the city." (33)

"[¿Cual es sus opiniones sobre la biblioteca?] Esta completa. Tiene literatura, desde las raíces colombianas hasta la literatura de grandes escritores a nivel mundial. El Internet es gratis para que los niños vengan y puedan hacer sus tareas, los niños de bajos recursos aquí encuentran cualquier tipo de tarea, y tengo entendido que hay personas que les ayudan a hacer los trabajos, los guían [...]." (36b) / " [What are your opinions on the library?] It is complete. There is literature, from the Colombian roots to the great world authors literature. Internet is free for children to come and make their work, children from modest backgrounds find here all works and I heard that there are people to help them out and guide them with their homework [...]." (36b)

"yo estudio en una universidad, y hay un curso que se llama "practica social". Yo vine todo un semestre hace un ano y estoy viniendo todo este semestre, estoy haciendo una practica social acá, en la biblioteca del Tintal como parte de un curso de la universidad." (33) / " I am studying at university and there is a class called "social practice". I came a whole semester last year and I come this whole semester. I do a work on social practice here at the Tintal library for a university class." (33)





## **From Patio Bonito to Tintal (2009, 6 april)**

In addition to the analysis of interviews related to Tintal, we reproduce here almost entirely, the two commented walks made with a resident of Patio Bonito, service employee for forty years and mother of a teenager, who lives here since the neighbourhood exists.

As we go by Patio Bonito, leading us to the Tintal library, C. lets us discover the logic of paths within the neighbourhood, with its main streets and its connections with the outside that are sometimes incomplete or improperly sized –in particular the connection with Tintal beyond the Transmilenio routes.

C. invites us to pay attention to the different types of businesses along the way, and describes through its history and its activities, the popular character of this former "invasion". This self-built working-class neighbourhood still operates today as a "welcoming place" for very modest, even marginal people such as displaced and recyclers (zorreros).

The security issue is also a theme that runs through these 2 discussions: even though C. feels safe as someone who has lived there for so long, she describes Patio Bonito as a neighbourhood undergoing the influence of paramilitary groups and threatened by "social cleansing". Drug problems among the youth, gangs and robberies growth... for C., insecurity is increasing in the area despite the recent establishment of a police station. As such, the presence of private security found throughout the city is described as a regular practice, even normal, and part of the everyday citizen life.

Even though Patio Bonito still presents houses reminding the architecture of self-built neighbourhoods, C. particularly emphasizes on the equipment that appeared gradually in the district under the pressure of its inhabitants. The sewerage and wastewater collection systems especially play a important role in Patio Bonito, which has experienced violent flood during its early years. In this sense, the surface of the streets is another element of analysis for the neighbourhood. It highly depends on the public or private management of the streets, thus depending on public policy or decision of local owners. Therefore, some streets have been recently paved while the inner streets of some blocks remain unpaved; others are in poor condition although regularly rehabilitated because of transit of buses and trucks. Finally, the walks show a neighbourhood that is now fairly dense in urban and social services, whether they are public or private initiatives: several churches and schools -most of which are private in agreement with the District-, a swimming pool, numerous playgrounds for children as well as collective cafeteria.

## Walking through Patio Bonito

" C. : [...] Allí queda Carrefour. Y hay mucha gente que se va a pie hasta Carrefour. Entonces es mas que todo gente que va para Carrefour o igual que vienen para el centro comercial. Esta es la calle principal que tuvo patio bonito. Inicialmente esta era la entrada y la salida de patio bonito. Pero ahorita es la 38 que es la salida y la entrada.

" Consuelo : [...] There, there is the Carrefour. And there are many people who walk to Carrefour or even go to the mall. This was the main street of Patio Bonito. Initially, it was the entrance and exit of Patio Bonito. But now it is the 38 that is used as an exit and entry."



[¿usted vive aquí cerca?] No yo vivo mas abajo. A mi no me parece lejos. Yo por ejemplo de aquí de mi casa, donde yo vivo, me voy al tinal a pie frescamente. [...] Así a paso lento, veinte minutos. Igual me voy de donde yo vivo a donde mi hermana que es mas abajo. Allá se echa uno diez, quince minutos. Mi madre si vive por allí. [¿Aquí siempre hay tanta gente en la calle?] Siempre. Siempre ha habido harta gente aquí en el...Siempre. El domingo es peor. El domingo yo no se de donde es que sale tanta gente. [...] Ayer domingo de ramos esto era cosa aterradora. Yo vine...fui a misa fue a Carrefour porque había una misa chiquita y entonces como que escucha uno mas al padre.

[You live here, nearby?] No I live further down. For me, it is not too far. For example, from here, my home where I live, I frequently walk to Tinal. [...] If I walk slowly it takes about 20 minutes. Similarly, I walk from my house to my sister's who lives below. To there, it's a 10-15 minutes walk. My mother also lives over there. [There are always so many people in the street?] Always. There has always been a lot of people in ... Always. On Sunday it's even worse. On Sunday I do not know from where people come out. For example I do not come out here on Sundays. [...] Yesterday, Palm Sunday, it was terrifying. I came ... I went to the mass and then to Carrefour, where there was a small mass, to hear the priest once more.





*Esta es la iglesia. Esa iglesia tiene lo que tiene patio bonito. Inicialmente empezó en un localito muy pequeñito. Y a medida que fue creciendo el barrio también fue creciendo la iglesia. Antes no era así. Era en madera, era feita.*

*This is the church. This church illustrates well Patio Bonito. Originally, it started in a very small space. As the area grew, the church also grew. Before it was not like that. It was all made of wood, it was ugly.*



*[...] Aquí por ejemplo vea, este está vendiendo pescado. El solamente vende pescado, pero si vamos a ver en otro carro esta vendiendo... Por decir algo hay otros que venden fruta. Esos negocios así aquí los llamamos "el agáchese". Porque venden todo a mil. Allá hay uno mas grande donde venden todo a mil que son medias... Esa es gente que compra los... por ejemplo se van a la aduana... Todo lo que coge la aduana... de contrabando, entonces ellos le venden a los pequeños comerciantes pero por lotes... Este sector es muy comercial, [...] Aquí hay fabricas de muebles y fabricas de colchones. Ahí los hacen. Este sitio lo llamamos acá en patio bonito "puerto pescado". Porque es el sitio donde venden el pescado y donde usted encuentra lo de un almuerzo. [...]*

*[...] Look over here for example this guy sells fish. He sells only fish, but if we go and see another car they sell... there are others who sell fruits. These businesses here, we call them "el Agaches". Because they sell everything for a thousand. Over there, there is a bigger one where they sell everything second-hand for a thousand ... They are*

the people who buy them ... they go to the customs .... smuggled goods, so they sell it to shopkeepers as batches ... This area is very commercial, [...] Here there are furniture and mattresses factories. They make them there. This site is called "puerto pescado" (fishing port) in Patio Bonito. Because this is the place where they sell fish and where you meet someone for lunch.



[...] Aquí por ejemplo tenemos supermercado general. Porque venden de todo. Venden tanto carne como lácteos... y aquí la pintura. Y aquí tenemos un (café) Internet, una fama y una zapatería. Las ensaladas que se las venden allí. Por eso digo, encuentra desde la ensalada, el pescado, las hierbas que usted necesite. Cualquier cosa. [...]

[...] Here for example is like a general supermarket. Because they sell everything. They sell various products like meat, milk ... and here the paint. Here we have an Internet café, a famous one and a shoemaker. The salads are sold there. That's why I said you could find everything you need, salad, fish, herbs. All things.[...]



Vamos al sitio que le dije y bajamos hacia la... Esta es la avenida principal... Esta es la calle 38 que va hasta el río. [...]

Let's go to the site I mentioned and go down there ... This is the main avenue. This is the 38th street that goes all the way down to the river. [...]



*Acá ahorita lo que esta preocupado Patio Bonito es porque...por lo de esos panfletos que han mandado a las casas. [¿Acá también los han mandado?] Uy!! Terrible. Si los han mandado pero mejor dicho...puerta por puerta. Porque lo que pasa es que patio bonito esta dominado por tres bandas. Uno porque ya conoce el barrio y lo conocen a uno pues uno puede andar después de las diez de la noche. Pero hay gente que aquí no puede andar después de las nueve de la noche en la calle. Como por ejemplo los muchachos del colegio que se meten mucho en problemas, que se sepa que son drogadictos. Porque esos son los que...Porque es que los panfletos que han mandado aquí a Patio son tenaces. Mas que todo contra las prostitutas y los de las...se me fue lo que estaba diciendo.*

*[¿Y la gente habla tranquilamente de eso?] No. Acá la gente es muy parca en ese sentido. Porque por ejemplo por decir algo...si yo comento algo con X o Y persona, entonces yo no sé si esa persona pertenece a ese grupo. Porque aquí hay mucha gente que pertenece a esos grupos no porque quieran sino por conveniencia. Digamos por la conveniencia de que este chuzo (local comercial) lo cuide esa gente.*

*[¿Quién es esa gente?] Aquí inicialmente se llamaban los paras (paramilitar). Claro que a esos ya los sacaron de acá. Pero no deja de haber uno que otro que esta trabajando aquí... así como por decir "por debajo de cuerda" (escondido). Que son los que inicialmente cuidan todos estos almacenes. Y ellos cobran una cuota. La policía ha hecho reuniones para explicar que eso no se debe hacer. Porque eso da pie para que después los extorsionen.*

*There, now, what worries Patio Bonito are these pamphlets they sent to the houses. [They also sent some over here?] Yes! Terrible. Yes They have sent some even .... door to door. Because what happens is that three gangs dominate Patio Bonito. Someone that knows the area and is known in the area, can afford to be out after 10pm. But there are people who cannot walk here in the street after 9pm.*

*For instance the secondary school kids who get in trouble and who are known to have drug problems. Because they are the ones ... Because what happens is that the pamphlets that are sent here in Patio Bonito are very hard. More than anything against prostitution and those of .... I forgot what I meant to say.*





*[And people talk easily about that?] No. Over there people are very passive regarding this. Because for example .... if I comment something with this person or another, I do not know if this person belongs to a group. Because here there are many people who belong to these groups, not because they want it but just for convenience. Let's say that for convenience these people take care of this commercial space.*

*[Who are these people?] Here, originally they were paramilitaries. Of course they were chased away. But the fact is that some continue to work here ... as they say here, "under a rope", hidden. They are the ones who originally protect all these stores. And for that they get a commission. The police have held meetings to explain that all this should not exist. Because it provides the required basis for money extortion.*



*[...] Bajemos por esta y los llevo a las piscinas. Esto...Patio Bonito es muy bonito ahorita. Antes esto eran unos "chirquiales". [¿Esto es nuevo, estas calles pavimentadas?] Esto no tiene sino...esta principal tendrá seis meses. [¿Todas las calles las pavimentaron? ¿O solo algunas?] La mayoría están pavimentadas. Las otras no porque como eso es...Las vías principales... eso le pertenece es al gobierno, al estado, pero por ejemplo lo que son calles peatonales le pertenecen a cada dueño. Por ejemplo nosotros...mi mami vive allí al otro lado...hace unos veinte años...la cuota que se dio por casa eran...como doscientos mil pesos imagínese. [¿Esa cuota la recogía la*

*ciudad o la junta de acción comunal?]* Eso se hablaba con un ingeniero. El ingeniero venía y miraba y hacía...el contrato inicial se hizo con un ingeniero...Acá ha habido muchas cosas que no se porque no han funcionado...no ha habido buena gestión.

*[...] Let us go down here and I will take you to the swimming pools. This ... Patio Bonito is fine now. Previously these were unpaved streets. [This is new, these paved roads?] This one is not ... the main one has been finished for six months. [All the streets have been paved? Or only some?] The majority is paved. The others are not... because the main streets ... it belongs to the government, the state, but for example the walkways belong to each owner. For instance, we ...my mother lives there, on the other side ... it's been twenty years ... the cost (of the paved roads construction) for each house was about two hundred thousand pesos can you imagine? [Is the payment collected by the city or the municipal council action?] It was discussed with an engineer. The engineer came, and looked up ... The original contract was done with an engineer ... Here there are many that, I do not know why, did not work... The management was not good.*



*Estos son los comedores comunitarios. Hay unos que son de la alcaldía y otros que son de bienestar familiar. Pero la mayoría son de bienestar familiar. De ahí de la 38 hacia acá es Patio Bonito que viene allí hasta la quinta mas o menos... que es Patio Bonito. De ahí para allá entramos ahora al barrio Paraíso...mentiras, entramos al barrio palmeras. De aquí de la 38 para allá es Patio Bonito primer sector. Porque Patio Bonito es tres sectores.*

*These are the collective cafeteria. Some are owned by the city hall and others, the majority, by Bienestar Familiar (a public family social service). From here, from the 38th to there it's Patio Bonito, it's going from there to the 15th street, more or less ... Over here and there, we enter the Paraiso neighbourhood... No I am wrong, we are entering the Palmeras neighbourhood. From here, the 38th and over there, it's Patio Bonito's first sector, because Patio Bonito has three sectors.*





*Este es otro colegio muy importante de Patio Bonito. Son colegios privados pero ahora tienen convenio con el distrito. [...]*

*[Me parece que hay muchas cosas para los niños.] Si. Especialmente los parques. Pero también es porque están...por ejemplo aquí esta este parque porque este es un colegio. [¿Privado?] Si. [¿Porque hay tantas escuelas privadas?] No se...Los colegios del distrito no dan abasto para darle estudio a tantos niños...Por ejemplo acá hay muchos niños desplazados. Muchos niños hijos de "zorreros" (recicladores)...Entonces son gente que no tienen realmente recursos para matricular a un niño a un colegio privado. Entonces casi todo el mundo busca el colegio publico. Entonces hay mucho hacinamiento en los salones...Y la gente se aprovecha y empieza a abrir los colegios privados.*

*This is another very important school of Patio Bonito. These are private schools, but now there are agreements with the district. [...]*

*[It seems to me that there are many things for children.] Yes, especially the parks. But it's also why they are... for instance there is this park because this is a secondary school. [Private?] Yes. [Why are there so many private schools?] I do not know ... The district's schools are overloaded and handle as many children as they can ... For example, here there are lots of displaced children. Many "zorreros" (recyclers) children... So these are people who do not actually have the resources to enrol a child in a private school. Consequently, nearly everyone seeks public schools. There is a real overcrowding in the classes and some take this opportunity to open private schools.*

*[...] Aquí en Patio Bonito sabe que predomina mucho...los tomaderos. Por ejemplo esto es un tomadero. Pero entonces son tomaderos que no son bien organizados entonces son mas bien focos de delincuencia. Unos años atrás uno podía divinamente entrar a un sitio de esos con su familia...pero ahorita no se puede. [¿En términos generales hay problemas de delincuencia?] Pues si, delincuencia si. Por lo que le digo de los grupos. Hay unos que roban acá en el mismo barrio. Y hay otros grupos que se forman y se van fuera del barrio.*

*[...] Here in Patio Bonito, you know what predominates... neighbourhood bars. For example, this is a neighbourhood bar. But*

some neighbourhood bars are poorly managed and are crime hotbeds. A few years back we could go somewhere quietly with our family ... but now we cannot anymore. [In general there are crime problems?] Well, crime, yes. That's what I told you about the groups, the gangs. There are some who rob here in the neighbourhood. And there are other groups that get organized here and go outside the neighbourhood to rob.



[¿La gente en general se siente segura?] Si. Por ejemplo yo personalmente me siento muy segura. ¿Por qué? Porque yo conozco gente de ellos. Conozco muchachos de ellos...los distingo. Mas o menos sé quienes son los papás y todo eso. Entre ellos se formó un problema tenaz. Eso es allá entre ellos.

[Do people feel safe in general?] Yes. For example, personally, I feel safe. Why? Because I know some of them ... I recognize them. I know more or less who are their parents. Between them there is a real problem. It is between them.



[...] [¿Esto es un proyecto nuevo? La piscina.] La piscina ya tiene sus añitos. Claro esta que lo que es ese parque para los niños eso es nuevo. Lo mismo que la estructura. Aquí es el parque de los muchachos...Por la mañana hay grupos de la tercera edad...les dan ejercicios.

[¿Puede explicarnos porque en un parque publico hay vigilancia privada?] No, no se porque. Pero todos los colegios también tienen vigilancia privada. Todos los colegios del distrito son con seguridad privada. [¿Para usted es

*normal?]* Normal. Los bancos también tienen seguridad privada. Y para nosotros es normal que la seguridad sea privada. Así el establecimiento sea del distrito.



*[Is this a new project? The swimming pool.]* The swimming pool is a few years old. Of course this park for children is new. As the structure. Here is the park where the young men ... In the morning there are seniors groups... they get to exercise.

*[Can you explain why a public park has private security?]* No, I do not know why. But all schools also have private security. All schools in the district are held by private security. *[For you it's normal?]* Normal. The banks also have a private security. For us it is normal that security is private. As institutions are public.



*[...]* *[¿Esta calle porque no la han pavimentado?]* Porque resulta que esta es la ruta (de bus) mas antigua que tiene Patio Ponito. “Buses rojos” y otra que queda mas abajo que se llama “contraunion” fueron las primeras rutas que tuvo Patio Bonito. Entonces lo que pasa es que esa ruta no tiene parqueadero. Entonces la gente no ha querido hacer gestión para que la pavimenten porque usted sabe que los carros pesados deterioran las calles muy rápido. Aquí viene la policía y los sacan de aquí por un momento y vuelven otra vez.



[...] [Why didn't they pave this street?] Because this bus street is the oldest in Patio Bonito. The "Buses rojos" street and another that is lower, which is called "contraunion" are the first roads ever in Patio Bonito. The thing is that this road has no parking place. So people did not want to handle and pay for the pavement because big cars deteriorated the streets rapidly. The police come here and expel them for a while but they come back.

Esto también es un colegio del distrito. Esto está nuevecito. No tiene cuatro meses. No lo han terminado todavía pero ya esta funcionando el primer piso y el segundo piso. En la esquina queda un colegio que es privado y al frente otro colegio que es privado.

Todo esto son pequeños talleres automotrices. Hay hartos, acá por ejemplo hay "montallantas". Esto es un jardín infantil pero es del bienestar familiar.

This is also a school of the district. This one is very recent. It has been there for almost four months. They have not finished it yet but for now the first and second floors are open. In the corner there, there is a private school, and in front of it there is another private school. All these are small car repair shops. There are many of them, for example here are some "montallantas" (tire repair, maintenance). Here is another garden for children, but which comes under family welfare program "Bienestar Familiar".



[Hay muchas casas que tienen su propio comercio. ¿No?] Si, pero hay otras que no. Por ejemplo por este lado no funciona el comercio. Lo único que funciona aquí es por ejemplo vea ahí... esa clase de tienda, donde usted puede ir a echarse sus chelas (cervezas) y ya. Pero por ejemplo un almacén de ropa o una... no funciona...o una panadería no funciona.

[Many homes have their own little business?] Yes, but not all of them. For instance, trade is not really successful over here. The only one that works here is for example, look over there ... this kind of store where you can drink a beer and go. For example, a clothing store, bakery or other ..wouldn't work.



*Mi madre vive aquí por esta cuadra pero no se si esta en la casa. Es la casa mas feita que tiene la cuadra (risas)...y me da pena. Vamos a ver si la cucha (vieja) está. (risas). [...] [Usted creció en esta casa...] Si, en este barrio, sí. Venga yo miro si mi madre está. El es un señor que alquila lavadoras. Igual, si le sale un trabajito como el que esta haciendo lo hace. El trasteo. Así se gana unos pesos de mas...Esos son los recursivos. Risas. Esos son los recursivos de Patio Bonito.*

*My mother lives here but I do not know if she is at home. It's the worst house of the block ... and it hurts me. Let's see if the old lady is there (laughs). [You grew up in this house ?...] Yes, in this neighbourhood. Come, I'll see if my mother is there. He's a man who rents washing machines, does moving, this way he earns a little more money ... These are the resources. Laughts. These are the resources of Patio Bonito.[...]*



*Esta calle me preguntará usted porque está así. No entendemos el porqué. La han pavimentado unas diez veces. Y vuelve otra vez. ¿Por qué? Por aquí este es el pasadero de los carros de todo. Porque esta es la vía que comunica al Tintal, a la biblioteca. Y al centro comercial.*

*Esta calle la llamamos "la del paisa". Porque es que inicialmente en este punto, ahí en esa esquina hubo un negocio de empanadas que se llamaba el paisa, después el la traslado para allí, después para allá y ahora la tiene mas allá. Entonces esta es la cuadra del paisa.*





*You asked me why this street is like that. We do not understand why. They've paved ten times. And they will have to come back again. Why? Because all the cars go through here, because that is the street that communicates with Tintal, with the library and the mall. We call this street "calle del paisa" (name given to the inhabitants of Medellin). Because initially in this corner, there was an empanadas shop called the paisa, then it moved there, and now it is over there. Therefore we call this street "la cuadra del paisa".*



*Este es el CAI. Este es un punto de la policía. Acá llegan todos los problemas chiquitos y se los llevan para la central.*

*[¿Desde cuando hay obras de servicios en el barrio?] Yo creo que empezaron cuando el barrio tenía tres años iniciaron con lo que era la red de aguas negras y todo eso. Ahora están en un proyecto para cambiar la tubería que ya está muy vieja. Porque patio bonito ya tiene 32 años más o menos. Las tuberías ya no dan abasto y por eso hay muchas casas en las que se ha devuelto el agua. Se inundan porque la tubería no da abasto.*

*This is the CAI. It is a police building. This is where all the small problems are dealt with, then they are treated at the police headquarters.*

*[Since when are public services in the neighbourhood?] I think it started when the neighbourhood was three years old. It started with the waste water system. Currently there is a project of renewing the*

pipes that are too old, because Patio Bonito is now about 32 years old. The piping system is exceeded and consequently there are many houses that are leaking, they are flooded.



*[¿Ha habido cambios? En el precio de las casas por ejemplo] Este barrio se inundó hace 29 años. Una inundación terrible. Todos tuvimos que salir de este barrio. Después de esa inundación durante seis meses hubo una oferta demasiado barata. Una casa se la daban a usted por treinta mil pesos. Una casa bien, de dos pisos bien estructurada y todo. Y un lote desocupado, con diez mil pesos usted compraba un lote aquí. Sino que igual en ese tiempo la gente no tenía suficiente plata. Claro está que la gente que tenía plata, su economía mas o menos, hay gente aquí, un solo propietario que puede tener diez casas en diferentes sitios. Ahora va uno a ver y una casa de esas vale 80 o 90 millones de pesos.*

*[Has there been any changes? On house prices, for example.] This area was flooded 29 years ago. A terrible flood. We all left the neighbourhood. After the flood, during six months the offers were very low. You were given a house for thirty thousand pesos. A good house with two floors, a good structure and everything. You could buy a vacant plot of land for ten thousand pesos. But most of the people did not have enough money at that time. Of course, there are people who had enough money, their savings, there are people here ... a single owner can own ten houses in different places. Now we are going to see a house like that, that is worth about 80 or 90 million pesos.*



## Walking to Tintal

*[¿Ustedes van a la biblioteca con frecuencia o no? ] No, mire que sabe que nos hemos vuelto flojos. Antes si. Sino que lo que pasa es que ahora mi hermana...ya va a ser un año que hay Internet allá entonces todos nos volcamos es para allá a meternos a Internet a...estos (les enfants) mas que todo a chatear allá con sus amigas. Y pues uno que de vez en cando también mira su correo a ver si alguien se acuerda de uno. Y entonces...para una tarea...a Internet.*

*[Do you often go to the library?] No, you see, we are a bit lazy. Before though, I use to go more often. But now my sister ... it's been a year now that my sister has the internet and we go over to her place to use it ...children use it to chat with their friends more than anything. And sometimes we also check our emails to see if someone remembers one of us. And for work too... on the internet. [...]*



*Pero ¿se da cuenta del deterioro de acá? No se si en la biblioteca podamos entrar ahorita en la sala de... para ver videos de... hay un libro de la inundación de patio bonito. Ahora preguntamos, sino que yo no tengo carnet...Yo tenia carnet de la biblioteca pero todo eso lo hemos descuidado.*

*But you realize the damage done here? I do not know if we can get in the library room ... to see the videos ... there's a book about the flood*



of Patio Bonito. We can ask, but I have no card ... I had a library card but we didn't take care of all that.

[...]



Ese parque Que queda aquí...ese parque se llama parque de los soldados. ¿Por qué tiene ese nombre? Porque aquí en esta parte de acá, hace muchos años había un resguardo militar. Porque como todo esto era potrero...acá los traían a entrenar...se prestaba el sitio para entrenarlos. Entonces cuando les daban salida de poquito tiempo...el parque era ahí...Y ahí se venían todos los soldados a jugar futbol. Y por eso se llama el parque de los soldados. Si usted pregunta...cualquiera le dice...usted llega acá porque la gente sabe que ese es el parque de los soldados. Esta es la iglesia y se llama la iglesia San Bernardita. Es muy bonita y esta iglesia también es nueva. También es una iglesia que la han edificado todos los residentes, la gente de acá del barrio. [Está cerrada.] Si, por lo general nunca están abiertas. Por lo mismo que...Hay gente que si entra a rezar pero hay otra gente que entra es a mirar que se puede robar. Entonces por eso no... Casi nunca las tienen abiertas.

This park, which is there ... it's called soldiers park. Why? Because in this part there, several years ago there was a military reserve. Because like everything that surrounds us, this was pasture.

There, they were practising. So when they had to get out there recently... the park was here and all the soldiers were playing football here. That's why it's called the Soldiers Park. If you ask ... everyone tells you ... you get there because people know that it's Soldiers park. This is the church it's called San Bernaditas. It's very beautiful and recent as well. It is also a church built by neighbourhood residents. [It's closed.] Yes, most of them are never open. Like ... Some come to pray, but others come to see what they can steal. That's why ... They are almost never open.

Aquí queda el CADE. Donde se pagan los servicios. Todo lo que son servicios.

*Here, it's the CADE, the place where we pay for all services.*



*Mire, si se da cuenta todo el material dañado ahí. Este puente lo hicieron debido a que como este era el único puente que había de ingreso al barrio...Vea el puente tan pequeño para meter dos carros. Y a veces pasan dos carros grandes, entonces había muchos accidentes ahí. El centro comercial tiene como cinco años. Aquí queda un jardín infantil también que es de lo mismo...de bienestar social.*



*Look, you realize all those things damaged here. This bridge is the first realized within the district. See this bridge is so narrow even for two small cars. And sometimes two big cars come across, thus there are lots of accidents. The mall is about five years old. Here is a day nursery that also belongs to social welfare..*





Los edificios esto se llama el tinal. Este pedazo de aquí hacia abajo se llama el Tinal. [¿Eso es nuevo?] Estos son viejitos ya. Los mas nuevos son los de la avenida para allá. Estos deben tener como unos diez años ya. [¿Hay comunicación entre los dos barrios?] Si, claro. Porque ¿sabe que es lo que pasa Camilo? Hay mucha...Por ejemplo hay familias de patio que consiguieron...O sea los hijos se casan y vinieron a comprar acá. Entonces, los papas de allá vienen acá y los hijos van allá. [¿Hay muchas personas que vivían en patio que ahora viven acá?] O sea, los jóvenes. Los que se han casado. Es que por lo general yo llamo a eso así porque por ejemplo en el caso de nosotros... mi hermano...Nosotros vivimos en patio bonito. Mi hermano compro en el barrio primavera. Es un conjunto residencial. Y la hermana de mi cunada también. Ella vive allí en la parte de la Cali para arriba que se llama "el rincón de los ángeles". Es un conjunto residencial.

These buildings over there, this is called el Tinal. This part from here to further below is called el Tinal. [This is new?] These are old. The most recent were those on the avenue there. They must be about ten years old. [Both parts communicate with each other?] Yes, of course. Because, you know what happens Camilo? There are many ... For example there are families from Patio Bonito coming over... Or you see, the children get married and come to buy over here. So parents are out there and children come over here. [Are there many people who lived in Patio Bonito before and who live here now?] You see, young people, those who got married. Usually I explain it like this because for example in our case ... my brother ... We live in Patio Bonito. My brother bought in Primavera district, it is a housing complex, and the sister of my sister-in-law as well. She lives in the upper part of Cali Avenue called "el rincon de los angeles". It is a housing complex.

[¿Por qué la gente se va a vivir en conjuntos residenciales?] Porque como eso es vivienda con subsidio...entonces...yo no creo que sea mas barato sino que la forma de financiación...por ejemplo la casa de mi hermano. El la compro hace quince años, le costo 28 millones.

En patio bonito sí se puede hacer pero por decir algo cuando se mete uno al fondo de ahorro...entonces en el fondo de ahorro se mete uno para casa usada.



*[Why do people go to live in housing complexes?] Because there are allocations ... I do not think it is cheaper but for funding ... For example my brother's house, he bought it fifteen years ago and it cost him 28 millions. In Patio Bonito it is possible when you have savings ... then you save to invest in a house at second hand.*



*Este es un colegio también...Nuevo. Ese colegio...esta es la sede principal. Y la sede B es el colegio que le mostré ahorita. Antes había colegios muy pequeños...escuelas pequeñas. Entonces las unificaron. Entonces ahora son la sede A, la sede B y la sede C y son dirigidas por un solo rector. Lo mismo pasa con estos colegios. Un solo rector para todos. [...] [Hay mas gente hoy que las otras veces que habíamos venido.] ¿Sabe por qué? Porque la gente está en vacaciones. Hay mucha gente a la que se le dio la semana.*

*This is also a secondary school... a new one. This school ...this is the main building (the headquarters). Building B is the one I just showed you. Before there were very small schools, small schools, they were unified. Those are building A, building B, building C and are led by a single director. [...] [There are more people today than the other days*

*we came.] You know why? Because people are on vacation. There are many people who have taken the whole week off.*



*[¿Ustedes vienen a este parque?] Venimos en diciembre. Es que yo personalmente no soy persona de parque. Yo no le hallo la gracia a venir a sentarme en un parque. Yo soy mas bien de andar. A mi me gusta andar mucho. [¿Cuando sale a caminar a donde va?] Cuando salgo a caminar...Por esto así..pero no...O me voy para donde mi hermana.*

*[Do you come to this park?] We come in December. I, personally, I'm not really a park lover. I feel no pleasure to come and sit in a park. I'd rather walk. I love walking. [When you go for a walk, where do you go?] When I go for a walk over here ... no ... Or I drop by my sister's place.*



*[¿Cuándo construyeron la biblioteca?] No se exactamente...Yo venia aquí a hacer tareas con mi hijo y estaba pequeño. Veniamos a buscar libros aquí en la sala infantil para que el leyera. Pero me tocaba leerlos a mi porque a el no le gusta leer.*

*[When did they build the library?] I do not know exactly ... I came here with my son to work when he was little. We came here looking for books in the children's room to read some. But I had to read them to myself because he does not like to read.*

*Sala infantil Internet y multimedia. Aquí le dan... Por ejemplo a uno de adulto si quiere tomar clases de informática, Internet...le enseñan a uno. Cuando uno es empírico es un nivel mas alto. Aquí por ejemplo es la sala para los bebes. Hay muchachas que les ayudan a buscar las tareas. Recreacionistas tienen los niños. Por ejemplo mire esa abuelita leyéndole a esa bebé. A me parece un cuadro tan tierno. Uno también puede meterse y coger cualquier libro y leerlo.. [...]*



*Children's room, internet and multimedia. Here they are ... For instance, if an adult wishes to have a computer course, internet ... he can be taught. When someone has experience, it's on the upper floor. Here is the room for babies. There are girls who help them. Counsellors working and taking care of the children. For example, look at this old woman reading to this baby. For me it is a very heart-warming image. You can come, take any book and read it. [...]*



*Este era el acceso de los camiones con la basura. Entraban y la descargaban acá. Adentro la procesaban. El parque era potrero. No había nada, era solo potrero. Esto lo arreglaron porque inicialmente no había salas como esta.*

*This was the garbage truck access. They came in and unloaded there. They handle it and treated it inside. The park was a pasture. There was nothing, just a pasture. They arranged everything here because initially there was no room like that.*

*[...]*

*Esta es la sala...cuando usted por decir algo tiene un grupo grande de trabajo. Usted viene y habla para que le presten el salón. Para lo que usted quiera escuchar de música pide el CD. Hay muchos niños.*

*This is the room ... when you have a working group. You come and ask for the room if it's available. For anyone who wants to listen to music, you can get CDs. There are many children.*



*[¿Ha cambiado mucho el barrio?] Claro...con todo esto ha cambiado mucho. Yo me atrevería a decir que el cien por ciento. Por todo. Porque por este sitio caminar era terrible. Uno por este lado no se atrevía a venir. Primero porque no había acceso de entrada. Eso eran potreros. Pero por ejemplo ahora... uno divinamente se puede ir de aquí a pie hasta la 13. Ciclo ruta. Todo, todo alrededor. La calidad de vida para mi ha cambiado demasiado. Con sus problemas y todo pero...*

*Los problemas típicos de que se ha luchado, se lucho mucho para que la recolección de basura fuera exactamente los días estipulados. A veces no venían sino una vez a la semana a recoger la basura. Ahora recogen los tres días a la hora que es. Por ejemplo con el servicio del agua, con las pavimentadas, todo eso. Pero se ha ido superando a mediada que ha pasado el tiempo se ha ido superando mucho...Con la policía mas que todo ha habido... Por ejemplo antes aquí en patio bonito no había CAI y era terrible porque mientras venia la policía de Kennedy aquí a patio bonito la desgracia era mayor. Ahora están controlando mas seguido, en las motos...andan mucho las motos, las patrullas. Entonces es un poquito mas controlado, los ladrones no se echan tanto al agua.*

*[¿Siente que en seguridad también ha mejorado? ] Si, en seguridad también. Por lo que le digo. El nuevo CAI tiene como diez motorizados y el de abajo también, siguen siendo muy pocos para toda la cantidad de gente.*

*[¿La comunidad ha hecho algo respecto a los panfletos?] La verdad es que no, no creo. Pues lo que inicialmente les dicen a los muchachos en el colegio es que no les presten atención. Y que denuncie uno la gente que esta reproduciendo. Por ejemplo a mi sobrino le dieron un panfleto de esos. Y ellos vieron quien. Pero es que ellos no se pueden poner a denunciarlos porque ellos corren peligro. Entonces la policía dice: "denuncien". Yo por ejemplo no voy a denunciar a nadie porque yo estoy pensando en mi hijo. Siempre hay el temor de ir a denunciar. Yo personalmente no lo haría. Yo pienso en mi hijo y en mis sobrinos. Lo único que han dicho es que denunciemos. Y que no los reproduzcamos. Porque como...dicen al pie de pagina que reproducirlo. Que no, que simplemente romperlos, no hacer caso.*





*[Has the neighbourhood changed a lot?] Of course with all this it has changed a lot. I dare to say it changed a hundred percent from all perspectives. Because here, walking was terrible. Nobody dared to come this way. First because there was no entrance, this was all pastures, but for example, now ... you can go quietly to the 13th street by foot. The bike path and everything, all around. The quality of life for me has changed greatly, with its problems and all but ...*

*Typical problems for which we fought were for instance that the garbage collection takes place the day stipulated. Sometimes they did not come or only once a week to collect garbage. Now they pick them up every three days. Also, for water service, for the pavement, all this. But all this has improved over time ... More than anything with what was done by the police. For example, before in Patio Bonito, there was no CAI and it was terrible because while the police had to come all the way from Kennedy and here, in Patio Bonito, things were getting worse. Now they have more control on motorcycles ... patrols are often done on a bike. So with a little more control, thieves don't come out as much as they used to.*

*" [Do you feel that security is also better?] Yes, the security as well. As I said, the new CAI has about ten bikers and those below as well, but it is little for the amount of people. [Has the community done something about the pamphlets?] Actually no, I do not think so. What was initially said to the youth at school is not to pay attention and inform on those who repeat. That's what they told my nephew. But they can not denounce otherwise they would run a risk. So the police say "denounce". I, for example, wouldn't denounce anyone, because I think of my son. There is always the fear of going to denounce. I would not do it, I think of my son and my nephews. The only thing they have said is that we must denounce and not imitate them. Because they literally say ... not to repeat. They say it has to stop, and one shouldn't make a big deal out of it." (40).*

## Interview and walk with Pedro Juan Jaramillo

*“But for the most of us, public space is a place to meet, where people can stay and give life to the place”.*

*“Public space is the structure which gives a possibility for the city to be alive”.*

*“The public space has not yet consolidated, it must be the place where people can come without assistance”.*



Pedro Juan Jaramillo Colombian is an architect working in Bogotá, project manager of the Gabriel Betancourt Mejía secondary school.

Interview made walking in the El Tintal library and Gabriel Betancourt Mejía secondary school area on April 6<sup>th</sup> evening 2009. Interview length 52:20.

*Attendees: Pedro Juan Jaramillo (PJJ), Nancy Rozo (NR), Nicolas Tixier (NT), Camilo Cifuentes (CC).*

Transcription, translation: Erwan Naour, Pascaline Thiollière.

### ***New architecture for Bogotá schools***

*New schools recently constructed in Colombia, attempting to create a new relationship to the city, are built upon the idea that educational spaces are the basis of a more efficient society. This means a real evolution of the reflection on educational facilities that used to be ordinary buildings often located in inappropriate areas. Following a survey on Bogotá schools, Mayor Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2000) gave impetus to a rehabilitation program for educational facilities, developing 21 secondary schools with new standards. Antanas Mockus (2001-2003) pursued this action and Luis Eduardo Garzón (2004-2007) worked on the rehabilitation of 178 educational facilities, repositioning 67 of them and building 40 new.*

*The construction of these buildings gave rise to public architectural competitions. This whole process is indicative of the desire to educate Bogotá children in opportune spaces.*

*Gabriel Betancourt Mejía secondary school is a 5 500 m<sup>2</sup> building complex on a 14 732 m<sup>2</sup> area which is located in El Tintal library's district. It was designed, under Pedro Juan Jaramillo's direction, by a Colombia National University team regrouping Germán Obdulio Moreno, Sergio Michel Segura and Jaime Andrés Gómez. This architect team, tried, during this project, to answer the following question: «Can a public secondary school be considered as a public space or must it follow the traditional school typology?». As Pedro Juan Jaramillo clearly explains during the interview, this school was thought and designed as meeting, mixing and sharing space, just like his vision of the public space.*

*Sources: Pedro Juan Jaramillo and*

*<http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=586487>*

*presenting and illustrating the new situation of Bogotá schools. For an other description with interior pictures of the school:*

*<http://www.varelafiholl.com/NewsDetail.asp?ID=3487&IDCompany=98>*



## Transcription (extracts)

*PJJ: This building you see here (the library) used to be a police warehouse. When the mayor decided to place some libraries around Bogotá and as they had the opportunity to buy the warehouse from the police to adapt it into a library, they chose this location. And there was nothing around here. The housing development of the area had just started, only few buildings.*

*Then the education council was looking for a place for a new school.*

*NT: What was the reason to place the school here?*

*They offered us two or three possibilities. This plot, and some others over there, 200 meters away. We decided to take this long plot, that didn't seem at first proper for a school.*



*But as I said, there was no public services, nor public institution here. At the beginning, there were a lot of community conflicts due to the different backgrounds of the new inhabitants coming to live close together. Especially the poor Patio Bonito population would not mingle with the other communities. The new school would enable the children of these different backgrounds to meet and mingle. It was part of an urban strategy to built it here. We had at first for the school the idea of a cluster, but then, for the long site, we were looking for a very linear skin, so that the "Alameda" (promenade, linear park, originally poplar alley) could take place. We had the feeling that if we didn't open the space here, the area would have been enclosed by housing and private buildings. The street was getting always narrower. They have started with this one (the library) and the opening up of the area was exactly what was needed for its future development, whatever happens there. Actually for us, this library is a part of the school.*



*The urban strategy was the main reason to build it. It has worked very well. One year after this experience, we were asked to make the Educational Buildings Master Plan of Bogota.*

*A public school is a public space. It has to be, it must be the place where the community will grow as a community; a place where people will meet, build and consolidate the community.*

*The only place where people can actually understand being part of a community is a place where children are, and also a place where one can study, grow and learn. This is very simple. That's the way schools are now being designed in Bogotá.*

*But look here for example [The big shopping centre behind the library]. This is not a place for a shopping centre. It's a crossroads, this is public space! They did build it on public space. How can that happen? This is awful.*

*Still it is encouraging to see that the achievements here seem to help the inhabitants to get along better. It was an urban strategy and we are very satisfied because we think it was very important for the community.*

*For example here instead of the narrow walkway, we could open the space... but as with the balconies here, we had to fight, we wanted the children to be able to come out. At the beginning we were not allowed to build them, and even now the director of the school tried to have them shut. It was important for us.*

*At least we got a place for the children and appropriate for communication, and more or less open. The scheme is very simple.*

*And it was one of the cheapest building built at this time. The plot was cheap because it used to be a waste treatment plant. So we lifted the building a bit from the ground...*

We can also notice that Pedro Juan Jaramillo's words imply a certain dismay regarding the difficulties of creating a true public space nowadays. The concurrence of many factors comes into play.

*NT: We have the same problems in France to build this kind of urban spaces.*

*PJJ: Well, you've got to fight.*



*You see from here to the river, on about a kilometer of a large street, it is very crowded, people go up and down (...) You see this place is a meeting place, it works as a transition between the classrooms and the sport area.*



*NT: And do you think that the school is built with the same principle of taking care of public space ?*

*PJJ: We thought a school must be defined as a public space, otherwise it is just a building, it doesn't make a public space. This is the only way to do it. I know that for many architects or mayors, the public space is only the walkway in front of the building. But we are not interested in buildings, we are not interested in objects. The question is how to assume the alternatives to build public space.*

*NT: I think a characteristic of Bogotá's public spaces, after having studied other spaces like Jimenez Avenue and Tercer Millenio Park, is that they enable to see and to be seen at the same time; there is a reciprocity between people and public space. And another characteristic is that all these public spaces are welcoming for the individual body as well as for the group. They accept and include the different classes and also the different types of gathering, from a single person to a group, meeting public space and others in public space.*

*PJJ: Yes. For example it is sad for us to see that this is shut here [interior school public spaces: sport playground, school street, place], it shouldn't be shut, all the sport area should be open 24/7, for the reasons you said.*

*But one day, in one, two or three years, this will be open, I hope.*



*New schools don't work on their own, they are always related to two or three other institutions or meeting place for the community; they complete each other. It's a set a public and social services that have to be connected with each other and with public space. That is why we in our Master Plan agreed on strategic sites where specific institutions should be built on, it must not be build anywhere. And it is not easy.*



Factors linked to “ambiances” and sight reciprocity explain why these spaces are mixing and blending places. That’s why Juan Jaramillo agrees on the principles and suggests a 24/7 accessibility to these urban areas. With high hopes, he exposes the evolutions as well as behaviour's mutability. Nowadays schools host various institutions. More than an education place, it’s a structure that develops activities for youth. New behaviours appear in new spaces and spread to the city in spite of the obstacles.

*NT: And now, eight or ten years after the achievement of your building and all these other projects in the city, what are your observations? How did it influence the evolution of Bogotá?*

*PJJ: I think this is very important. Transmilenio transformed Bogotá and gave a completely different idea of what the city could be. The city as a whole, not only as public space.*

*NT: Do you think that not only the Transmilenio but also the borders of the Transmilenio, the many new public spaces on the sides have played a role?*

*PJJ: Yes, regaining the edge of Transmilenio gave a sense to the whole project. Before you had different inner urban areas and now they are a tissue, a sustainable network, impossible to disconnect. Transmilenio was fundamental, not only in the access to transport, but also in the image of the city, the undercurrent respect it meant toward the people and from the people in return to the spaces and infrastructures.*

For Pedro Juan Jaramillo, the recent urban development in Bogotá, including the Transmilenio has completely changed the perception of what Bogotá could become. This transport system, connecting the city to its inter-urban neighbourhoods, reinforces the entity of the city, what was not functioning with the “buseta” buses. In addition, the Transmilenio gave meaning to its side spaces and bolsters the weaving together of single urban places that used to be isolated. It is not only a technological breakthrough, but also an urban one. New areas are emerging, others come back to life and in particular the image of Bogotá changes, the city modernizes.

*NT: The “recuperación” of public space in Bogotá has two different meanings: it means turning a private space into a public one, in the sense of getting it back to reuse it, but it also means allowing recovery, taking care of the space.*

*PJJ: Peñalosa who was the Mayor at that time had to deal with heavy discussions around the issue. To build public space, from an American point of view, is more about having beautiful open landscapes. But for the most of us, public space is a place to meet, where people can stay and give life to the place. That is why we thought of a place for a market as part of the school, to bring life and exchanges into the school. But of course they did not accept that. (laughter)*

*Lucho (Garzón), that came after Peñalosa wanted to take care of the two million children, the Bogota children that were not all having enough to eat. He wanted to educate but also feed the children. He emphasizes one thing that Peñalosa has already thought about, it was the idea to build collective cafeterias. The actual Mayor unfortunately doesn't have the same priorities...*

*NT: What are your references, the theory that influences your architecture?*

*PJJ: Well it's a paradox. Because most people understand Le Corbusier in an other sense than we do. The projects we are doing are actually 1930's Le Corbusier, in terms of space of sociability.*

*As soon as you tackle the problem as a territorial problem, belonging to a metropolitan structure, as it is the case for the 8 millions inhabitants city of Bogotá, you must pass by Le Corbusier and it's structural approach. We would have to read Le Corbusier again.*

*We rediscovered something that had not been translated in Spanish: Le Corbusier's Master Plan for Bogotá... Public space is the structure which gives a possibility for the city to be alive.*



*I'm very corbusian, however you call it. (Laughter)*

*NT: Do you have other influences coming from sociology, the Barcelona School for example?*

*PJJ: No. The first Colombian architecture schools are from the 1930's. They had a very strong professionals approach. At that time, to think the city wasn't something to worry about. We had to worry about buildings, aesthetics. So for us, it has been so difficult to have discussions about the city in architecture schools. Now every architect says that he knows about the city, but we don't know anything about the city, we have no idea about the city. Some of us are trying to discover the meaning of the city and build a School where you can think the relationship between architecture and the city, architecture and the metropolitan structure, but it doesn't exist. It doesn't exist at all. We are early 18th century.*

*(Laughter)*

*NT: The new districts and their many public spaces do not have a long history yet. Thinking the city, the citizen's place, practices of new public spaces, could give new foundations for the future development of Bogotá. And maybe it is a chance for Bogotá, to have so many people making new foundations.*

*Bogotá is fascinating Europe nowadays, maybe for the wrong reasons... What do you think we could learn from the Bogotá experiences? And how do you think the city will develop?*

*PJJ: Bogotá doesn't exist... Bogotá existed at the beginning of the 20th century; it had an identity, but then came a lot of migrants... It has been very unstable culturally. Bogotá does not have a strong identity that can give a direction to the future development.*

*You think it has? It's a difficult question.*





*NT: Maybe the city has never been demographically stable enough to have a "living in Bogotá" culture?*

*PJJ: At least we have a typical and basic expression in the way we build the city, the materials, the scale of the city...*

*I'll put it another way. You have an identity when everyone understands the program, when people, as a whole, know that there is a common program behind everything we do. Without that, it is just experiments.*

*NT: Do people here understand public spaces and buildings as common good?*

*PJJ: I don't think so; not yet. It is maybe happening in small parts of the city like in Patio Bonito or Ciudad Bolivar, where they for example pave their street together, or organize festivities together. It has then a profound meaning. But this kind of public space is not perceived as part of their parents, their own life, the space and life of their children... No I don't think so. And this is the problem. The capitalism doesn't help at all...With capitalism, the perception has changed, things are here only to be used."*



Nancy Rozo speaks out an important point: the growth and development of Bogotá have been more sudden than planned. That gives the city its diversity. Moreover Bogotá influences and economically supports the whole territory.

Despite the relative late occurrence of planning in Bogotá and the lack of development organisation, compared to Europe, spaces of social diversity and interaction exist.



The public space has not yet consolidated, it must be the place where people can come without assistance". Nancy Rozo suggests that, besides urban structure and consolidation of public space, it is essential to also work on citizenship and citizen awareness. We could cite as an example "Bogotá sin indiferencia": it is a program that aims, through agents in public space, to change the citizen relationship to his city, as well as to other citizens and to the way we practice, experience and understand urbanity.

There is today an input of new ideas, as the very concept of public space, its creation, and management. To build up the city, it is nevertheless essential to have a program, and to achieve this program with the inhabitants; it is essential to have this identity.

## **7 - Small scale – Conclusions : public spaces, public times, public bodies**

In the three sites and among a large number of the collected urban micro-narrations, we can clearly notice the two following points:

- The mentioning and perceiving of urban transformations by the interviewees, who were often referring to the site before being developed, either in the form of personal memories of the site before its transformation or through evoking the existing planning policies;
- The description of public spaces in terms of social markers (evoking certain uses dominated by a social group, social categorization and differentiation of places) and the recurrent referring to a broader social context either general or personal (mentioning their own social situation, referring to violence or insecurity ...).

This second point reinforces certain observations of public spaces and their uses made by our team at the same time as the interviews: the visibility of certain types of users or activities that mark socially these spaces (street vendors, indigent or displaced people), in addition to the strong presence of the monitoring activity in public space (police, security guards, watchmen, cameras, etc..).

Furthermore, this study highlights three strong characteristics for all the studied sites. It is worth noting that in these urban situations we are in the presence of:

- Public spaces having a metropolitan dimension, which appears in their uses and their atmospheres;
- Inviting spaces for the body as much as for groups;
- Spaces and atmospheres that are in permanent reconfiguration made by the public.

### **Public spaces having a metropolitan dimension in their uses and their atmospheres**

In this research, the chosen public spaces are emblematic of urban transformation that has undergone Bogotá. Far from being an exception, the development work in the avenues for allowing the passage of Transmilenio, the creation or amelioration of parks or the construction of large libraries are urban process carried out in numerous locations throughout the city.

But what makes these public spaces have a metropolitan dimension?

1. Each comes separately under a public policy that is applied to multiple locations within the city. Local action with a global and metropolitan discourse.

2. They are large-scale projects that are usually clearly legible due to their well-defined perimeters attained by distancing neighborhoods using wide avenues and intermediate spaces. These spaces seem belonging to the metropolis more than the neighborhood where they are rather installed than integrated.

3. These spaces, including the Transmilenio, due to their size, their open configuration and their location a little bit away from the surrounding densely built zones, give access to rare urban metropolitan perceptions. Tercer Milenio Park, despite being located in a slightly recessed land relative to its surroundings, it has a magnificent 360-degree view of Bogotá. Apart from a tower or the cliff top of Monserrat east of Bogotá, this is one of the rare sites where one can see a large part of the city with its scattered neighborhoods on the southern hills. From a sonic point of view, the situation is remarkably metropolitan. We again hear at 360 ° the sounds of the city in a continuous, yet discrete and almost panoramic way. It is a unique place away from bustling activities. La Biblioteca El Tintal, placed at the center of a park, though it is architecturally served by an old ramp for truck access, it is markedly separated and detached from its surroundings. It is perceived from a distance, no matter where we come from, and reciprocally, when we come out, all directions are possible. Jimenez Avenue and its amenities stand out against the streets and neighborhoods that surround it. It crosses the city for several kilometers. It is sufficient to take a transversal or parallel street to realize how distinctive it is. It works as a landmark and urban frame as well. Finally, the Transmilenio offers a seldom urban experience of crossing the city with superb urban scenes as it has a real visioning aspect of the metropolis. Again, the trip length, the size of certain stations extending over than 500 meters, the central and well-protected location in the middle of wide avenues, give it an immediate metropolitan dimension.



4. They represent everyday places frequented by the surrounding neighborhoods dwellers where the sociability of proximity is still present. But as the interviewees themselves pointed out, their metropolitan dimension is expressed by a broader attractiveness, which is notably related to the Transmilenio service. Tercer Milenio Park also appears as a new recreational public space of the center. While El Tintal library is considered as a place of convergence that starts to unify the former "invasion" of Patio Bonito and the recent constructed urban zones that surround it. In addition to a greater geographic influence, the metropolitan dimension which is introduced by the transformation of the three sites has established an urban integration, both spatially and socially, covering territories that were until then more or less marginal. Similarly, Tercer Milenio Park constitutes a mean of eradicating the

zone of extreme poverty and criminality that formerly prevailed there and which is partially displaced. Jimenez Avenue has regained, because of its new urban planning, a continuity that minimizes the pockets of social marginality that had been developed in certain places. Finally, the reality and the symbolism of the new El Tintal, implemented on a muddy site previously allocated to waste, give the interviewees a sense of re-inhabiting the city from that moment on.

### Hospitable spaces for the body as much as for groups

One of the characteristics of the three studied public spaces is their capacity to accommodate bodies and groups. Several reasons support this phenomenon:

1. Without the presence of public, these spaces are relatively empty of plants, buildings and street furniture. Their recent landscape design is mainly based upon the work of ground surfaces, with care given to the choice of finishing materials as well as their laying patterns. It also provides a large variety of possible seating (benches, curbs and level changes), in addition to the major work on the slopes that is necessary for the flow of water. This type of space offers so many opportunities for the body to sit, walk, lie down, sit astride, etc. The photos and video sequences illustrate this variety and potential that William Whyte often described in his New Yorkers' observations<sup>82</sup> (Life of the Plaza, sitting space ...).



2. These spaces work as reserve spaces, offering to everyone the opportunity to cut himself off for a moment from the metropolis: buffering relatively aggressive urban situations (urban noise, traffic pollution, social interactions, etc..). So people go there to relax, to rejuvenate and to recharge their batteries. It is located at the heart of the city and at the same time away from urban agitation. Even Jimenez Avenue, which contains various activities, includes many sub-spaces of this calming nature.

<sup>82</sup> WHYTE H. William. (1980). The social life of small urban spaces. Edited by Project for Public Spaces. New-York



These spaces are considered also as reserve spaces in the sense that one can practice all sorts of activities; either alone or in groups.

3. They are spaces where each one -single or in group- seems to find his place or at least a place thus creating many sub-spaces at certain times and for regular chronicity such as: collective sports, individual sports, picnics on Sundays or quick snacks during weekdays. They are also used as places for training to police or army. Such spaces accommodate refugees as well.







4. Finally, they are places, where one can meet “his friend of vice as well as his friend of talent”. They are considered as meeting places, where people gather for practicing common activities or the same sort of activities. These spaces are also places where one is close to the others and is mixed with different people, (whether in the activities or social status). There is a strong co-presence and coexistence among people and the different activities. Here again, these aspects reveal a strong labeling of the metropolitan scale marking outstandingly these places.

### **Permanent reconfiguring of space and atmospheres by the public**

As shown in numerous studies of micro-sociology, following the researches of Erwin Goffman<sup>83</sup>, the public nature of a space cannot be reduced to its physical accessibility. Far from being a quality in itself, given in advance, its public nature is defined as “socially organized functions”<sup>84</sup> crossing unknown people in a path, starting a conversation, queuing up ... are actions that each one of us carry out in a trivial, neutral and routine manner, without even thinking about it. This reveals the knowledge and the awareness of the implicit rules governing, forming and organizing social life. Managing forms of co-presence and mutual observability among anonymous or in a wider aspect the adjustment of behavior between different passers-by contingent on daily urban situations proving the “ephemeral order”<sup>85</sup> which governs public spaces through actual activities and social interactions that take place there.

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<sup>2</sup> GOFFMAN Erving, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (monograph), University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956, revised and expanded edition, Anchor Books, 1959. GOFFMAN Erving, *Relations in Public: Micro-Studies of the Public Order*, Basic Books, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> QUERE L., BREZGER D., “L'étrangeté mutuelle des passants. Le mode de coexistence du public urbain” in *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaines*, n°57-58, Dec. 92-Mars 93, Paris, MEET, p. 88.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p. 90



Mentioning here such definition of public space takes even more sense in our study that in the three case studies (with certain variations), the ambiances are fundamentally characterized by the presence of public (see all sound and video recordings).

In this respect, Jimenez Avenue is particularly considered exemplary. As a central public space, his system of occupation reflects the great rhythms of the city. During daytime when shops are open, the flows and the ephemeral masses formed by the public dominate: streams of passers-by going up and down the avenue, crowds around street entertainers or hucksters, groups of pedestrians waiting to cross the intersection of Decima Avenue, families taking pictures at San Victorino Plaza... These figures of crowds are more or less porous and in continuous motion which affect the physical form of the space. At certain times, it eradicates totally the perception of the space built form.



In general, the physical reconfiguration of space is directly linked to individual and collective activities that take place in the streets and in particular the strong presence of street vendors. It sometimes changes very fast and can cause strong variations.



From this point of view, two types of phenomena are worth noting:

- The gatherings of local and small groups form certain events (draftees preparing, distribution of clothing to the displaced, journalists waiting ...) and that, without necessarily creating a break in the course of public space, prove the existence of common area, sometimes vague, between the ordinary and the extraordinary;
- The role that street vendors themselves play -whom are often lightly equipped by (stroller, simple bag ...)- in creating this ambience. The observations have shown that some of them move in the space following the events or the crowds which intensify and vanish at a certain rhythm, thus contributing to the rapid mobility of the public and the lability of space.





These phenomena of permanent reconfiguration of space reflect their public dimension; their current "invitation" or "hospitality" to a wide variety of users and uses. A one-hour video is afforded that was taken in April 6 between 17:00 and 18:00 at the crossroads between Jimenez and Decima Avenues. This video film different systems of occupation at the intersection (depending on the density of public and bus traffic along the Decima Avenue), showing different activities and events through observing several street vendors, traffic officers, the passing by of a siren car, police interpellation etc....







Whether it is Jimenez Avenue, Tercer Milenio Park or El Tintal Library, we are in the presence of metropolitan public spaces. But this public dimension is not only conferred on a spatially defined status but also through a multiplicity of variations between spaces, times, and public bodies that constantly reconfigure such spaces. Our videographic and sonic work shows the variety of these changes, temporary appropriations, social mix, etc. If we only take these elements as evaluating criteria, then these spaces enjoy a great contemporary urban success. Whereas at least two elements might become problematic in the future: on the one hand the intensive gentrification process that prevent establishing a real social mix; on the other hand, the extreme re-appropriation of all the space during a continuous time by a single type of activity (such as permanent markets) which hinders this permanent



reconfiguration between spaces, time and public bodies. Managing these spaces so that they remain places for everyone while accommodating multiple activities, means dealing carefully with a complex of practices at the same time.

## IV - Openings





# 1 - From a broad urban story to everyday tales

All urban, cultural, social and economical transformations have fostered the narrative of politicians and city professionals, in particular during Mockus' and Penalosa's mandates. A unifying story, drawn on a range of actions and projects sometimes preceding their mandates, was however built despite the fact that these actions were not necessarily running under a common aim or a preset general organization plan, and most often without an organic link between them. It has softened as the mandates went along. Since Mockus' second mandate (2001), there began to be a broad consensus on public space policy, transportation infrastructures, competitiveness, etc.,- among the different administrations, as well as between these and public opinion (media-people). Of course the consensus is partly (but not only) due to an effective circulation of discourses. This unifying narrative was largely built "in the midst of action" and sometimes even afterwards.

This story of a rapid and efficient urban transformation was officially and internationally acknowledged and traced in 2007, at the International Venice Biennale. These narrations have also highlighted all undertaken actions and helped giving a global logic to the whole. Let us not judge these observations negatively but remain enthusiastic about the actions that have been carried out until now. Yet, there might be in this form of project management a lesson to be learned from these transformations: action where possible, when possible, using available means, but above all, action supported by a real metropolitan story. Each local action is part of a global story that includes social, cultural, educational, functional and environmental issues. We are here far away from large urban projects seeking to establish an ideal spatial organization that can scarcely evoke, without the master plan under one's eyes, possible narratives. Projects are here multi-disciplinary and covering all urban scales. They come under local inventions as much as under global policies as exemplify the remarkable cases of libraries, parks and schools.

What this research partly shows is that this story has all the more power and efficiency so it is now shared by the following three types of people:

- **City actors** (political and professional). Even though urban decisions are partly driven by other external factors (heavy trading or real estate development in the form of urban projects under conventional land operations, beginning of gentrification), urban policies and actors continue on the same story, focusing on cultural, social and public values of urban transformations.



- **Residents.** Interviews conducted on the three study sites reveal that the residents of Bogotá, whatever the neighborhood or their social affiliation, know and have made this story theirs, showing a shared culture of urban actions and projects. They all recall the memory of Bogotá before all of these actions, and the story they make largely corroborates the official discourse, one example is a public space regained for all. These urban transformations are "recognized" and in a way "adopted" by a large number of people. Nevertheless, they do not forget to point at a set of what we might call situated controversies (activities and people's mobility, beginning of gentrification, difficulty of maintaining a public policy for all, etc.).
- **International media and planners around the world** take up this story of a rapid and spectacular transformation, usually without discussing, moderating or even updating it.

While the current transformations of Bogotá come in recent years under another public policy, the official as well as the ambient discourse remains the same. Today it tends to disconnect from reality, be independent and at the international level become legend.

Regarding this global urban story, self-governing itself more and more and having impact today internationally, we are convinced that it is important to return to the people's narrations, to the daily-lived experiences of everyone and to field observations in order to anchor the real. And this is not to contradict the public story of this transformation, nor to show today weaknesses of its evolution, but rather to show that the only way to regenerate itself is through relying on the social reality and the involvement of all concerned actors.

We are convinced of the importance of producing description based on the lived experience and observation, not as a continuous tale, but as a mosaic of sensations, stories, performances, observations, reflections, according to the experienced reality of all. Collecting, creating and sharing these elements is considered a part of public life and therefore a part of the new projects.

Capturing and listening to real situations and its narrations (through walks, interviews, observations, pictures, sounds, videos, etc.) is not in itself sociological expedition, detached reports or even the paradigm by which one can understand a global situation. These recordings of reality and its stories are meant to be the first concrete evidences of a complex, varied and evolving urban situation in order to enable the sharing of stories for the very transformation of this reality – or at least enable to put it into debate.

## 2 - Situated controversies

We think the “recovered space” policy (sitio recuperado) initially undertaken in Bogota can be understood in three ways:

- **statutorily recovered spaces** to actually make them really public and accessible to all; reducing illegal privatization as well as too obvious forms of permanent appropriation, in particular toward street vending.
- **spaces that physically recover** through “fitness/reshaping” (almost medical metaphor): transformations at a curettage level, innovative renovation, daily care of their sustenance;
- **spaces where one socially recovers**, for anyone who spends a moment there, using them as back step place, for a break, a mini-activity, enabling to distance oneself from a sometimes exhausting city; these spaces are also used to recover

“Recovered” spaces, as the Jimenez avenue, the Tercer Milenio Park and the El Tintal library with its neighborhood, are not free from controversies<sup>86</sup>. Most often absent from the great public narration or media coverage, it is important to note that these controversies do not affect the interest toward the achieved transformations. On the contrary, they show the need to update today this urban story, most of all according to social issues.

The world of “before” resurfaces in an impressive way. If the public story has shown the tenacity, variety and invention of the numerous urban projects, it has at the same time blown away the very conditions of their implementation: destruction of a neighborhood, displacement of population, removal of markets and peddling allowance, etc. And as a matter of course, poverty has often only moved to the next neighborhood, drugs dealers have gone a little further, street vendors have invested other places. Citizens remember. They know or wonder, for example, where the ghosts have gone (as some used to call the Cartucho inhabitants). If they are concerned about what people have become, they also show fear of their coming back too numerous. They talk about the trashes in the soil that resurface everywhere in El Tintal library district and recall the former dump, etc.

Here and as too often elsewhere as well, all renovation activity goes through the removal or displacement of the former uses, as through a new social order organization (reinforced surveillance, codified activities). People talk about it but do not necessarily deeply criticize the transformations because they most often appreciate the projects. Nevertheless, they worry about the evolution, talk about future projects in these renovated neighborhoods that aren't meant for them, about a

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<sup>86</sup> With the expression “situated controversies”, we adjust the idea developed by Bruno Latour of scientific controversies. For us, it is about controversies as dialogue taking place between local and global issues. But unlike for scientific controversies, we think that with an object as the urban, the controversies need to be located, and therefore incarnated, so that they can be productive and not only rhetorical. LATOUR Bruno. (1991). *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes. Essai d'anthropologie symétrique*, Ed. de La Découverte.

growing gentrification and about the danger of an even huger evacuation of social diversity.

These different points show a current tendency to reduce certain sharing of public space. A gap is growing between the public story that mostly remains the one of the first mandates and the actual resident's stories as they perceive the evolutions. Here again, the sharing of narrations, the reactivation of located controversies would enable us to know how to pursue these urban transformations today for the benefit of all.

We remain convinced that a living together in the city is possible only if there is dialogue between different stories, without negating controversies but on the contrary accepting them in the debate. Therefore, we need to take down and update a bunch of elements out of the knowledge of places and experiences. The sharing of this knowledge only can breed a new collective reality. We can not for long impose a story that is only built from the outside and that gradually disconnects from the real situations of everyone. A shared story owes to mostly build on what exists and what every one is willing to bear.

This forceful relationship has been found in Bogotá. But it is not given once and for ever, it is something that is continuously built upon the risk of losing it.

By the sharing of stories, it isn't about making Bogotá change, but about letting every one change Bogotá<sup>87</sup>.

### 3 - Urban transects

To cross stories and corpus, we propose in this research a transect of multimedia nature<sup>88</sup>. It allows the connection of various types of data along different urban sections : inhabitants and users tellings, photographs, videographic sequences, soundscape extracts, but also analysis features from the literature study and interviews with experts.

The representation method that we develop to make a synthesis of the bibliographic research and the "in situ" work is a "transect". It is an imaginary line that will define a section of the city linking our located study cases: public spaces, public transports, and cultural equipments.

At the territorial scale the section is recently, and has usually been, the representation method used by geologists, geographers and landscape designers. At the beginning of the 20th century the Scottish urban planner Patrick Geddes had underlined the "synoptic" potential of the section, its capacity to reveal the relations

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<sup>87</sup> Adapted from the conclusion of KRACAUER Siegfried. (1930 – reed. 2004). *Les employés, aperçus de l'Allemagne nouvelle*. Paris. Ed. De la maison des sciences de l'homme & Ed. Avinus.

<sup>88</sup> Transect developed with Java application, - readable with an internet browser.

linking human collective lives to physical geographic frames. His use of the section aimed also to put together different disciplinary perspectives in one visual representation.

Because of that and since the same time, there has been a link between the graphic and cultural conventions of the architectural section and those of the “transect”, which is used in the field of human geography and social sciences. The use of the famous “valley section” (conceived by Patrick Geddes fifty years earlier and inspired from the geographic studies of Humboldt) by Team X opens new possibilities of hybridization of these two representation methods to serve the urban and architectural project. It is a representation method which has been until now under developed.

It is the metonymical potential of the section that allows inscribing in filigree the narrations as well as the “atmosphere” perceptions in a static and graphic representation. The section does not imply a predominant discipline nor exhaustively collected data for a case study. On the contrary it selects everything that appears on its way and creates, precisely, the meeting point between architectural, social and sensitive dimensions; between the public sphere and the private sphere, between built and mobile. It can even allow a reading of the historic stratum and of the programmed partitions.

However, the section is not often used at the urban scale. It’s potential as a representation and a design tool is still to be developed (or to re-developed) for the city and the metropolis, particularly regarding the contemporary social and environmental issues.

For geographers, the word « transect » refers to a site observation tool or a space representation through a section in the vertical dimension in order to show a superposition, a space succession or the relations between different phenomena. Thus a “transect” is not only a method of graphic representation; it can be a path in the space. But in opposition to the “flâneur” attitude, the one who operates a “transect” knows he must make intrusions, transverses, over lines. It is a section that differs from the clinical one in the sense that it involves the body of the viewer itself.

For us the urban « transect » is an observation tool, located between the technical section and the sensitive trajectory. Action as well as meeting place, the “transect” uses the technical representation of the sections and of the trajectory in order to hybridize them; it is conceived “in situ” as well as through drawing.

Including atmospheric dimensions to the architectural representations, making possible the inclusion of narrations, the “transect” is for us a promising tool for representing the sensitive space and the daily practices, for analysis and conception.

The tool outlined here could also be repeatedly the scene of urban narrations where located controversies can be expressed, updated and discussed.





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## **VI - Annexes**

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DVD Sound Sequences Contents

DVD Videographic Sequences Contents