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Perti/enencia and Public Space: A Politics of Relevance,
Ownership and Belonging in the Historic/Traditional Center of
Bogotá, Colombia

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MRes in Urban Research

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Abstract

This thesis explores how ‘public space’ has become both a site in which, and a process through which, new forms of democracy are being negotiated in Bogotá, Colombia. This city has been cited as a ‘global best practice’ example of urban governance and planning for the way that it combined decentralization processes with a public space development paradigm in order to democratize the city institutionally and spatially. Public space was used as both an actual, physical site for democratizing the city and its citizens, and as a symbol for a new, more democratic urban order at the same time as new participatory mechanisms were being employed by the municipal government. Yet research on the public space miracle has tended to focus on how physical public space projects have had the effect of democratizing the city, while failing to fully explore the ways in which the emphasis on public space and participation in Bogotá’s new planning paradigm created more democratic planning and governance *processes*. This is the gap that this thesis seeks to address, drawing on long-term ethnographic research into participatory public space planning processes to add a procedural dimension to the topographical understanding of the role ‘public space’ has played in Bogotá’s ongoing transformation. Through four case studies that explore how different citizen groups and state entities are involved in public space planning and recovery efforts entailed in a new Revitalization Plan for the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá, I show how discourses of public space and participation combine to produce competing understandings of ownership, relevance and belonging – a complex politics that I call *perti/enencia*. *Perti/enencia* acts as a grounded theoretical framework for a dual relational analysis: exploring the relationship between physical public space and political public spheres *within* local contexts (i.e. at the neighborhood scale), and exploring how this relationship is affected by broader negotiations *between* these and broader local and extralocal contexts. By demonstrating the simultaneously democratizing and disempowering ways in which public space and participation are being used to renegotiate the parameters of collective relevance, ownership, and belonging in the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá, I develop an empirically informed framework that contributes to our broader understanding of how local histories and necessities interact with outside interests and knowledge to dynamically alter identities and power relations in ways that offer key insights into the pluralistic nature of contemporary democracy.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Printed Name: Erich Hellmer

Signature: _____

Chapter 1: Introduction

I walked into the Journalists' Park (El Parque de los Periodistas) late in the morning on June 10, 2016. It was a bright, sunny day, and the park was swarming with activity. Blue jackets emblazoned with the slogan 'A Better Bogotá for All' (Bogotá Mejor Para Todos) were everywhere. This was the slogan of mayor Enrique Peñalosa's new development plan for the city, and the light blue windbreaker jackets had become the standard uniform for government workers – particularly when they were out and about working with citizens. Today was just such an occasion – the 11th anniversary of the city celebrating the 'Global Day of the Citizen' – a day which the city government had decided to use as a reason for organizing massive public space recovery efforts across the Historic/Traditional Center.¹ Today, in neighborhoods all across Bogotá's Historic/Traditional Center, volunteers from seven major Colombian and/or international corporations² were joining forces with workers from a number of city government agencies to clean, paint and repair various parts of public space in an effort to both improve these spaces and develop a better kind of proactive citizenship amongst Bogotá's residents. As Enrique Peñalosa himself put it,

Every day we are working to have a decent public space so that all citizens alike can walk in peace and enjoy the city. Activities such as today, where 2,500 volunteers from these private companies united to recover and beautify the public space, demonstrate the commitment of citizens and that more and more assume to have a city for all and demonstrate with effective acts the affection that we have towards the city (COLMEX Media Center, 2017)

The idea behind events like this, which were a key part of mayor Peñalosa's urban development efforts, was to produce better public spaces and better publics at the same time. Joining private citizens and companies together with government workers to recover public space was meant to generate a citizenry that – literally from the ground up – could take on social and physical problems in public space to make a better city for all. In a country that has experienced plenty of division, it was about forming alliances and partnerships and building a new city through these. As Ricardo Naya, president of CEMEX, put it,

¹ Sometimes 'Historic Center' and 'Traditional Center' are used interchangeably, although they can refer to slightly different things and choosing to use one over the other may carry certain implications. 'Historic Center', for instance, can refer just to the Candelaria – the main tourist district and home to key national government buildings. Meanwhile, 'Traditional Center' can be used to talk about poorer parts of the fringe areas surrounding this. I choose to use Historic/Traditional Center because my research includes both. See pages 64-69 for more on the Historic/Traditional Center.

² Citi Bank, Bavaria, CEMEX, Coca-Cola, FEMSA, Gas Natural Fenosa, Telefónica and Terpel

We are building a citizenship. We are entrepreneurs committed to local governments and their processes. We are a neighbor who can be part of a change and a difference when we work together, and above all when we make tripartite alliances where we all contribute and also win (*ibid*)

Yet on the morning of June 10th, as I stood in the center of the Journalists' Park amidst dozens of blue jackets and white t-shirts with the Citi Bank logo on them, I did not know any of this.

The day before, Lirian – the leader of a local citizen group dedicated to caring for this park – had invited me to take part in a community public space recovery day. She did not offer much information, but I had come to the park expecting to find Lirian and other members of the Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas (Neighbors of the Journalists' Park) working with a few government employees on minor public space recovery efforts. Instead, I found cameras, trucks, even a small orchestra setting up for a concert in the middle of the park, and, of course, an army of ‘volunteers’.

I approached a small display being managed by a few young people in blue jackets. There was a large piece of paper clipped to the display that asked people to write what they liked and disliked about the public spaces in the city center. The people in blue jackets turned out to be employees of IDPAC (Instituto Distrital de Participación y Acción Comunal, or District Institute of Participation and Community Action). They were flagging down passersby, and trying to get them to ‘participate’ in their little project. I spoke with two of them for a while, and added my own opinions to the sheet upon their request. I also explained my own project, and we chatted for a while about issues of public space and participation. They offered me their phone numbers and said they would be happy to meet later for a more in-depth conversation.

After chatting with some other people from the IDPAC’s press office, I began to notice there weren’t any familiar faces around. I did not see Lirian, or Oscar, or any of the other members of the Vecinos. I made my way around the park, trying to think of what to do. There were just swarms of government officials running around. Everyone seemed to be involved in trying to organize something, talking amongst themselves in small groups. I decided to escape the sun for a minute, and get a coffee across the street.

Inside the coffee shop, I encountered a group of people in Citi Bank t-shirts who explained to me the actual nature of the day – that instead of this being a local community public space recovery effort, all the volunteers were either Citi employees, or their friends/family members that they had invited along. Rather disappointed, I finished my coffee, and decided to go back out and talk to some more people. Walking back through the park, I watched as volunteers cleaned garbage out of the canal in the middle of the pedestrianized Jimenez Avenue, scraped flyers off of light posts, and painted over graffiti on benches, and I started to think about how today shed light on the ambiguous uses and definitions of the word ‘community’. Before continuing interviews, I paused to ponder what it meant that a ‘community’ of volunteers from private corporations and government organizations were the key players in this event for recovering ‘public space’ – asking myself what this said about the ‘public’ *for whom* these ‘public spaces’ were being recuperated, and *by which* the spaces were being produced as ‘public’.

These are not insignificant questions to be asked regarding the city of Bogotá – a city that has been celebrated in recent decades for a ‘miraculous’ transformation that has, according to some, been driven by developments (discursive and physical) relating to ‘public space’. Bogotá – after decades of suffering from a range of social, political, economic and infrastructural problems – had emerged at the beginning of the 21st century as a ‘global best practice’ city because of the way it had combined public space expansion and reclamation efforts with efforts to install a better kind of citizen culture, thereby symbiotically creating a more democratic city. Citizens were supposed to be actively involved in making their city more democratic by taking part in the planning and maintenance of its public spaces, and by how they interacted with one another in these new and improved places. They were meant to be producing a more democratic urban order through social processes and new, stronger place relations. Yet on this day, as I sat and watched this discourse turn to practice in front of my eyes, I could not ignore the fact that the ‘citizens’ that were ‘participating’ in the production of this new democratic order did not include the group of local residents who had actively been fighting to defend this public space from unwanted developments for years. In the months I was to spend working with groups like Lirian’s, this had become a recurrent theme: the paradoxical convergence of discursively promoting a more bottom-up planning and development paradigm with a greater emphasis on empowering the public sphere, and actual practices of ‘participation’ that excluded citizens for whom certain city spaces were most relevant or important. This is the paradox around which I develop the theory of *perti/enencia* – a politics of relevance,

ownership and belonging in the new urban revitalization paradigm in Bogotá's Historic/Traditional Center.

1.1 Overview of the Problem

Post-modern theories of urban planning have increasingly promoted concepts of relational space alongside normative calls for an expanded, more equitable ‘right to the city’. The two converge around the idea of space being *socially produced*, or an expression of convergent urban imaginaries (those based on abstract technical plans and/or on everyday lived spatial experiences) combining to produce physical urban forms that also alter underlying socioeconomic/sociopolitical power dynamics. These are ‘post-modern’ insofar as they respond to high-modernism’s emphasis on a strict spatial determinacy, and top-down centralized planning structures, which have been criticized for enhancing exclusionary urban spaces and decision-making processes, despite professed attempts to make cities more ‘open’ and ‘public’. The ‘open’ modern city was the city of cars and malls, and of large-scale displacements by urban renewal projects – spaces and processes that excluded the city’s poorest residents. The idea of ‘right to the city’, therefore (along with similar post-modern, post-structuralist critiques), sees new forms of emergent/processual sociospatial power relations as the key to challenging these exclusionary dynamics.

The core principle of a ‘right to the city’ kind of relational geography theory is that citizens, rather than city planners, are the true ‘makers’ (or ‘producers’) of ‘the city’. As an extension of this, citizen empowerment through more and different forms of ‘participation’ has become a ubiquitous discourse and praxis in models of planning based on relational space theories, wherein citizens are purportedly encouraged and empowered to impart their experiential forms of knowledge on plans and developments that seek to enhance, rather than alter, the human-space relations that make certain locales meaning-filled ‘places’. This is where relational theory converges with theories of the public space.

As lines between physical and social dimensions are blurred, definitions of ‘public space’ have naturally been challenged. As a *socially produced* phenomenon, ‘the public space’ is defined as a site of active public participation, coterminous, essentially, with ‘the public sphere’. Here, one’s right to ‘the city’ is about *the right to participate in decision-making processes* as part of a democratic collective, as well as to producing the city as an everyday

lived experience through rights of access to urban spaces and institutions. These alternatively represent ‘procedural’ and ‘topographical’ approaches to public space (cf. Iveson, 2007), and act as good representations of how relational theories have been applied to develop a more nuanced understanding of urban publicness. This has made research on public space issues a particularly good arena for exploring the changing practices and theories of urbanism more broadly.

Yet critics have pointed out that these two groups of theories (procedural and topographical) tend to be divergent rather than mutually supportive, as researchers tend to focus on one dimension or the other when analyzing empirical case studies of public space (cf. Iveson, 2007; Low, 2015; Low and Smith, 2006). Much of the literature still focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of *topographical* public space. These include promoting the democratic value of public space as a space for protest (cf. Irázabal, 2008), or acting as a site for establishing a cosmopolitan micro-politics of every day interactions to promote the experience and acceptance of difference (cf. Lees, 2004). Yet there is another group of literature that supports a more *procedural* approach, focusing on the emergent nature of publics as spheres of social influence, and argues that *any* kind of space (virtual, private, etc.) can act as an equally good platform for this (cf. Cornwall and Coelho, 2007). A gap exists in urban theory, therefore, surrounding the relational definition of the spatiality of the public sphere and the public space. Questions arise as to the causal relationship between these two (i.e. questions over whether space is a better influencer than spheres when it comes to making a better, more equitable urban society).

Bridging this gap is becoming more crucial as measurable shifts in human socio-spatial relations are taking place at the hands of changing technologies (of governance, communication, transportation, production, etc.) and ideologies (of capitalism’s emancipatory potential in particular). As theorists have grappled with the existence and definition of a neoliberalizing, globalizing world order (cf. Escobar, 2001; Ferguson, 1992; Sklair, 1999) empirical case studies of actually existing neoliberalisms (Brenner and Theodore, 2002) have become helpful with understanding the ways in which local and extra-local relations affect measurable changes to the political economy. In this, cities have become increasingly important places for researching new processes of creating social, economic and political order at different scales (cf. Yeoh, 1999), as urbanization rates continue to increase globally, establishing a cycle for reinforcing the political and economic importance of cities. Latin America in particular has become an interesting region in which to examine the effects of this.

In Latin America, a Third Wave of democratization has accompanied, or been driven by, a wave of (post)neoliberal reforms (cf. Eckstein, 2006; Roberts and Portes, 2006) that involve key changes to the conceptual and practical contours of ‘public space’ and ‘public spheres’. Coupled with rapid and dramatic urbanization, the region has been defined by a series of post-crisis and post-authoritarian states where ‘democratization’ has become homologous with forms of decentralization – a technology of governance that seeks to both localize decision-making (especially at the level of the municipality) and legitimize national governments that have had authoritarian, clientelistic reputations (cf. Cameron et al., 2012). This has had the effect of producing greater emphasis on citizen participation (i.e. more participatory, direct forms of democracy) as well as more equitable spatial development practices, much of which has played out at the level of, or within spaces of, the city (cf. Goldfrank, 2011).

In many cases, this has entailed discursive attention being focused on reforming urban public spaces in a putative attempt to improve quality of life (especially for poor citizens), but also to demonstrate state authority, and create more ordered forms of harmonious relations between urban residents through types of citizen education (cf. Berney, 2011, 2017; Galvis, 2013; Nuijten et al., 2012). At the same time, many of these attempts to reform public space have also been seen as detrimental to a long-standing history of a strong public space culture in Latin America (cf. Goldstein, 2004). As planning models based on commercialization and privatization have been imported from places like North America, along with discourses of ‘public space’, they have decreased public space’s democratic nature (cf. Low, 2000).

Latin American cities have, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, dually combined forms of modernist planning and forms of post-modern human, cultural and relational geography, and a wide variety of citizen-centered top-down and bottom-up discourses and practices of democratization, into new, experimental paradigms of urbanism focused on ‘the public space’. In effect, ‘public space’ in Latin America has become both a key site for democratic reforms (as a physical space), and a central discourse involved in organizing a wide range of political, economic, social and cultural activities under the aegis of ‘participatory democracy’ (cf. Holston, 2009). Certain cities stand out as prominent examples of this, one of which is Bogotá, Colombia.

As alluded to above, Bogotá was hailed as an ‘urban miracle’ (cf. Berney, 2011; Gutiérrez et al., 2012) for its dramatic transformation in the 1990s and early 2000s, riding a wave of success that was developed through, or at least made visible in, an expanded and reclaimed public space. Yet as I’ll show, despite a great deal of attention being paid to the physical, topographical forms of public space in this process, and despite overt discourses of ‘participation’, less analytical attention has been paid to procedural forms of public space (i.e. political spaces where citizens dictate decision-making processes). This thesis, then, seeks to build on previous research efforts to develop a more fully hybrid topographical/procedural understanding of the role public space has played in Bogotá’s transformation through an ethnography of participatory processes that pertain to public space planning, recovery and maintenance efforts. In other words, this thesis seeks to explore how ‘public space’ is made ‘public’ in actual instances where Bogotanos engage in planning, maintenance, governance and development processes that have to do with urban space.

In so doing, I develop a theory of *perti/enencia*, which I put forward as a key conceptual metaphor to understand the nature of publicness in an emergent system of decentralized democracy and planning where publics have gained greater access, at least in legal principle, to decision making processes and to a more open, ‘public’ topographical city. This is a portmanteau term derived from the closely related Spanish vernacular words *pertenencia*, meaning both ‘belonging to’ and ‘ownership of’, and *pertinencia*, meaning ‘relevance for’. This term is put forward as a means to conceptualize the underlying dynamics determining how the city is (or in some cases is not) envisioned and developed in more deeply democratic ways (i.e. the complex ways that collective and particularistic interests are being pursued by the various actors involved). Where citizen actors organize around a politics of *perti/enencia*, they do so by establishing a shared sense of place attachment based on reassessments of shared cultural and historical roots. From this more unified position, they seek to negotiate interests around constitutionally established principles of shared rights and responsibilities in such a way that they constantly reformulate a/the ‘public space’ as both a site of democracy, and a process of democratization.

This process is particularly prominent in the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá, as various strategic development plans over the years have made this the focus of urban renewal/regeneration/revitalization efforts around which a broader city transformation can take shape. The Historic/Traditional Center has experienced a pronounced decline (in

residential numbers, land values and reputation), making it a key target for rebuilding efforts. In particular, ‘revitalization’ has become a notion that promotes a politics of *perti/enencia* in that it seeks to guarantee a kind of *permanencia* (‘permanence’) for local residents, small businesses and the cultural activities that these entail. This has become the basis of a shared sense of *pertinencia* around which a politics of *pertenencia* can be formed (i.e. a politics where citizens take ownership of planning, maintaining and policing their own public space). In the next section, I elaborate on this.

1.2 The Politics of Perti/enencia: Procedural Dimensions of the Public Space in Bogotá, Colombia

‘We see the city as a specific space for research on heritage values, where citizens are the ones who can identify and characterize value based on their own everyday experiences, or the common patterns of construction and appropriation of those values. Re-signifying the territory implies, in this way, constructing an ethics of pertinencia through promoting a memory-city relationship’. (IDPC, 2015: 92, author’s translation)

‘If it costs you nothing, you feel nothing. But if it costs you, if you build it, if you have to produce it...now you feel a sentido de pertenencia (Ana Yolanda Cañon, Director of the Office of Citizen Participation and Anti-Corruption, IDPC, interview, 10/29/15)

The first quote here summarizes how *pertinencia* features in the current revitalization paradigm for Bogotá’s Historic/Traditional Center. In a 2015 report on the progress of the Revitalization Plan published by the IDPC,³ a declaration is made that states the government is committed to ‘re-signifying’ the city center through a citizen-centered process where cultural values are constructed/re-appropriated by citizens based on what *they feel is relevant* to their daily lives, and how this reflects their personal experience of the city (what the quote calls a ‘memory-city’ relationship, or what others simply call *memoria*). Here, *pertinencia* (relevance) is the basis of an urban planning politics that seeks to build the memories, or lived experiences, of local citizens into plans and development outcomes (i.e. into processes and spaces) by celebrating their everyday activities as forms of ‘living’ and ‘intangible’ culture. This is an empowering politics in that it seeks to allow citizens to make ‘endogenous’, or emic plans and developments that more directly reflect their interests, and is particularly important to residents of the

³ Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural, or District Institute for Cultural Heritage, the entity in charge of leading efforts of cultural preservation, and subsequently the organization leading revitalization efforts in the Historic/Traditional Center (albeit with a number of other planning and development agencies).

Historic/Traditional Center who are largely from lower socioeconomic classes, and have traditionally been displaced by large-scale renewal projects in the city center.

The second of the two above quotes describes the other core principle in the *perti/enencia* portmanteau: the push for establishing a greater *sentido de pertenencia* (a ‘sense of *pertenencia*’) amongst the city’s inhabitants in order to create a better socio-spatial dynamic. *Pertenencia* is dually defined as someone *having ownership of* something, and as a person *belonging to* something (i.e. some type of collective or group). Although the differences between these definitions are subtle, they are nevertheless significant, at least insofar as deconstructing them helps us understand the complexities of relational public space in contemporary planning processes in Bogotá. For example, approaching *pertenencia* as ‘belonging to’ captures issues and practices related to formulating a sense of ‘community’, or coming together as a ‘public’, as well as a feeling of belonging (safety, comfort, happiness) within a certain place. These are desired *outcomes*. Approaching *pertenencia* as ‘ownership of’, alternatively, encapsulates issues of controlling access to space, as well as a growing rhetoric of *taking responsibility for* developing and maintaining physical public space. These can be processes that either promote, or discourage, the desired outcome of a city with a convivial sense of belonging based on a unified sense of relevance.

As Ana Yolanda’s quote suggests, *pertenencia* has most prominently been used in planning and development discourses as a means for encouraging citizens to form a relationship, or bond, with their city through active engagement with one’s urban environment (i.e. making a sense of belonging by taking ownership of responsibility). If public space can be promoted as a stage upon which citizen culture can be cultivated through every day interactions, it can also be promoted as a process of relationship forming – not just with others (as theories promoting the cosmopolitan power of the ‘encounter’ suggest), but with the space itself. *Pertenencia* is the dual process of signifying public space as ‘public’ by fostering a relationship with it through improvement efforts, and developing an identity of ‘public participant’ through the same (i.e. ‘the public space’ is being produced as a topographical location and as an emergent public sphere of active individuals). The outcome, it is hoped, is a more responsible and cohesive urban public ready and willing to defend and care for their physical city. Yet this drive for establishing *pertenencia* has enigmatically been pursued by decidedly top-down, expert-led, ‘pedagogical’ means (cf. Berney, 2010, 2011, 2017). This raises a key question: whose

interests are being served in these processes? For whom are these relations and procedures relevant?

The result is a paradoxical, unresolved tension between *pertenencia* (ownership/belonging) and *pertinencia* (relevance) in the public space of Bogotá. The former has become a ubiquitous (if not ambiguous) discourse of civic responsibility based on a hegemonic understanding of order, whereas the latter has largely remained an illusive goal of giving citizens greater power to guide planning efforts and avoid displacement. This paradox is, as my research shows, established and negotiated in the procedural public space *in relation to* idealized visions for topographical public space.

Here, citizens, with the help of government initiatives, tried to develop an emic sense of *pertinencia* for local places and cultural processes as a means for establishing a greater sense of *pertenencia* that would establish citizen-led efforts to improve local territories, and protect the newly unified community of relevance against powerful outside forces. This is a politics of *perti/enencia* that creates a sense of belonging based on a bottom-up system of socially produced space (i.e. one reflecting ‘right to the city’ theories). However, as my research shows, the government and a core of community ‘leaders’ sometimes demanded that citizens develop a greater sense of *pertenencia* (ownership, here meaning a greater sense of responsibility) a means for establishing a public order that would encourage growth and development – ultimately creating new spaces that would be defined by a different kind of *pertinencia* (relevance), derived from a different kind of resident public, and which would generate a very different kind of ‘belonging’.

This is the paradox that exists at the core of participatory public space planning politics in Bogotá, and is what I heuristically describe as a politics of ‘*perti/enencia*’. In this thesis, I use this paradox to explore how citizens in different parts of the Historic/Traditional Center organize around urban plans and developments to formulate nascent public spheres, and produce the public city through their actions in and with local public spaces.

1.3 Overview of the thesis

The first chapter following this introduction reviews the concepts and theories that form the ontological and epistemological basis of this thesis⁴. In particular, I explore how ‘public space’ was imagined in both the high-modernist planning paradigm, and post-modern theories of relational space. I look at how socially produced space has expanded the traditionally topographic understanding of ‘public space’, and how relational space has also helped break down inapt dichotomies of public and private in the city. Additionally, I look at debates over ‘participatory planning’, and how these reflect different normative models of ‘the public sphere’. I compare collaborative and agonistic forms of deliberation, and look at how these can constitute different forms of procedural public space, while also discussing how different perspectives on these issues arise from different contexts internationally.

As de Sousa Santos writes in his critical expose on the utility of the public sphere (as an explanatory concept) to the contexts of the Global South,

If the epistemological diversity of the world is to be accounted for, other theories must be developed and anchored in other epistemologies – the epistemologies of the South that adequately account for the realities of the Global South (2012: 43)

Yet disentangling the epistemologies and theories of any discernably distinct context in a globalized world is always a difficult challenge, particularly when dealing with contexts that have long histories of colonial rule. The point is that the public sphere is, in theory, meant to shift the balance of power between the government and the governed. In post-colonial contexts, however, this power shift is less easily discernable. Yet as de Sousa Santos notes, this means neither ‘dumping all this rich tradition into the dustbin of history’, nor ‘ignoring the historical possibilities for social emancipation of Western modernity’ (2012: 46). Thus de Sousa Santos asserts that a kind of double movement is required to unpack the validity of ‘public spheres’ as a conceptual framework used to analyze Global South contexts: a deconstructive movement designed to identify the Eurocentric elements of theories/epistemologies inherited through histories of colonialism (and reproduced by forms of neocolonialism); and a reconstructive movement that identifies and builds on historical and social legacies that predate, cut through, and extend beyond these colonial pasts.

⁴ Here, ‘epistemology’ refers to the ‘nature of knowledge and how it can be acquired’, and ‘ontology’ means ‘the nature of the social world and what can be known about it’ (Snape and Spencer, 2003: 1).

I argue that part of this disentanglement requires a critical deconstruction of broader debates on the relationship between public sphere and public space, which in of itself is part of a larger debate on drawing functional and conceptual lines between public and private. This is the primary goal of the literature review chapter: to delve into the key debates (most of which are derived from the Global North) surrounding public vs. private, and the relationship between (or rather, the relationally defined parameters of) public spaces and public spheres. Building on the historical developments identified in the context chapter, the case studies and grounded theory of *perti/enencia* that follow are meant to act as a kind of reconstructive movement that builds a dually relational perspective on public space and publics (as topographical/procedural and local/extralocal networks).

Chapter 3 provides contextual information about Bogota, linking this to the theoretical literature reviewed in chapter two. I discuss how public space was used as both a topographic site for increased citizen interaction, and a means for establishing a better procedural publicness (an effort encapsulated by programs of ‘citizen culture’). I contextualize this ‘miraculous’ transformation by looking at broader shifts in the institutions and principles of governance and planning in Bogotá, and how efforts to expand decentralization have enacted a kind of ‘populist neoliberal’ form of governance. The goal of this chapter is to show how what certain authors refer to as an ‘urban miracle’ (cf. Gilbert, 2006), or Bogotá’s dramatic reductions in violence and dramatic increases in positive governmental measures (i.e. finances, development projects, corruption levels), were related to ‘public space’ as part of a system of ‘pedagogical urbanism’ (Berney, 2011, 2017), and show how a gap exists in the literature regarding procedural aspects of public space.

Chapter 4 outlines my methodological approach. Here, I explain why ethnography was chosen as my methodology, and describe how I ‘chose’ my case studies through a reflective process of ‘resonance’. I briefly explain the different types of research methods used, and the various research ‘sites’ where I used these. I describe how my methods relate to my findings and analysis, and also reflexively consider the limits of my research and my own positionality.

The first of my empirical chapters, Chapter 5, explores how a new Revitalization Plan, managed by the District Institute for Cultural Heritage (IDPC), sought to create a model of urban revitalization (rather than renewal) in the historic center of Bogota based on an expanded understanding of *permanencia* (‘permanence’). This was the idea that residents

and businesses shouldn't be displaced by redevelopment efforts. The IDPC's Revitalization Plan sought to make various types of 'living cultural heritage' (and the residents that produced these) permanent fixtures in the Historic/Traditional Center. Through programs celebrating forms of tangible and intangible heritage, the goal was to establish a shared sense of history amongst local residents to promote a stronger sense of community, and place attachment. This new found feeling of relevance (*pertinencia*) would then be turned into a stronger sense of ownership and belonging (*pertenencia*) through cultural events, products and physical public space recovery efforts in neighborhoods of the Historic/Traditional Center.

These are meant to represent exemplary cases of how *perti/enencia* works as a right to the city-like urban planning and development paradigm. Here, local forms of knowledge are being used (with government support) to create a planning/development platform, a stronger sense of community and place attachment, and a more empowered public sphere capable of managing their own neighborhood. Yet these cases also demonstrate some of the key challenges to a paradigm of planning and development based on *perti/enencia* and public space: namely, that establishing a shared sense of *pertinencia* (relevance) amongst the broader community was not a simple task (it usually came down to a few 'key actors', or local community leaders), and also how contingent the successes of these processes are on the amount and type of government resources committed to them.

Yet if this ownership/belonging paradigm proved challenging within relatively homogeneous sectors of the city, with relatively homogeneous 'publics' (homogeneous in the sense of being residential neighborhoods composed largely of those with the same socioeconomic background), then in parts of the city with a greater mixture of uses and users (i.e. a topographical public realm with a more heterogeneous public), combining *pertinencia* (relevance) and *pertenencia* (ownership/belonging) to enhance right to the city was considerably more difficult. This is the type of context explored in Chapter 6, which looks at the case of the Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas (Neighbors of the Journalists' Park).

The Parque de los Periodistas is a large, open public space adjacent to the Avenida Jimenez, or Eje Ambiental, one of the historic center's most iconic public spaces. Located near a cluster of private universities, in between major transportation hubs, at the edge of the city's primary tourism district, and near a large number of national and municipal government agencies, this area sees over a million visitors passing through it each day.

Meanwhile, the population of local residents is quite small, numbering in the thousands⁵. This imbalance is amplified by the fact that many ‘traditional’ residents in the area (those that have been in the area for decades, even generations) are low- to lower-middle-income families, while the daily visitors (what some residents refer to as the *población flotante*, or ‘floating population’) are frequently middle- to upper-income individuals that live in the city’s wealthier northern sector.

Chapter 6 explores how the tourists, workers and students that flood the area every day and leave every night were seen by local residents as lacking an appropriate sense of *pertinencia* (i.e. a true appreciation for the heritage value of the neighborhood), which they thought translated into a lack of *pertenencia* (or a lack of respect). *Flotantes* were subsequently seen by residents as the primary source of problems in the neighborhood, such as drugs, begging, muggings, graffiti and littering. The argument residents made was that this population ‘used’ the center, as opposed to ‘living’ it, which made their sense of place attachment weak, or based on a different set of priorities. The residents, therefore, wanted to teach these *flotantes* about the cultural heritage value of these spaces, and develop a kind of co-responsibility with them, to make the Historic/Traditional Center a more convivial space. Yet because of simple numbers (i.e. there are more *flotantes* with more money), the public spaces of the area were increasingly being designed and managed with the *pertinencia* of the visiting population in mind (rather than of the local ‘resident’ population), which created conflicts of interest that made collectivizing across the boundaries that separated these groups a difficult task. Furthermore, because the *flotantes* were often associated with powerful institutions (like private universities), this entailed a power imbalance.

I explore the dynamics surrounding this principle/organizing concept of ‘co-responsibility’ through a specific example: the Germania Para Todos project. This was a participatory planning effort organized by a non-profit foundation called Soy+Ciudad, and graduate students studying urban planning at a local private university, to jointly renovate a small neighborhood park along with local residents. Residents were invited to come and impart their local understanding/knowledge on the plans and the final project outcome, with the idea being that the park would be designed with their interests in mind, and that the design process would bring students and residents closer together. This would be an ideal form of *perti/enencia* as a form of ‘co-responsibility’ – where two different interest groups (with

⁵ Compared to Bogotá’s overall population, around 8 million.

their separate senses of *pertinencia*) would come together to form a public sphere that would take collective ownership of managing this new public space (a combined *pertenencia*). However, in the participatory planning efforts that ensued, the different interests of these groups, and the different positions of power that they held over public space appropriations and planning, became readily apparent, and a politics of *perti/enencia* failed to come together.

Finally, in Chapter 7, I explore an even more complex case study of the politics of *perti/enencia*: the case of los Amigos de la Plaza España (Friends of Plaza España). Plaza España is Bogotá's largest open-air plaza, and is located in the locality of Los Mártires. Despite its size, Plaza España has largely languished in relative insignificance, at least compared to other large plazas in the Historic/Traditional center. It cannot match the political/cultural significance of the Plaza de Bolívar, for example (which is flanked by the National Capital, Palace of Justice, city hall and the city's cathedral). While Plaza de Bolívar is a popular tourist destination, Plaza España (and the surrounding neighborhoods of Los Mártires) has long been seen as a place of urban decline, insecurity and poverty – strongly associated with the infamous neighborhood called El Bronx, which was one of the city's most notorious areas for street-level drug sales and gang activity, and home to a large population of hundreds of homeless. This would begin to change in May of 2016, however, as a massive force of police and social workers entered El Bronx, and cleared it of its 'residents' – a move which was shortly followed by the bulldozing of the neighborhood's buildings. Following the Bronx operation, Plaza España became a refuge for a large population of displaced homeless people, and became an emblem of public space problems in the Historic/Traditional Center. It also, however, became emblematic of citizen-centered efforts to reclaim and improve the public spaces of the city.

I track the maneuverings of the Amigos group, which, like the Vecinos, were organized in defense of a public space. I explore its internal organizational dynamics as well as how the group interacted with government agencies/officials. As development interest in the area grew, the Amigos tried to organize around efforts to establish 'cultural offerings' as a means for transforming the image of the Plaza España, and generate a more amicable sense of *pertinencia* for this public space. In pursuit of this new image, they also sought to 'institutionalize' local business practices (which were often associated with illegality and informality). However, because of the wider range of actors and interests involved in these processes, the group struggled to formulate a coherent sense of 'community' – a problem they attempted to solve by adopting a consensus-based, collaborative politics that

ultimately made their interests more open to cooptation by powerful forces like the municipal government. Here, the politics of *perti/enencia* became inverted – going from a bottom-up planning and development paradigm based on right to the city principles of socially produced space, to a top-down pedagogical effort of teaching citizens how they should use public space in order to reproduce a new urban order designed by experts in the municipal administration. However, we also see here how this inversion was itself – to some degree – inverted, or how citizens coopted the pedagogical model to teach themselves how to fight for their interests in the sphere of planning and development. It is, in other words, a case that exemplifies both the empowering/emancipating potential of a politics of *perti/enencia*, and the potential for this politics to serve as a discursive means for reproducing hegemonic power relations.

Combined, these case studies develop a grounded theory of *perti/enencia* to show how in the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá, an emphasis on retaining endogenous forms of knowledge, culture and local actors has produced a discourse pushing for plans based on emic sense of *relevance*, and how this is meant to act as the foundation for building a greater sense of *ownership* (i.e. responsibility) amongst citizens such that a more universally amicable sense of *belonging* can be attained. The problems and potentials entailed in the processes of negotiating this new politics are indicative of a need to pay greater attention to procedural aspects of public space, and critically analyze rhetorical allusions to expanding ‘right to the city’.

Chapter 2: Theory

While persisting as one of the key terms of urban geographical and sociological studies across several decades, ‘public space’ remains a notoriously difficult concept to define and put to work. (Vigneswaran, et al., 2017: 496).

This statement, brief as it may be, reveals a lot about ‘public space’ in contemporary social theory and planning practice. That public space is both difficult to ‘define’ and ‘put to work’ demonstrates how public space is both a concept, and a practiced/lived phenomenon. As a concept, it is far more than a simple topographical feature, representing many aspects of how societies organize themselves (spatially, socially, politically, culturally). Yet insofar as it *is* (to some degree) always tied up in topographical space, it also entails day-to-day practices of sociospatial interaction, which are frequently far from the ideals encapsulated in the *concept* of public space. In this sense, people dream of better cities through the lens of ‘public space’ because they live much of their everyday lives (the good and the bad) in various interactive spaces of the city described as ‘public’. However, ‘public space’ is also a ‘key term’ because it is used by powerful actors (the state, private developers) as a discourse promoting greater democracy and higher quality of life, even if in practice it entails greater measures of exclusion and unequal access.

This thesis seeks to contribute to evolving debates over the various natures and potentials of ‘public space’ as it is imagined and practiced in a specific place. Here, I explore the debates underlying a shift in public space thinking that has taken place in recent decades. I begin by depolarizing the relationship between ‘public’ and ‘private’. Increasingly, our world is understood (and designed) as one of overlaps and mixtures rather than firm distinctions.

Next, I address another dualism/overlap debate: that of ‘public spheres’ and ‘public spaces’. To contextualize these, I begin by exploring the paradigm shifts that surround them. In the case of ‘public space’, this means understanding the rise of pluralistic, relational geography that accompanied an explosion of post-modern theories. High modernism (exemplified by Haussmannization, and CIAM, or Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne, doctrine) sought a totalistic, top-down approach to reordering urban space and society to make it more ‘public’. The abject failures of these methods produced responses that sought social and spatial orders derived from below – bottom-up approaches that sought to exploit meaningful relations rather than create them.

This trend is mirrored in shifting theories of the ‘public sphere’. If high modernism was defined by attempts to order urban space and society under a single overarching technical strategy, then a correlate is found in certain theories of the public sphere (c.f. Habermas, 1991) that promoted the bracketing of difference to create a unitary, conflict-free public sphere. Theories that challenge this singular version/vision of ‘the public sphere’ are more relationally based, much like the post-structural geography theories that challenge high modernism’s vision of public space. I address this by discussing different understandings of participatory models of democracy, and how different ideas of the public sphere relate to different concepts of the role civil society plays in contemporary democracy.

The point of these discussions is to demonstrate the need for a more holistic, multi-dimensional approach to understanding how ‘publicness’ relates to the organization of urban societies and spaces. As I show below, and in the following chapters, a more grounded approach to understanding these issues is needed if theory and practice truly want to embrace relational, bottom-up power relations and systems of order.

2.1 Public vs. Private: A (Fallacious?) ‘Grand Dichotomy’

As Alan Wolfe writes: ‘in modern society, no boundary seems quite as important, yet quite as porous and ambiguous, as the one between public and private’ (1997: 187). Everyday usages and understandings of what are categorically ‘public’ and ‘private’ often complicate attempts at reflexively and critically analyzing the underlying, definitive aspects of these categories. This is further complicated by a longstanding view that the world is becoming more ‘private’ in a ‘late capitalist’, or ‘neoliberalized’ world (cf. Banerjee, 2001; Habermas, 1991; Kohn, 2004; Mitchell, 1995; Sennett, 1976).

As Sheller and Urry (2003) note, this trend is perhaps best exemplified by the works of Habermas (1992) and Sennett (1976), who proposed a decline in public life based on something like a Weberian slippage from *gemeinschaft* into *gesellschaft* due to the pressures of modern capitalism (what Habermas calls the ‘polarization of the social sphere and the intimate sphere’, or what Sennett dubs *The Fall of Public Man*). This concept is also, however, strongly established in Arendt’s (1958) foundational conceptualization of ‘the rise of the social’, and the decline of the *vita activa* in modern society, and was even a foundational tenet of CIAM high modernist planning (Holston, 1989). These are all based

on a narrative of decline: that the individual, and society in general, have suffered from the failures of liberal, capitalist democracies, and that the political and market spheres have combined to make the world more ‘private’.

One problem here, as authors such as Sheller and Urry (2003) have pointed out, is rooted in the fact that this assumption depends on universally applicable definitions of ‘public’ and ‘private’. We need, these authors argue, more dynamic categories to understand the complexities of publicness and privateness in a changing world.

Wolfe offers one way to do this with his ‘trichotomy’ (*sic*) of ‘public’, ‘private’ and ‘distinct publics’, where

There is a *private* sector in which we appropriately judge behavior by whether it maximizes individual freedom or self-interest; a *public* sector in which we make decisions that are meant to apply equally to everyone in the society (even as we recognize the near impossibility of doing this); and a realm of *distinct publics*. These publics - by which I mean...communities of interest, identity and belief - are on the one hand collective: they are guided by shared norms, can impose sanctions on members, and try to perpetuate themselves as groups at the cost of overriding individual preferences. But - hence the plural - such publics are not authoritative for the entire society; there are too many of them. It is for this reason that they are, on the other hand, partially private: they can protect individual members against intrusive state intervention from outside, express particularistic rather than universalistic needs, and allow the individual members within the group to develop their personal identities (and self-confidence) more fully. (Wolfe, 1997: 197, original italics)

Parkinson argues along similar lines when he offers a four-fold definition of ‘public space’. Parkinson suggests a space can be ‘public’ if it possesses AT LEAST one of the following characteristics (even if it doesn’t meet all the other criteria):

1. It is openly accessible, and/or
2. It uses common resources, and/or
3. It has common effects, and/or
4. It is used for the performance of public roles (2012: 69)

A place, space, event, or entity can be somewhat public and somewhat private by possessing some, but not all, of these characteristics. As Weintraub puts it, the public/private distinction is ‘not unitary, but protean’, or ‘not a single paired opposition, but a complex family of them, neither mutually reducible nor wholly unrelated’ (1997: 2).

This results in categories such as ‘public space’ and ‘public sphere’ being dealt with not as ‘static’ categories, but rather dynamic, interactive expressions of a hybrid public/private social world. In other words, ‘any discussion of public and private should begin by recognizing, and trying to clarify, the multiple and ambiguous character of its subject matter. To bring some intelligible order into the discussion, its complexity needs to be acknowledged, and the roots of this complexity need to be elucidated’ (Weintraub, 1997: 3). Benn and Gaus propose this can be done by looking at grounded social realities, specifically ‘the ways in which the categories of public and private regulate a people's institutions, practices, activities and aspirations’ (1983: 5). The ‘categories of public and private’, they argue, can be read by looking at what they determine to be ‘probably universal’ categories of social organization: access, agency and interest.

‘Access’ they subdivide into four categories: physical access (i.e. access to places and spaces); access to activities and intercourse (i.e. access to what's going on in a given place or space); access to information; and access to resources. This is a particularly relevant dimension to the public space/public sphere debates, as I will discuss later, because of how topographical and procedural proponents tend to preference either physical access, or access to activities and intercourse. ‘Agency’ comes down to an agent's ability to act, and on whose behalf. ‘Interest’, alternatively, is about whether, how, and to what extent something works to one's advantage or disadvantage. For instance, a private business' interests might be to benefit shareholders, or directors. By contrast, a public entity's interest is supposed to be that of ‘any or every member of the community or to the state considered as a *res publica*’ (Benn and Gaus, 1983: 10).

Measuring publicness and privateness as expressions of various dimensions, or attributes, that exist along a *continuum*, helps to avoid a common error identified by Weintraub: the tendency to see any public/private distinction as *either*: (1) What is hidden or withdrawn versus what is open, revealed or accessible; or (2) what is individual, or pertains only to an individual, versus what is collective, or affects the interests of a collectivity of individuals (1997: 5).

These theories provide a comprehensive base upon which to build an epistemology for studying ‘public space’: one based on the recognition that public/private distinctions are made by agents, in relation to access, and in pursuit of certain interests in a variety of ways across different contexts. We should avoid over-simplifying, and curtail our tendency to

use only one defining criteria, opting instead to look at as many aspects of public and private as possible in how publicness is imagined and practiced in specific contexts.

To understand the importance of this, it is beneficial to delve into the historical roots of public/private distinctions in the literature on urban planning and democratic governance. Two key (interrelated) transitions have taken place. The first is the ‘Spatial Turn’, a movement in social theory that has pushed geographic thinking to the fore (cf. Warf and Arias, 2009), and transformed it from a strict science of things in space to a phenomenological philosophy of emergent relationality. Space, it is increasingly accepted, is produced, and in turn a force that reproduces social relations. This has had obvious implications for urban planning (where spatial theory meets everyday spatial encounter).

Another transition has taken place emphasizing more direct forms of democracy. If the ‘Spatial Turn’ marks a postmodern transition away from high modernist principles of strict, expert-led city models of dividing public and private *space* (i.e. aspects dictating ‘access’, or ‘visibility’), then theories pushing for more localized, citizen-centered forms of democratic decision-making in the public *sphere* are the source of opportunities for understanding how different forms of negotiating other types of access, interests and agency. This has direct implications for urban planning theory and practice, and the theorization/praxis of publicness, as theories and debates revolving around the ‘public sphere’ have been translated into practices of ‘participatory planning’, and a number of movements responding to this.

2.2 The dialectic of the public city, and city publics: The politics of (relational) public space and participatory planning

A strict public/private dichotomy was essential to high modernist planning, which is most often associated with Le Corbusier and the Internationalists (i.e. CIAM). High modernism is defined as a ‘rational design of social order’ that was born of Enlightenment principles and the industrialization of production (Scott, 2016: 77). Here, a powerful central authority (the nation state) was propped up by a modern, technically proficient bureaucracy to plan and order society through physical development projects as well as political, institutional reforms. It was a top-down project of physical and social engineering.

Scott (1998) uses the apt analogy of forest management to represent high modernism's combined goal of physical and social engineering. Belief in science – of the power of rationalism to solve problems – drove processes of ordering forests into more productive, efficient territories, all of which depended on *homogenization*, or making things uniform (i.e. certain trees were more profitable than others, and these were singularly grown in uniform patterns). In the human social world, this was mirrored by increasingly simplified categorizations of populations (age, sex, class, religion, nationality, etc.), which in turn drove simplified processes of mapping out solutions. Insofar as identities were crafted and cultivated by a rationalizing discourse of a powerful state, people were not much different than trees, or any other kind of object, which could be improved (through an increasingly homogenizing order) by technology and rationality. ‘Society became an object that the state might manage and transform with a view toward perfecting it’ (Scott, 2016: 79). Indeed, the very invention, or ‘discovery’, of ‘society’ was itself the key to the whole modernist project, such that space and society were being co-created so that ‘every nook and cranny of the social order might be improved upon’ (Scott, 2016: 80). ‘Social engineering’ became a practice of ordering every aspect of life, from diet, to physical appearance and judgments of physical health, to defining people’s identities (black, white, indigent, mentally ill, woman, gay man, etc.).

The planning of cities is the best correlate for Scott’s forest management analogy. Exemplified by Le Corbusier and CIAM, the high modernist ideal of order and rationality was consolidated in the idea of ‘total city planning’ (Scott, 1998). *The Radiant City* became the model of modern, rational planning throughout the world (even if it was rarely applied in full, at least at scale, with exceptions like Brasilia). Here, ‘formal, geometric simplicity’ and functional segregation of land uses were the physical manifestations of formal order that functioned as *pre-conditions* for social order (Scott, 1998: 106). Straight lines, and strict land-use zoning practices would produce a better, happier, more modern (urban) society.

The roots of modernist planning can to some extent be traced to the ‘Haussmannization’ of Paris. This term (coined in the 1920s) refers to Baron Georges-Eugéne Haussmann’s redevelopment plans for Paris during the Second French Empire. Haussmann’s vision was to ‘open up the cramped medieval city to a streamlined, rational network of wide boulevards’ (Marcus, 2001: 728). This ‘opening up’ of the city center meant massive, comprehensive redevelopments centered around new wide avenues, and a series of monumental plazas, parks and green spaces (Jordan, 1995; Rodgers, 2012). Thus,

'Haussmannization' is a term that refers to the kind of modern urban planning that many (especially in the US) are familiar with: broad city streets laid out on a grid pattern. On the other hand, the term 'Haussmannization' has broadly come to mean (especially for critics) 'urban renewal by demolition' (Jordan, 2014: 88). It serves as an example of how infrastructure can function as both an instrumental and intrinsic form of urban oppression – a form of 'infrastructural violence' that subjugates citizens, particularly of poor neighborhoods (Rodgers, 2012: 1).

As this suggests, modern urban renewal projects, beginning with, Haussmannization, were largely efforts to change 'the city' (as a holistic, dynamic space and social order) through expanding and ordering 'public space', particularly to allow for the freer movement of people (Marcus, 2001). There was, however, always a dark side to this 'openness', and ease of movement, as the expanded boulevards were also easier to police and thus often more oppressive spaces. Yet the private and public realms were not, even from the beginning, so much diametrically opposed as they were mutually dependent elements in a system of (re)producing a capitalist urban society. The 'brilliance' of a Haussmannized urban order, as David Harvey (2006) explained, was not its complete reordering of space into two fixed categories of 'public' and 'private', but rather an *incomplete reformation of the relationship between public and private* which created a new social order of ill-defined boundaries. As Harvey notes, 'Haussmanization sought to orchestrate the private and public spaces of Paris in mutually supportive ways' (2006: 21). It became (as I'll discuss below) the basis for an all-encompassing urban 'spectacle'. This effort consisted of two key strategies. On one level, public developments were seen as an opportunity to 'prime the pump' of investments following a series of economic recessions. Second, at the level of the street, the new, more 'open' city center offered new opportunities for both direct and indirect forms of exclusion.

Direct exclusion was increased by means of increased policing, as 'the boulevards were everywhere used to penetrate and then colonize unfriendly territory in a generalized attempt to create spaces subservient to empire in both military and political economic terms' (Harvey, 2006: 30). More indirect exclusions were entailed in 'the spectacle', which Harvey defines as 'political pacification through consumption and arousal of erotic desire...to ensure capitalism's own survival' (ibid: 27). Production and consumption, as the organizing forces of order in the capitalist society, become self-promoting, self-reproducing discourses of power bordering on totalitarian forms of governance, where all

aspects of life become understood and defined in the image of capitalism. Public space became the stage for this, and a means for reproducing this new system of order.

This is what ‘total city planning’ means: creating a new physical and social order. This depends on clear distinctions (insofar as things either were, or weren’t, part of the new order), but also blurring the lines between ‘public space’ and ‘private property’. In fact, insofar as Haussmann’s reordering effectively reproduced the interdependency between public *space* and private *property*, it was actually part of the problem, according to CIAM doctrine, which took private property (and growth by real estate speculation) to be inimical to a good urban order based on greater equality. Capitalism had, according to CIAM high modernists, created socioeconomic chaos, and a lack of singular vision (a general public order), which effectively produced a chaotic landscape. This is where high modernists embraced the concept of ‘the city as a machine’. In order to maximize capitalism’s social benefits, the post-industrialized city needed to embrace the machine’s productive capacity and become one itself, only with perfectly ordered people functioning as cogs working together in a physically well-designed social system (Holston, 1989).

Modernists embraced the concept/process of *defamiliarization*, or ‘making the city strange’, to change expectations for, and understandings of, urban life. To break down the growing power of the private sphere (and its spatial correlate, private property), they sought to organize a unified urban vision through the ‘master plan’, and through more open architectural forms that erased private barriers.

First, *social institutions* (like property, residence, domestic organization, child and health care, and education) would be (re)invented. The objective would be ‘to restructure the institutional relationships between the public and the private domains of social life so that they are both entirely regulated by a comprehensive, state-sponsored master plan’. Once again, the point was to eliminate private property, and thus was seen as ‘a proposal for transforming the social structure of capitalist society itself. For as the master plan eliminates private property as an institutional basis of both domestic organization and public order, the old distinctions between the public and the private disappear’ (Holston, 1989: 55-56).

The second vehicle for change was architectural, which sought to build urban forms that negated representations of public and private. Holston uses the example of the glass façade to demonstrate this.

An all-glass facade exposes the private domain, previously concealed behind walls, to public scrutiny. Glass transparency dissolves an opposition between private and public and between inside and outside, which had in the past been fundamental to the concept of facade in the representation...by rendering [public and private] architecturally illegible, modernism sought to render them socially irrelevant. (Holston, 1989: 56)

By changing both social institutions, and physical urban forms, modernism sought to overturn the public/private divisions of the capitalist city, and ultimately 'produce both a new type of city and a new type of urban public for it in which such discriminations would disappear (Holston, 1989: 55). This, however, was far from what high modernism achieved.

What Holston observed in his study of the modernist city of Brasilia is that the *strategy* of defamiliarization entailed in the city master plan was actually inverted by a *process* of inhabitation. People actually constructing and inhabiting the city (as opposed to imagining it) enacted a kind of 'familiarization'. This entailed the construction of unplanned/informal urban spaces, and, within the planned spaces themselves, defamiliarization and spatial determinacy combined to inadvertently contravene the goals of openness and publicness in two key ways: through 'the death of the street' (which entailed an inversion of pre-modern public and private categories), and 'typologies of order, work and residence' (or the zoning of form and function).

'The street', here, was used to contrast 'the avenue' in a way that corresponds directly with Haussmann's vision for Paris. 'The street' represented 'a particular type of place and a domain of public life' where particular 'public displays and transactions of crowds' took place, or where 'the public sphere of civic life is both represented and constituted' (Holston, 1989: 101-102). Part of the problem with 'the street' (to high modernists) was that it was a space of/for a daily life defined by mixing and overlap, which defied modernism's vision of uniform order. Mixing businesses and apartments in small buildings adjacent to narrow streets meant private activities poured out into the street , affecting all aspects of daily life. To create a more ordered, and more *public* civil society, a different urban order was needed, which did not just mean widening and straightening roads, or creating glass facades, but also separating different land uses into different city zones: residential, recreational, industrial, political, etc.

The effect was not, however, the creation of a more active public that matched the ideal form of the urban space that had been laid out. Rather, quite the opposite effect was observed. The effect was the rise of a third type of social that was even more privatized than ‘the street’ had been by spillover from adjacent private spaces: a space known as the ‘elite space’. This was a sort of pseudo-public space, or public/private hybrid space of socialization, that was specifically designed to only be accessible by certain members of society – the epitome of which was the shopping mall.

The effect, Holston argues, was not just a functional segregation of shopping and living spaces, but also the stratification of shoppers and non-shoppers (i.e. the haves and have-nots). Malls became exclusive consumer spaces of the upper classes, where unwanted individuals could be excluded by private security or social stigma, and where sociability became increasingly about consumption. This enhanced, rather than counteracted, the privatization of society (Holston, 1989). This effect was reproduced in the closed-off communal green spaces of Superquadra: big apartment blocks built around courtyards, or interior green spaces that were for residents alone (*ibid*). The result, Holston argues, is that private, interior spaces were increasingly becoming the key places where any form of true, or ‘authentic’, social interactions took place. Therefore rather than dissolving the capitalist spectacle and its negative effects on modern society, high modernism was actually *reproducing* it.

A key reason for this failure, according to many post-modern theories, is because high modernism failed to fully appreciate the relational aspects of spatial planning and spatial uses, all of which was caught up in the ideal of the remote, expert planner in charge of a technical ‘master plan’, and a view of space as a canvas upon which experts could design a better social future. A flood of post-modern planning theories emerged in response, and they have embraced a more relational definition of space and urban planning. I explore some of these in the next section.

2.2.1 Relational (Agentic?) Space, and The Participatory Planning: Post-Modern Responses, and the rise of Procedural Public Space

One of the main responses to high modernism has been the growth of post-structural ‘relational space’ theories. These were theories organized in response to the idea of ‘absolute space’, or space that can be known *a priori*. This was based on Euclidean geometry, and a Cartesian dualism, spread through the ‘Enlightenment project’, that

depended on fixed three-dimensional space as a frame of reference within which we frame objects of perception (Davoudi and Strange, 2008). In relational geographies, ‘space is not a “container” for entities and processes; rather space is made by entities and processes. Moreover, these entities and processes combine in relations. Thus, space is made by relations. Space is relational’ (Murdoch, 2006: 21). Analyzing space, then, is not about space *per se*, but ‘the implications of these produced spaces on the dynamic processes of social, economic, and political relations’ (Dikeç, 2009: 79). Relational space is a kind of two-way street, whereby spaces are constructed, or otherwise manipulated by or implicated in, human social activities, which in turn shape the needs, desires and *processes* of/for that construction and manipulation. To use Harvey’s words, ‘social definitions of objective space and time are implicated in processes of social reproduction...space and time arise out of the world of social practices but then become a form of regulation of those practices (1996: 212).

Two key groups of theories here are Actor Network Theory (ANT), based on the work of Latour (cf. 2005a; 2005b), and ‘assemblage’, based on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1987). These theories hold that non-human ‘actants’ function basically as co-constituents in producing social life and the physical environments within which this occurs. ANT theorists argue that ‘the social *is nothing other than patterned networks of heterogeneous materials...* composed not only of people, but also of machines, animals, texts, money, architectures...The argument is that these various networks participate in the social. They shape it’ (Law, 1992: 381-382, original emphasis). Assemblage, meanwhile, takes relationality out of this neat pattern of networks, emphasizing emergence, multiplicity, indeterminacy or fractured constellation of heterogeneous parts that ‘are not fully determined by their position within a relational configuration’ (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011: 125-126). Both represent a kind of ‘hybrid geography’ that is ‘concerned with studying the *living* rather than abstract spaces of social life, configured by numerous, interconnected agents – variously composed of biological, mechanical and habitual properties and collective capacities – within which people are differently and plurally articulated’ (Whatmore, 1999: 26).

One way of understanding how identities and social positions are established in these living spaces is through the notion of *backgrounds*. This emphasizes how meaning and signification are created through action and interaction rather than symbols (Anderson and Harrison, 2010). They argue that human subjects are ‘primarily derived in *practice*’ (Thrift, 1996: 9) – specifically practices that are shaped by ‘latent worlds’ established

through routine events and things ‘we constantly come across’ (Thrift, 2008: 19). Space, then, can be taken as a physical register of human activity, but also as a force that (in turn) shapes it through processes of embodiment: a ‘background’ imposing itself on daily social life in a doubly unconscious way (i.e. *it* is not conscious, and we are not *necessarily* conscious of its impact). This helps show how power structures become permanences in both the social and physical realms, exerting themselves through unconscious reproduction in geographical history laid down as backgrounds.

Not all socio-spatial relations, however, are defined by unconscious ‘backgrounds’. Explicit attempts are constantly being made at developing meaningful relationships with space. It is in these purposeful engagements with the built environment that ‘space’ becomes ‘place’, with ‘place’, being a ‘phenomenological understanding’ of ‘coming together in space’ (Agnew, 2011: 317), or are ‘spaces which people have *made* meaningful’ (Cresswell, 2004: 7, emphasis added). As Relph describes it:

Places are not abstractions or concepts, but are directly experienced phenomena of the lived-world and hence are full with meanings, with real objects, and with ongoing activities. They are important sources of individual and communal identity, and are often profound centers of human existence to which people have deep emotional and psychological ties. (in Larice and Macdonald, 2013: 727-728)

Place is a locational and phenomenological discourse, or both *a part of* and *more than* topographic space. It is both representational, and non-representational. It is the product of both concerted effort, and a force that exerts itself on social actors in unconscious ways.

This is a key part of Lefebvre’s theory of socially produced space, corresponding specifically to the concept of ‘lived space’. Lefebvre argues that all socially produced space is comprised of three essential parts: ‘representations of space’, ‘spatial practice’, and ‘spaces of representation’ (1991). Representational space is the dominant form of space in the modern city. It is the abstract space of scientists and planners, and akin to spaces of Debord’s (2005) ‘spectacle’. In contrast, ‘representations of space’ (or ‘lived space’) is the everyday spaces of inhabitants and users, or space made and/or represented by those who occupy it. Representations of space are ‘lived’ in two key senses: They are derived from the everyday creative practices of urban inhabitants, who literally produce ‘the city’ as a collective effect of their daily activities; and they are a collective reflection of inhabitants, and creative productions from this reflection, what Lefebvre inclusively calls the *oeuvre*. Spatial practice (or ‘perceived space’), finally, is like the glue that binds

the other two dimensions together – something like backgrounds, or a pre-cognitive system of reproduction that puts the other two kinds of spatial dimensions to work (Watkins, 2005).

The difference between representational space and lived space depends on how these modes of spatial production relate to power, as emphasized by de Certeau, who notes that these different spatial processes reflect different *types* of power, explored through the concepts of ‘strategy’ and ‘tactics’, and their corresponding agents, ‘voyeurs’ and ‘walkers’. This conceives of two different, overlapping spaces in the city, or variant forms of producing and experiencing the same city, by ‘voyeuristic’ practices of expert-led planning and governance on the one hand, and the ‘everyday’ experiences of the city on the other (de Certeau, 1984). Whereas the planner employs ‘strategy’ by *seeing*, the practice of the ‘ordinary practitioner’ is the quintessential, ‘elementary form’ of experiencing ‘the city’: *walking*. Walkers ‘compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other’ (*ibid*: 93). Thus, de Certeau’s *Walking in the City* illuminates ‘a particular relationship between space and power’ (Secor, 2004: 360): divided between ‘writing the city through the optics of control’ (Crang, 2000: 312), and ‘alternative narratives and maps based on wandering’ an extension/re-invention of Benjamin’s *flânerie* (Mbembe and Nuttall, 2004: 361). It is as though ‘the city’ is a story, but one being told in different versions by a vast number of narrators, who alternatively ‘emplot’ themselves (Read, 2012: 87) into the narrative weave of its discursive and geographic space through the ‘rhythms’ of their daily practices. On the other hand, they are subjected to the ‘persuasive storytelling’ of governments and planners who have the power to selectively determine the validity of the city’s stories (Throgmorton, 2003).

The embrace of the liberating potential of ‘walkers’ and ‘lived space’ – consolidated into a movement celebrating the extraordinary potential of ‘the ordinary’ and the ‘everyday’ – is driven by a discontent with elitist architectural designs for the city, and the ways in which this supposedly commercializes and economizes culture. The response has been to take a more dynamic approach to space and place that combines its strategic and tactical processes of production, adopting something like Foucault’s notion of ‘heterotopias’ (cf. Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008). Based on the assumption that power is diffuse and active, rather than discretely located, Foucault identified spaces that defied the overarching spatial order (the ‘strategic’ spaces) as ‘heterotopias’. Heterotopias are attempts to reclaim, or

establish, places of otherness, or places that challenge the overarching ‘spectacle’ of representational space (cf. Dehaene and De Cauter, 2008). However, rather than being simple sites of resistance against this overarching spatial order, these smaller spaces were sites that produced their own ordering power, whether or not they did anything to disrupt hegemonic spatial norms (Tonkiss, 2005). In other words, alternative orders *can be*, but *are not necessarily*, less oppressive or exploitative than the hegemonic form.

So what can theories of relational space ultimately do to inform research on public space? First, these theories contribute to a more *procedural* understanding of space. If space is produced by social processes, then understanding the different meanings associated with space more broadly, or specific places, demands an understanding of broader social processes surrounding the production of these. Second, and more importantly, the postmodern recognition of relational space, or space that is socially produced, demands that we accept no singular source of oppressive power (i.e. the power to dictate inclusion and exclusion, agency and submission), but rather that productive, diffuse power regulates a variety of spaces in a variety of ways. In a heterotopic landscape, ordering systems of socio-spatial relations overlap to both challenge and prop-up institutionalized power. This relational understanding of the world demands that we look at local and alternative examples (such as those arising from cities in the Global South) to understand much broader power dynamics. Third, and building on the second point, the implications of this are that ‘if space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production’, or ‘the “object” of interest must be expected to shift from things in space to the actual production of space’ (Lefebvre, 1991: 36-37). We must, in other words, construct theories based on processes rather than outcomes.

A post-structural, relational politics and geography are often fused together in the notion of ‘right to the city’, as originally developed by Lefebvre (1996). To Lefebvre, a science of *the city* had been propped up by planners and urban researchers alike who accepted the city as a clearly coherent, already existing object that could be manipulated as easily as it could be studied. Against this, he cast a theory of *urban society* as an *oeuvre* – a process of working rather than a product of work. Here, ‘the city’ is representative of a ‘virtual object’, whereas ‘the urban’ is a way of life, a social force, a process based on everyday lived realities. This formed the basis for Lefebvre’s proposed planning system, which sought to embrace and reproduce ‘the urban’ rather than inventing ‘the city’, a type of combined planning/inhabitation praxis, or a ‘way of living in the city and the development of the urban on this basis’ (1996: 155). To Lefebvre, a ‘right to urban life’ formed the basis

of a normatively better (more democratic, liberating) planning and development regime in that ‘urban life’ was itself a mixed, heterogeneous *experience*, which when mapped out onto the topography of ‘the city’, would expand the inherently inclusive nature of urban spaces and societies.

Importantly, as Mitchell points out, this planning paradigm makes the city ‘a work in which all its citizens participate’, or that ‘the city as a work’, as an *oeuvre*, is actually based on the struggle between different groups of people as they live their lives (2003: 17-18). ‘Right to the city’, then, is the right to be part of urban publicness, or participate in the public sphere, an innate and positive right that forms ‘the city’ in a truly democratic way. In a way, then, Lefebvre’s is a city made by and or through ‘public space’.

This, in a Lefebvrian theory, is the problem with the high modernist city: in its attempts to destroy privacy and promote publicness, it actually destroys the mechanism of the *oeuvre* – the true source of publicness. As spaces are increasingly planned *for* people rather than produced *by* people, the *oeuvre* becomes increasingly alienated from urban life, thus diminishing people’s most fundamental right: the ‘right to the city’. As Harvey writes about ‘right to the city’, ‘the definition of the right is itself an object of struggle, and that struggle has to proceed concomitantly with the struggle to materialize it’ (2012: xv). Or as Mitchell puts it, ‘social justice, rights and their relationship to urban space...are not determined in the abstract, but rather in practice’ (2003: 6).

Translated from theory to praxis, this ideal has contributed to a wide range of active forms of participatory planning paradigms. The participatory planning movement is a field of theories and practices broadly interested in shifting away from positivism, and towards philosophies and policies encompassing issues of discourse and inclusiveness (Fainstein, 2000). It expands the critique of modernism from failed *spaces* to faulty *processes*. Planning has increasingly become a practice that explicitly seeks to bridge ‘strategic’ and ‘tactical’ modes of sociospatial production. This has entailed not only a shift in the way the sociospatial dynamics of ‘the city’ have been imagined and practiced, but also in the ways in which ‘the planner’ as a functionary has been defined. Indeed, the notion of the ‘strategic planner’ has become largely transformed by a collaborative planning model that sees the planner’s role increasingly as ‘mediating between stakeholders’ (Fainstein, 2000: 452), or, as in the case of insurgent planning, removing the figure of ‘the planner’ (i.e. a specific actor) entirely and emphasizing the action of *planning* as a set of value-based, redistributive practices (Miraftab, 2009; 2016).

Modernism attempted to holistically reshape the social world. It was not just an attempt to make the space of the city more public, but an attempt to change the public that inhabited it, as well. Postmodern ‘right to the city’ responses are equally holistic. They seek to not only transform the space of the city (with certain social and economic goals in mind), but also to transform urban society (i.e. social, political and economic institutions). In some cases, this can be seen as simply an inversion of the idealized transformational process (i.e. from top-down to bottom-up). However, a true ‘right to the city’ paradigm, following Lefebvre’s triad, would entail a merger of top-down processes and lived, everyday processes in a realm of institutionalized spatial production practices. Here, in theory, the expert and the lived are mixed and negotiated (somehow) to produce the best possible city for all. This, however, obviously goes beyond the realm of architecture and design, and merges with politics. In relational space theories more broadly, ‘public space’ becomes less about space itself, and more about practices and processes of the public sphere, taken as the defining aspects of what make a space ‘public’. This realization necessitates a deeper look at what is meant by ‘public sphere’ – the issue I turn to next.

2.3 The Public Sphere: Realm of Communicative Rationality, or Arena of Agonistic Competition?

One of the keys to understanding the contemporary world is to grasp the dynamic relationship between dominant and counter public spheres. (Fenton and Downey, 2003: 17)

As the opening quote states, grasping ‘public spheres’ is key to understanding contemporary politics. ‘Publics have become an essential fact of the social landscape, and yet it would tax our understanding to say exactly what they are’ (Warner, 2002: 49). It has become almost a ‘God-term’ in democratic theories (Gitlin, 2002: 168), denoting an essential part of civil society, which itself is accepted as one of the three key pillars of modern democracy: civil society, the State and the market (Calhoun, 1992).

Its functional definition is (in principle) simple. ‘The public sphere’ is ‘a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk’ (Fraser, 1990: 57), or

the space of communication of ideas and projects that emerge from society and are addressed to the decision makers in the institutions of society...it is the space where

people come together as citizens and articulate their autonomous views to influence the political institutions of society. (Castells, 2008: 78)

But it is precisely in the act of ‘influencing the political institutions of society’ that the public sphere becomes complicated. The ‘scaling up’ of decision-making from sphere to state (or having decisions made at the level of the public sphere institutionalized as part of governmental mandate) is a difficult thing to put into practice (Avritzer, 2002). Certain things are required to make this happen, as Gitlin describes:

If the State is to be the instrument of the public good, the public must first be sovereign and capable of ascertaining its good, so that the State may belong to the public and act accordingly. Toward this end, the public needs *access* to information about matters of public moment; it needs *rights* of political organization, speech and assembly; it needs *deliberation*. (Gitlin, 2002: 168, original emphasis)

The form of deliberation needed, however, is less clear, as we see with debates over the work of Habermas.

Habermas has been a (if not the) key contributor to theories of the ‘public sphere’. Habermas’ conceptualization of the public sphere is based on his theory of ‘communicative rationality’, which essentially held that ‘reason alone has authority’ (Negt and Kluge, 1993: 9), and that what constitutes reason is established through processes of *communicative action* with other rational beings (Habermas, 1984). Therefore, despite the individual being the basic building block of an empowered public sphere, an ‘isolated existence’, or ‘individualistic’ one, was secondary to a ‘connection with all others who think, with the community of rational individuals’ (Negt and Kluge, 1993: 9). Rationality, established through acts of communication, was the source of power for the public sphere, established in its ability to connect, or integrate individual elements into an overarching social order.

This depended on Habermas’ idea of the ‘life world’ as the principle explanation for social organization. Basically, to Habermas, a kind of collective phenomenological ‘background’ knowledge exists in societies that individuals can draw upon. However, it is through *interacting* (specifically, through interacting via acts of communication) that individuals can reach mutual understandings, such that social groups are organized and reinforced, and made capable of reproducing their group knowledge, through individuals. As he puts it, ‘under the functional aspect of *reaching understanding* communicative action serves the transmission and renewal of cultural knowledge; under the aspect of *coordinating action*, it

serves social integration and the establishment of group solidarity; under the aspect of *socialization*, it serves the formation of personal identities' (1984: xxiv-xxv). To Habermas, then, 'public space' is a discursive space of developing collective understanding, or a process where individuals involved in coordinated acts of 'reaching understanding' produce a public space. In this sense, 'publicity refers neither to a function nor to the content of opinion or expression, but to the social space generated in communicative action', wherein 'associational life is the material from which public spheres emerge' (Young, 2000: 170).

Habermas' work has acted as a base upon which (and an oppositional framework against which) many contemporary theories of the public sphere have been built (Kramer, 1992). Many critiques of Habermas' public sphere theory tend to focus on the problem of *access*, 'because if democracy requires deliberation, then equal access to the terms of deliberation becomes central to the entry of persons into the social world of democracy' (Gitlin, 2002: 168). While Habermas saw the public sphere as 'guaranteeing access to all citizens' (1974: 49), 'in practice, universal access to and equality within the public sphere were undermined by exclusions, mainly concerning gender and class' (Picatto, 2010: 169). This was because Habermas' theory of communicative action depended on the principle of 'bracketing', or on people entering the public sphere ignoring their differences in order to come to a consensus about important issues. Critics point out that bracketing cultural and social differences to reach consensus actually tends to reproduce hegemonic standards, particularly when culture enters the equation. As Fraser put it,

In stratified societies, unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles. The result is the development of powerful informal pressures that marginalize the contributions of members of subordinated groups both in everyday life contexts and in official public sphere. (Fraser, 1990: 64)

This is why critics like Young argue against Habermas, saying that 'democratic process ought to encourage and enable the organizing of multiple and contending discourses, forms of expression, and debates' (2000: 172; see also Fraser, 1990; Mahoney, et al., 2010a; Newman, 2006). These critiques emphasize the 'emergent' nature of public spheres, and thus their natural tendency to be 'played out around a number of different struggles' (Newman, 2006: 14), or defined by multiplicity and plurality (Mahoney et al., 2010a). Mahoney et al. argue this means focusing on how publics are formed by instances of 'claim making'. By focusing on claim-making, they argue, we can begin to see publics as 'assembled', as opposed to (or in addition to) being 'summoned', or formed as a kind of an

audience. They argue that rather than bracketing differences, we should explore what place difference should have in public life by ‘exploring empirically the difference that multiplicity and pluralism make in practice to how publics are formed and function’. Mahoney, et al. assert that thinking this way ultimately ‘opens up analyses of the multiple ways in which publicness is practiced or performed; the different affective and normative rationalities within which publics are constituted; the proliferating forms of mediation that shape the conditions of possibility for becoming publics; and the governmental processes that open up and close down spaces of emergence’ (2010b: 170-172).

Yet even if we embrace ‘emergence’ and ‘multiplicity’, and reject ‘bracketing’, another problem still exists with Habermas’ original formulation of the public sphere: its dependence on deliberation, or more specifically, the question of what kind of ‘deliberation’ is needed. Some theorists criticize the principle of collaboration and consensus as the ideal means of deliberation, often times channeling the work of Arendt (1958; 1973). To Arendt, public life revolved around *difference*, or that ‘being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position (Arendt, 1958: 57). As Young synopsizes,

For Arendt the public is not a comfortable place of conversation among those who share language, assumptions, and ways of looking at issues. Arendt conceives the public as a place of appearance where actors stand before others and are subject to mutual scrutiny and judgment from a plurality of perspectives. The public consists of multiple histories and perspectives relatively unfamiliar to one another, connected yet distant and irreducible to one another. A conception of publicity that requires its members to put aside their differences in order to uncover their common good destroys the very meaning of publicity because it aims to turn the many into one. (2000: 111)

This kind of thinking has been taken up by a number of theorists, who have produced a great number of alternative ways to imagine (or indeed replace) the concept of the ‘public sphere’, perhaps most notably, Fraser’s (1990) concept of ‘subaltern counter-publics’. Fraser bases this model on a critique of four assumptions made by Habermas: First, the ideal of ‘bracketing’; second, that a multiplicity of publics is somehow detrimental to democracy; third, the assumption that private issues and interests should be left out of the public sphere; and finally, that functioning public spheres require a separation between civil society and the state.

Fraser argues that the public realm must be understood in terms of struggle, or competition, on multiple levels, taking place both *within* individual public spheres

(‘intrapublic relations’), and *between* multiple public spheres (‘interpublic relations’). Through showing how emergent ‘publicness’ is an interaction of these dynamics, Fraser demonstrates how hegemonic public spheres are constantly being challenged by ‘subaltern’ fields of interests that, in being particularistic, provide a dynamic bridge between their underlying ‘public’ and ‘private’ natures (which are constantly being renegotiated from within). ‘Publicness’ is, in this understanding, a multi-tiered phenomenon that creates both unification, and separation, which is to say that publics possess a kind of ‘dual character’.

On the one hand, they function as spaces of withdrawal and regroupment; on the other hand, they also function as bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed toward wider publics. It is precisely in the dialectic between these two functions that their emancipatory potential resides. (Fraser, 1990: 68)

Fraser’s notion of ‘counter publics’ has influenced, or been mirrored by, a number of similar theories of decentralized democracy.

Guidry and Sawyer (2003: 273-274) outline a similar argument for an inside-out/bottom-up kind of democratization in their model of ‘contentious pluralism’. This consists of ‘marginalized groups [using] a variety of performative and subversive methods to uproot the public sphere from its exclusionary history as they imagine, on their own terms, democratic possibilities that did not previously exist’. Ultimately, it is argued that these ‘marginalized groups’ can ‘plant the seeds of a more egalitarian public politics in new times and places’. Or as Gitlin argues when developing a theory of public ‘sphericules’: ‘the unitary public sphere is weak, riddled with anxiety and self-doubt, but distinct communities of information and participation are multiplying, robust and brimming with self-confidence’ (2002: 170).

These debates surrounding the singularity of a/the ‘public sphere’, as well as on the deliberative mechanism for decision making behind this (collaboration/consensus vs. competition/agonism) have not only been academic. Put into practice, they have helped drive new practices pertaining to what can broadly be called ‘participatory planning’. These new forms of planning apply debates over communicative, or associational rationality versus ‘agonistic’ competition to real-world scenarios (i.e. remaking the built environment, and engaging actual human actors in these processes).

Forester (1982) was an early proponent of communicative/collaborative participatory planning – a consensus-based theory based on something like Habermas' communicative rationality. Recognizing that 'information is a source of power in the planning process', Forrester (1982: 67) argued that the aim in collaborative planning should be to create deliberative environments where citizens can be provided with technical and legal information, as well as provide a forum in which this information could be openly debated. To Forester, information was controlled by 'three faces of power', all of which could effect planners and citizens participating in planning processes:

1. Control over decision making;
2. Setting agendas (more subtle); and
3. The ability for institutions and actors to shape the felt needs and self-conceptions of citizens – a more insidious face of power (1982: 76)

In Forester's participatory planning theory, a more 'progressive' planner would have the job of 'anticipating' these forms of manipulation, and responding accordingly, by countering 'such dominating influence through a variety of informal, information brokering roles, keenly attuned to the timing of the planning process, its stages and procedures, and the interests and perceptions of the participants all along the way' (1982: 77). This depended on a fairly straightforward assumption that information could be exchanged between parties (developers, governments, planners, citizens) in rational, collaborative ways – much like in Habermas' notion of communicative action. As Fainstein puts it, 'within communicative theory, the planner's primary function is to listen to people's stories and assist in forging a consensus among differing viewpoints. Rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experiential learner, at most providing information to participants but primarily being sensitive to points of convergence' (Fainstein, 2000: 454).

This, like a Habermasian public sphere, depends on the ability of planners to 'bracket' differences, as well as 'naturalized' forms of instrumental power imbalances inherent in state and market structures (Huxley, 2000: 371). Thus, critics point out that 'while collaborative planning theory provides a worthwhile ideal, the assumptions of bracketing status difference, identifying common good and building consensus, problematize its application in real life' (Roy, 2015: 59). This is because collaborative/communicative planning 'operates poorly in situations of social and economic inequality' (Fainstein, 2016: 259). Roy argues, for example, that while collaborative planning *may* produce greater democracy, it is more likely that powerful, hegemonic forces (exercised by state and/or

market institutions involved in urban development) are *more likely* to ‘co-opt the high democratic principles of collaborative/communicative planning theory and nurture a post-political condition (2015: 59). This potential for cooptation has led some to claim participation is ‘the new tyranny’ (cf. Cook and Kothari, 2001).

This is because, as Flyvbjerg argues, ‘power defines what gets to count as knowledge’ (2002: 361). Like Forester, Flyvbjerg sees information and knowledge as central to the problem with modernist planning. Unlike Forester, however, he sees *rationality* as part of the problem, not the solution, arguing that ‘the normative emphasis on rationality leaves the modern project ignorant of how power works and therefore open to being dominated by power’ (2003: 325). Basically, as Mosse (2001) points out, the ‘people’s knowledge’ that is supposedly being included in participatory plans is itself created through the planning process, meaning it actually reflects and reproduces the social relations entailed in the planning system. Just like relying on a rationally designed model of the physical city ‘brackets’ types of social interaction by physically separating land use types, relying on a rational model of communicative planning that ‘brackets’ social and cultural differences can exacerbate the very problems that planners are trying to solve. All forms of knowledge become subordinated to what is defined as ‘rationality’ simply because the powers that be are the ones determining what counts as ‘rational’.

This leads Flyvbjerg to argue that in order to enable democratic thinking and the public sphere to make a real contribution to democratic planning and action, we have to tie them back to what they cannot accept in much of communicative planning theory: power, conflict, and partisanship. One must ‘become a partisan’, ‘face conflict’ and ‘exercise power’ to shift the balance between power and knowledge (2002: 361). This means embracing, rather than abandoning, cultural, racial, ethnic, gender and other types of differences when approaching the public sphere, and creating one’s own distinct interest group as a vehicle for contending with other interests (especially those in a dominant position relative to one’s own ‘partisan’ cause). However, as Sandercock (2016: 422) notes, some form of deliberation *is* still important to planning processes, and this should strive towards a kind of ‘common good’. The point that communicative/collaborative planning critics make is simply that these processes must be ‘agonistically constituted’, and embrace an ‘intercultural perspective’ that does more than simply accommodate differences. Through this, public spheres, or political communities of shared interests, can be formed around a ‘sense of belonging’, which will act as a driver for greater political commitment.

So what do these debates/perspectives have to do with this thesis, and questions about public space in Bogotá? If tensions persist in debates as to the role of architecture and design in altering the relational nature of public and private space, then debates over how public spheres should be organized and practiced in relation to one another and to powerful institutions of the state and the economy provide a sort of parallel. These have converged in debates relating to public space and ‘right to the city’, which grapple with the nature of democratic input into the processes of *producing* in addition to *conceptualizing* public space. Like with Lefebvre’s (1991; 1996) ‘right to the city’ arguments for spatial production, arguments for the political production of ‘emergent publics’ are increasingly about relational processes that promote bottom-up decision-making mechanisms, and, through these arguments for democratization and equality/equitability, this becomes more and more a process of fragmenting political action across a wider range of actors and scales.

In the final sections of this chapter, I turn to explorations of this in a more focused discussion on how public sphere theories (what might be called ‘procedural’ approaches to publicness) and public space theories (‘topographical’ approaches publicness) have been critically examined together in empirical research to provide a more grounded understanding of these concepts.

2.4 Topographical and Procedural Approaches to Public Space: Tying it All Together

“Public Space” envelops the palpable tension between place, experienced at all scales in daily life, and the seeming spacelessness of the Internet, popular opinion, and global institutions and economy. (Low and Smith, 2006: 3)

The spatial metaphor helps distinguish public discourse and expression not by content or import but as differently situated. (Young, 2000: 170-171)

Low and Smith (2006) argue that ‘public space’ and ‘public sphere’ tend to be examined divergently, rather than in overlapping ways. They argue a more unified, comprehensive research agenda is needed to ‘comprehend the ways in which social and political, and economic and cultural processes and relations make specific public places and landscapes, and the ways in which, in turn, these geographies reaffirm, contradict, or alter their constituent social and political relations’ (Low and Smith, 2006: 5).

Iveson (2007) makes a similar argument when he compares ‘topographical’ and ‘procedural’ approaches to public space. The first approach refers to public space definitions that ‘denote a particular kind of place in the city’, while the second defines public space as ‘any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate’ (Iveson, 2007: 3). For Iveson, as for Low and Smith, both topographical and procedural approaches offer contributions, but on their own, each is fraught with incomplete and/or inadequate concepts.

For topographical adherents, conceptual shortcomings are largely related to ‘a wide-spread concern that public spaces in contemporary cities are becoming more exclusionary, and hence less accessible to those seeking to put them to work in circulating ideas and claims of others’ (2007: 4). These lead to a direct decline in democracy, community, and forms of collective social action. Some planners, politicians and academics promote a topographical expansion of public space as a means for increasing ‘right to the city’, based largely on the belief that greater interaction in the open spaces of the city will increase social cohesion by forcing a variety of actors to confront difference in everyday contexts. In other words, ‘without the encounters that occur in public space, the public realm contracts’ (Low, 2006: 43).

Procedural adherents, on the other hand, are those that see the ‘publicness’ of a space more in terms of its use for a particular *kind of action*. These are theories of ‘public space’ like Avritzer’s (2002), which see ‘the public space’ as synonymous with ‘the public sphere’. It is where ‘citizens can participate as equals and, by arguing about collective projects for society, guide formal political decision-making’ (Avritzer, 2002: 6).

The problem is that in most attempts to theorize the relationship between public spheres and public spaces, the two approaches (topographical/space, and procedural/spheres) rarely overlap (Iveson, 2007; Low and Smith, 2006). In the following sub-sections, I will break down examples of topographical and procedural public space debates/theories. In the final sub-section, I will discuss how these theories, on their own, miss important aspects of ‘public space’ as a combined action/principle/place that organizes ‘the city’ in a huge number of ways.

2.4.1 Topographical Public Space Critiques

As Iveson notes, topographical approaches tend to look at public space as a disappearing, declining realm of everyday public life. In a two-part piece on the critiques and classifications of public, Carmona (2010a, 2010b) offers a comprehensive look at these kinds of critical approaches. He broadly organizes public space critiques into two ‘camps’: ‘those who argue that public space is over-managed, and those who argue that it is under-managed’ (Carmona, 2010a: 123). He recognizes that while this is an oversimplification, as a heuristic tool it ‘provides a useful lens through which to view the critiques’ (*ibid*). He begins by looking at under-management critiques, which include categories of: neglected space, invaded space, exclusionary space, segregated space.

‘Neglected space’ arguments can, as Carmona points out, be largely traced back to the idea of ‘broken windows’, originally proposed by Wilson and Kelling (1982). This holds, essentially, that poor upkeep of the physical environment creates a cycle of delinquency and deterioration. Small incivilities can lead to serious crime and social degradation (which will reinforce and recreate a poor physical environment), just as small examples of physical deterioration (like a broken window) will lead to greater lack of care, and worsening social issues. Many critics have associated this with punitive, even ‘revanchist’ forms of urban governance, where the poor and minorities (i.e. the disempowered) are unfairly criminalized due to their behaviors and neighborhoods already being seen as depraved, or unorthodox, or that ‘broken windows’ theories ‘exacerbate’ pre-existing kinds of discrimination (e.g. Herbert and Brown, 2006).

‘Invaded space’, alternatively, is a criticism primarily leveled against the city being overtaken by private automobiles, and is likewise a criticism of modernist planning practices. This is where the city becomes more of a space to be moved *through* rather than *within*. Jane Jacobs’ fight against Robert Moses is probably the most well-known example of this. As Jacobs said,

Everyone who values cities is disturbed by automobiles. Traffic arteries, along with parking lots, gas stations and drive-ins, are powerful and insistent instruments of city destruction. To accommodate them, city streets are broken down into loose sprawls, incoherent and vacuous for anyone afoot. (1961: 338)

To Jacobs, cities were naturally diverse places, and this diversity was a good thing. Building highways and avenues for car traffic to replace the mixed street/sidewalk space destroyed this vitality.

These infrastructure projects also run the risk of becoming physical and psychological barriers between groups and neighborhoods. They become, in other words, what Carmona calls ‘exclusionary spaces’. Rodgers (2012: 1) describes this as a kind of ‘infrastructural violence’. This concept demonstrates how infrastructure (particularly road infrastructure for cars) can be oppressive, and used for purposes of creating ‘pacified spaces’. In Managua, a four-lane highway was built through the Carlos Fonseca neighborhood. The purpose was ostensibly to reduce traffic congestion, but in reality, what this project did was carve up a poor, ‘notoriously insecure’ neighborhood, effectively dividing it in two while allowing for wealthy drivers from elsewhere to rapidly pass through the area (improving their safety while decreasing the safety of Carlos Fonseca residents).

Infrastructural violence is not only found in large-scale infrastructure projects, however. It is found in any kind of ‘contingent material configuration’ that connects two types of pacifying power: despotic power (or the power of the state to make decisions without consulting civil society) and infrastructural power (or the capacity of the state to physically penetrate civil society within its territories) (Rodgers, 2012: 19). It is, therefore, also found within the scale or territory of ‘the street’, specifically in what Davis (1990) calls ‘sadistic street environments’. Based on Whyte’s ([1980]2014) idea that good urban public spaces provide pedestrians with comfortable places to sit, Davis critiques the ‘fortress model’ of Los Angeles, and how the city is making small changes (like building uncomfortable, barrel shaped benches) to make the city ‘unlivable’ for the poor and the homeless.

Davis’ ‘fortress model’ of Los Angeles also connects to the critique of ‘segregated space’, which is exemplified by Caldeira’s *City of Walls*. Here, Caldeira (2000) explores a shift in the organization of the city, from patterns of isolation (i.e. suburbanization in the US), to patterns of fragmentation and fortification. She argues that where different social categories of people are forced to live in direct proximity to one another, the wealthy isolate themselves behind walls and security guards from their poor neighbors, reproducing (again) social categories of ‘us’ and ‘them’ through the deployment (and reproduction) of fear.

Finally, the ideas of ‘domestic spaces’, ‘virtual spaces’ and ‘third places’ are lumped together into an ‘other’ category of public spaces that are behind closed doors. This includes works like that of Castells (2008), which claim that the public sphere and civil society have become global (rather than national) spheres, and constituted in ICTs. This category also folds in work like Oldenburg’s (1999: i), which explores the notion of ‘third places’, or sites of ‘informal public life’ (i.e. cafes, pubs, barbershops, bookstores, etc.). These are public/private hybrid spaces where accidental and organized events alike create and reinforce *publics of shared interest*, as opposed to a politically unified singular public sphere. These are generally less critiques of public space than they are analyses that argue for a transformation taking place in (or a re-theorization of) how we think of physical sites of publicness. These can be, like with malls, potentially exclusionary spaces because of how their access is restricted (directly or indirectly) by private owners.

Much of what constitutes these ‘under management’ critiques admittedly bleeds into the categories of ‘over-management’ arguments, as constructing freeways and walled compounds are not necessarily good examples of inaction. Nevertheless, Carmona outlines four different categories of critiques that he labels ‘over-management’, which are said to contribute to increases in:

1. Privatized space: Referring to risks associated with the ownership and management of public space being privatized.
2. Consumption space: Talking about the commodification of public space use practices.
3. Invented space: In reference to the spread of placeless, homogeneous designs reflecting imagined historiographies and projecting fantastical images of modernity.
4. Scary space: Arguments over crime, and the fear of crime, and how this has been allowed to dominate perceptions of place; where crime prevention strategies negatively affect the freedoms with which space is used and enjoyed. (Carmona, 2010a: 144)

I would argue that consumption space, invented space and scary space can all be subsumed by the sub-category of ‘privatization’, based on the way these issues are generally addressed in the literature as part of a declining public realm at the hand of expanding ‘neoliberalization’ processes. Here, ‘privatization’ is seen as ‘a steady withering of the public realm’ at the hand of market liberalism and government downsizing, a ‘palpable decline in the levels of goods and services historically provided by the government’, including providing and managing ‘public space’ (Banerjee, 2001: 9). The *effects* and *causes* of this kind of ‘privatization’, however, can be thought of in two different ways.

On the one hand, this refers to the ownership and maintenance/management of open urban spaces being ceded to private corporations by the government due to budget constraints, or to otherwise ease financial pressures (Schmidt, 2011). These spaces, typically referred to as ‘pseudo-public spaces’, or POPS (‘privately owned public spaces’), are commonly critiqued for having management practices that are more exclusionary, and less transparent and accountable (*ibid*). The key consequence here is the direct physical exclusion of people from public spaces. In his description of ‘fortress Los Angeles’, Davis concludes that fear and consumerism combined to create an increasingly divided and militarized city based on ‘the architectural policing of social boundaries’ (i.e. privatizing with walls) as well as a ubiquitous militarized response in the form of private security guards (1990: 223).

On the other hand, you have a more insidious, indirect kind of ‘privatization’ that critical theorists argue is expanding through consumerism and the related phenomenon of ‘invented space’. These are issues at the core of theories of ‘the spectacle’ (Debord, 2005), ‘Disneyfication’ (Sorkin, 1992a), and the expansion of ‘non-places’ (Auge, 1995). These theories all explore the phenomenon of ‘privatization’ less as a matter of direct ownership, and more as processes of increased consumerism, and systematic homogenization, the effects of which are the creation of a more private individual and social world.

Sorkin provides a good example of this thinking. He describes the ‘Disneyfied’ city as a new kind of urban geography that ‘eradicates genuine particularity in favor of a continuous urban field’, a ‘vast, virtually undifferentiated territory’. It is, in other words, a homogeneous space where different architectural forms are actually just mimics of either an imagined ‘generic historicity’ or ‘generic modernity’. It is a city defined by an ‘architecture of deception’ based on ‘pure imageability’ (*sic*) rather than the ‘real needs and traditions of those who inhabit it’. This forms a ‘city of simulations’, or ‘the city as a theme park’ (1992b: xii-xv).

Sorkin’s metaphor of ‘Disneyfication’ seeks to show how ‘authentic’ urban places have been replaced by ‘fantastical’ representations and false simulations. It is, in a way, the spatial equivalent of a unified, bracketed Habermasian public sphere. Sorkin argues that in the theme park city (much as in Disneyland), difference (cultural, ethnic, gender, etc.) is picked apart, reduced, and recombined into an agglomeration that is always a representation of something real rather than an authentic experience, ‘winnowing

complexity in the name of both quick access and easy digestibility' (1992c: 226). Whereas real authenticity, Sorkin argues, is derived from historically rooted relations, representations are mimics that play with historical narratives to make them more consumable.

These false representations are not only physical manifestations, or architectural forms, but actually create new ways of *encountering* the physical world, such that it is not only the places themselves that are disconnected, but also the social actors experiencing them. As much as a historical disconnect is at the heart of a representation of (i.e. how Disneyland portrays Main Street being different from a 'real' Main Street), dislocation drives people's experiences of these representations of place. Movement between is both the means and the ends of how people seek to experience the world. Because 'the simulations referent is ever elsewhere', inhabitants of the 'city of simulations' (just like visitors to Disneyland) are 'always in a condition of becoming' as they are always in, or seeking to move towards, a place that is 'like' someplace else (Sorkin, 1992c: 216). The effect on the public nature of the city is not insignificant, as space is depoliticized in equal measure to its reinvention around consumption. As Sorkin puts it, 'the theme park presents its happy regulated vision of pleasure...as a substitute for the democratic public realm' (1992b: xv).

Sorkin's notion of 'Disneyfication' is an architectural/urbanist's extension of Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*. Debord (2005) outlined 'the spectacle' as an alienating form of social organization that reproduces itself through consumerism, itself a product of advanced capitalism's specific modes of production. In this, individuals are both victims of a hegemonic force of social control (alienated from reality by being separated from physical processes of production), and complicit agents in the reproduction of this force (falsifying the world by remaking it in the image of what they want to consume, rather than making the world as active productive participants). In this sense, 'privatization' is not a matter of real estate holdings, or private security guards (although these are certainly part of it), but is rather a process of world making (shaping both social and spatial dimensions) that depends on separation – separation from meaningful work (the act of production), separation of authenticity from image (representation), and separation of individuals from communal relations (commodification, rationalization, and contractual relations), all while obscuring these real effects by projecting an image of the social order it seeks to establish. It is a more totalizing form of privatization than a simple transfer of ownership.

Carmona admits that there is a great deal of overlap between categories in his model (both within and between the over-management and under-management groupings), and argues that the two categories are rather like opposite sides of the same coin – converging to form a general homogenization of the public built environment that somehow ‘privatizes’ social relations. In general, with all these topographic critiques taken into consideration, topographical public space adherents have tended to promote the expansion of ‘public space’ for two reasons. One emphasizes the value of public space as a gathering place. The other sees public space as a unifying vision for how urban spaces and societies can be made more collective.

The first reason is emphasized by proponents of public space as a natural mixing ground, a site for experiencing diversity and turning this experience through a kind of cosmopolitan politics of recognition and acceptance. This is essentially the idea that ‘when the city operates as an open system – incorporating principles of porosity of territory, narrative indeterminacy and incomplete form – it becomes democratic not in a legal sense, but as physical experience’ (Sennett, 2006: 4). If the city is made more ‘open’ (i.e. ‘accessible’), then people will naturally be forced to interact with one another, the result of which will be a kind of organic democratization of society. This represents a kind of latent spatial determinacy, a holdover, perhaps, from the high modernist era.

However, as Amin (2002, 2008) points out, this is based on a false equivalency. Amin does recognize the importance of space and physicality, seeing embodied experience and ‘entanglement’ between humans and material culture as establishing ‘a kind of pre-cognitive template for civic and political behavior’ (Amin, 2008: 5). Nevertheless, he notes that the fleeting nature of ‘everyday’ interactions between strangers in open urban space lack the impetus of political force. Amin argues that

Some people might come to develop solidarity with others as well as with the city through such engagement, while others will not, depending on background, disposition, expectations from public space and response to the commons... Accordingly, it is too heroic a leap to assume that making a city’s public spaces more vibrant and inclusive will improve urban democracy. (*ibid*: 5-7).

In other words, physical form matters, but is not a guarantee of publicness. Thus many critics have opted to take another path towards theorizing problems with topographical public space. This path leads us towards understanding public space decline as a process of ‘squeezing out other ways of *imagining* public spaces’ (Mitchell, 1995: 125, emphasis added). In other words, rather than publics being ‘squeezed out’ of physical public space

by police or the quantitative reduction of publically-owned open spaces, publics are being ‘squeezed together’ by an anti-political push to homogenize the human social experience. This is the reason why I claimed that a public space urbanism privatized by ‘the spectacle’ is more ‘insidious’ than that privatized by more direct means (policing, walls, etc.). The more we push towards public spaces that are simply ‘openly accessible to all’, the more we run the risk of accidentally reproducing a universalizing discourse of publicness that brackets, rather than accepts, difference. We restrict the political nature of public space when we think of it as a vacant lot rather than an open concept.

This is how Mitchell develops a theory of public space around Lefebvre’s ‘right to the city’ concept. In a recent article, he described this as using ‘the *end*’ of public space as a way to expand ‘the *ends*’ of public space (i.e. public space as a process), emphasizing that urban public spaces are not just ‘sites of significant social struggle’, but also ‘*sites over which* struggle is engaged’ (2017: 503, original italics). In response to critiques of alienation as an effect of modernity, Mitchell embraces public space as a concept and practice that can effectively operationalize Lefebvre’s ideal of the city as an *oeuvre*, or ‘a work in which all participate’ (Mitchell, 2003: 17). To Mitchell, the publicness of an urban sociospatial form is found in the extent to which it is produced *by* rather than *for* the inhabitants of a city, who do not make ‘the city’ in the abstract, but do so through real struggles.

This ‘right to the city’ approach, where publicness is based on the active co-production of ‘the city’ by its inhabitants, acts as a bridge between the ‘topographical’ and the ‘procedural’ dimensions of public space. From the procedural perspective, we see that if producing space is a relational process, then the various ways in which this process is organized deserve as much attention as the ways in which we organize space. Next, then, I look at debates over how citizens can and do organize. The goal will be to connect these procedural arguments over ‘public spheres’, or other types of politically-empowered democratic collectives operating on behalf of civil society, to the relational, productive topographical theories of ‘right to the city’.

2.4.2 Procedural Critiques

Procedural public space critiques are generally theoretical debates over how citizens can, or should, organize themselves as democratic collectives. Some, in line with communicative and collaborative planning theories, promote a consensus-based approach, while others, following criticisms of communicative planning theory, argue for a more agonistic approach. While most tend to mix elements of both, theorists tend to fall more on one side of the line or the other.

De Souza, for example, develops a theory for an 'alternative' planning model, which takes social justice, rather than modernization, as its ultimate goal. He argues that this system must combine a Habermasian emphasis on communicative (over and against instrumental) rationality, but not in the 'weak' way that traditional communicative planning theories have proposed. Rather, a Castoriadian sense of 'collective autonomy' is proposed as the basis for de Souza's model. 'Collective autonomy' is defined as the 'conscious and explicitly free self-rule of a particular society, as based on politico-institutional guarantees as well as the effective material possibility (including access to reliable information) of equal chances of participation in relevant decision-making processes' (de Souza, 2000: 188). He essentially argues that true forms of rationally-based collaboration can't exist in the real world (defined as it is by so much inequality and difference), and therefore that direct democracy at local scales is the best alternative.

Like many other proponents of direct democracy, de Souza uses participatory budgeting schemes as a good example of how this can work (see also Avritzer, 2002; Postigo, 2011; Rodgers, 2010; Souza, 2001; Wampler and Avritzer, 2004). Participatory budgeting (usually associated with the type that began in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989) is a financial management scheme that allows citizens to have a greater say in how the municipal budget is spent on local development needs. Local councils are organized through a series of meetings between state delegates and citizen representatives (i.e. community leaders), where the latter consult their local base and come up with priorities concerning where government investments are needed. The key here is the council's ability to have a final say in discretionary spending.

Researchers who have explored participatory budgeting in different settings have concluded that its success (measured in terms of re-aligning decision making processes to empower the disempowered, and also to curtail clientelism and corruption) is very much contextually dependent (cf. Postigo, 2011; Rodgers, 2010; Wampler and Avritzer, 2004). More precisely, it is dependent upon the specific forms of 'coalition building between civil

society activists and reformist politicians' (Wampler and Avritzer, 2004: 308). It is a highly contingent type of 'instituted process', with its successes (and failures) acting as consequences 'of the particular interaction of multifarious competing and contradictory interests, networks and incentives' associated with a wide range of political actors, 'all embedded within a temporally specific context' precipitated by distinct historical events (Rodgers, 2010: 25). In other words, while some may argue that participatory budgeting effectively *creates* more 'politically conscious citizens' (Postigo, 2008: 1945), having politically conscious and active citizens can also paradoxically be a *prerequisite* for these programs to be effective. Holston (2009) points out that assuming otherwise can effectively negate the value of experiential knowledge in relation to technical expertise, the same argument made by Mosse (2001).

The trick lies in how to construct a unified, yet *decentralized* kind of democracy without establishing, or reinforcing, a paradigm of 'differentiated citizenship', or a fractured kind of citizenship that is reproduced through exclusion from property, denial of political rights, residential illegality, misrule of law or servility (Holston, 2009: 256). In other words, how much power do you want to give public 'sphericles', and how does this negatively affect a broader public sphere? To Holston, the answer is to pursue a kind of urban citizenship based on insurgent practices of protest, what he rightfully calls 'insurgent citizenship' (2009). This is an agonistic process of bottom-up democratization that is based on the post-authoritarian Brazilian experience wherein previously marginalized citizens (physically removed to the edges of cities and the backwater regions of the country, and/or marginalized politically and economically by exclusions from full participation in the market and government apparatus) used social movements to become more politically competent, and establish constitutional mandates that defended substantive rights for participation. It describes a process of democratization that evolves from citizens pressing their claims, becoming knowledgeable through these confrontations, and at the same time formalizing and institutionalizing their demands through collectivization. Neighborhood organizations 'forged new horizontal confederations of citizens' based on common concerns that related to real life, every day experiences (in areas such as housing, land conflicts and infrastructure), and these coalitions were scaled-up to the point that they became part of the process of re-writing Brazil's constitution (Holston, 2009: 258). The outcome was a newly invigorated citizenry, empowered with new rights that had been expanded in substance and scope, and which in particular brought both new types of collective spaces, and previously ignored personal spaces of daily life (particularly amongst the marginalized poor) into the national political spectrum.

In addition to arguments for greater citizen participation, some have argued for altering the institutional framework of modern democracies to fit a more heterogeneous global democratic field (cf. Fung and Wright, 2006). The narrow, shallow understanding of democracy as competition amongst parties in elections is no longer sufficient, Fung and Wright note, and they propose a model of ‘empowered deliberative democracy’ that can alter institutional forms of government based on three key principles, and three design properties. The key principles are: (1) a practical orientation that deals with concrete concerns; (2) bottom-up participation that establishes new channels for those most directly effected by concrete issues; and (3) deliberative solution generation, or that ‘participants listen to each other’s positions and generate group choices after due consideration’ (2006: 19). Fung and Wright’s design properties, alternatively, include (1) the devolution of power to more local administrative levels; (2) the maintenance of a centralized government body that helps local deliberative processes by supervising and coordinating resources; and (3) that the process be ‘state-centered’ and ‘not voluntaristic’ (sic). This means that efforts must ultimately ‘colonize state power and transform formal governance institutions’, rather than being ad hoc, spontaneous forms of activism (*ibid*: 23).

Two important things must be pointed out here. First, the third principle directly contrasts with what Fung and Wright call ‘strategic bargaining and negotiation’, described as a more agonistic process where parties ‘advance their own unfettered self-interest backed by resources and power they bring to the table’ (*ibid*: 21). This is, in other words, a version of direct democracy that clearly falls on the side of communicative rationality over agonistic competition. Second, Fung and Wright’s argument for democratization efforts being ‘state centered’ in the sense that they ‘colonize state power’ in an institutionally transformative way, shows how this deliberative kind of communicative rationality does not mean these processes cannot be aggressive, or even combative. It is *where* aggression is directed (i.e. against ‘state power’) that matters.

As Young famously pointed out, there are risks involved in connecting civil society to state decision-making mechanisms, particularly the risk of cooptation, or where ‘[civil society’s] independence from state imperatives, and therefore their ability to hold state institutions accountable to citizens, is threatened’. She notes that ‘whenever procedures are created to link state and civil society for purposes of policy-making, implementation, or evaluation, these procedures risk becoming another layer of bureaucracy disciplining citizens or insulating them from influencing the process’. As a further risk, ‘when

deliberation and decision-making authority are dispersed among diverse locales, associational interests, and perspectives, they are liable to lose a generalized vision of the coordinated action of the whole society. The point, Young reminds us, is that we must ‘be vigilant in monitoring the actions and effects of both state, economy, and civil society, and actively promote the limitation and balance of each by the others’ (Young, 2000: 194-195).

Avritzer argues in a similar vein, framing it as a relationship between an ‘open, egalitarian public space’ (involving ‘demands for accountability, respect for rights and democratic practices at the local level’), and ‘political society’ (‘democracy as a form of organization of political competition among groups and state administration’) (2002: 6). Using examples from Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, Avritzer offers the concept of ‘participatory publics’ as a distinctly Latin American alternative to theories of democratic elitism. These consist of four elements:

1. The formation at the public level of mechanisms of face-to-face deliberation, free expression, and association. These mechanisms address specific elements in the dominant culture by making them problematic issues to be politically addressed;
2. The idea that social movements and voluntary associations address contentious issues in the political culture by introducing at the public level alternative practices;
3. The transformation of informal public opinion into a forum for public deliberation and administrative decision-making;
4. They bind their deliberations with the attempt to search for institutional formats capable of addressing at the institutional level the issues made contentious at the public level. (2002: 7)

These models and normative ideals of direct democracy are becoming increasingly important components of a more procedural approach to ‘public space’ based on ‘right to the city’. On the one hand, going back to Holston’s notion of ‘insurgent citizenship’, it is worth noting that the deepening of democracy in the case of Brazil was based on politics surrounding ‘personal’, ‘everyday’ experiences, much as Fung and Wright’s ‘empowered deliberative democracy’ was based around addressing ‘concrete concerns’ (2006: 18). These are both similar to the principle of the city as an *oeuvre*, in that, as Mitchell (2003) made clear, ‘right to the city’ is *never* a right won, or otherwise constituted, in the abstract (i.e. through ‘master plans’), but always in tangible struggles (the concrete and the everyday). Additionally, Fung and Wright (year), Avritzer (2002) and Holston (2009) all emphasize how this proceeds incrementally through the coupling of horizontal coalition formation processes with vertical (bottom-up) institutionalization processes. This is similar to a kind of ‘representational space’ where types of knowledge and power over spatial

production are negotiated between the ‘voyeurs’ and the ‘walkers’, or between the elites and the average citizens.

2.5 Conclusion

Public space has played a key role in debates driving the ongoing transition from a modern to post-modern planning paradigm. As such, it plays a central role in how we think of and experience urban life, and democracy in an urbanized world.

Modernism was a paradigm of absolutes. It differentiated between categories in absolute terms, without shades of grey, and sought an absolute transformation of social and spatial forms to make urban life (and society more generally) more ordered and therefore better. To combat negative developments associated with capitalist industrialism, high modernists promoted new more orderly forms of social and spatial organization led by a strong state. Public space was the architectural symbol and physical forum in which this new order could be established. Big and open, the public spaces of the modern city sought to eliminate the culture of chaos associated with the ‘street’ – the symbolic and lived space of public interaction in the pre-modern city. The mixture of uses (commercial, residential, recreational) that took place in, and adjacent to, ‘the street’, were seen as threats to establishing an ordered society. Similar ideals surrounded early understandings and practices of ‘the public sphere’. There was a single public sphere whose job it was to promote and protect the interests of civil society against the state and the market. Each sector of society had its place, and related to the other in an ordered way. Differences were bracketed in a way that mirrored the modern principle of zoning to create a singular ‘public sphere’ that was similar in its utopian image to that of the city as machine: all parts working together for a common goal.

Yet as modernism (as a design principle and political system) failed to change key structural issues in society (poverty and other types of inequality), challenges to modern principles and theories began to appear that saw a different relationship between politics, space and society. New participatory planning paradigms emerged alongside ideals of ‘socially produced space’ to enact a new understanding of what ‘right to the city’ meant (i.e. a right to produce the city, not simply access it). Importantly, this process of production entailed an emphasis on mixture and diversity rather than singularity, and recognized the need for a more contentious politics to combat the hegemonic reproduction

of inequalities. Public space has increasingly come to be seen as a process *through* which multiple publics of shared interests can be formed, a site *in which* differences can be negotiated, and a concept *around which* more democratic urban forms can be imagined and developed.

While ‘topographical’ forms of public space are important to social organization and harmony, they are not inherently mechanisms for democratizing cities and urban societies. Processes that extend and expand access to visions of, and decisions about, ‘the city’ are needed for this. This is what the entire notion of ‘relational space’ is based on: the assumption that space is made up, in fact, of the social relations that literally produce it, and that, insofar as it becomes something that human social actors feel the need to transform (and subsequently organize themselves and resources in such a way as to accomplish this), it exerts itself on society as though it had some sort of agency. Therefore,

It is necessary to show that the struggle over the park is not only a struggle over a space already formed but simultaneously over its contemporary production, a struggle over the conceptual tools and power structures of the here and now. (Fraser, 2007: 674)

A multi-dimensional public space defined as both topography and procedure can be described as ‘the process of achieving more social justice through changes both in social relations (institutions, laws and norms) and in spatiality (from the spatial structures in a material sense to the territoriality and the image of places)’ (de Souza, 2000: 187). As Iveson explains, public space should be understood as a three dimensional expression of publicness, which consists of:

1. Publicness as a *context for action* (i.e. urban public space)
2. Publicness as a *kind of action* (i.e. public address), and
3. Publicness as a *collective actor* (a/the public) (Iveson, 2007: 8, original italics)

This is the relational ontology that I adopt in order to address the problematic of ‘public space’ in Bogotá by looking at different types of public space interventions that involve different types of actors. In an evolving system of planning and governance that is experimenting with strategic forms of decentralized participatory democracy, and which explicitly promotes the importance of topographical ‘public space’, I want to understand how *publicness* as an organizing function and concept actually emerges as a *process*. I want to look at how aspects of *lived* public space and *representational* public space are negotiated in actual processes of producing public space. This exploration entails questions

such as: What kinds of public spaces are being represented as ideal forms, who is deciding about these ideal forms, what is the relationship to these representations and the everyday experiences people are having in public space, and how is all this combined to form a more robust and dynamic public sphere? Furthermore, how do *actors* (of a wide variety) envision their role in the process of planning and using public space, and how do they see this as being relevant to their identity as part of a/the public?

These are questions/issues I explore in order to contribute to an evolving understanding/theorization of public space's relationship to democracy in an increasingly urbanized world. To do this, I look at public space planning and citizen participation in Bogotá, Colombia. Bogotá was chosen as a site for this research because of how it was praised as a 'global best practice' example of a city that used public space as a tool for overcoming serious problems. In the next chapter, I explain this in greater detail by exploring the recent history of planning and governance changes that led to Bogotá's 'urban miracle', and how institutional and cultural reforms surrounding public space played a part in this.

Chapter 3: Context

3.1 Introduction

There are two primary reasons for exploring the theoretical concepts discussed in the previous chapter through case studies of public space planning and participation in Bogotá, Colombia. First, exploring publicness as a relational, procedural and topographical phenomenon means accepting that to be public is a context-specific trait, while at the same time recognizing that context specificity is itself relationally established. This recognition implies that different formulas of publicness will be derived in different places at different times, that these formulas will be produced in relation to others, which inherently means power imbalances will exist between them. As discussed in the introduction, these implications have been increasingly adopted by a growing field of theories seeking to promote the use of evidence-based, context-specific (i.e. grounded) examples of ‘actually existing urbanisms’ (Shatkin, 2007) in the Global South to produce urban theory *for* the Global South, rather than importing ideologies and theories from the Global North (see also Parnell and Robinson, 2012; Robinson, 2002; Roy, 2005, 2009; Shatkin, 2007; de Sousa Santos, 2007, 2008; Watson, 2009).

Second, and following the first point, Bogotá represents an excellent case study of this because of how it has been hailed as a kind of experimental laboratory of urban reconstruction (Pérez, 2010) where innovative municipal government strategies were used to bring the city out of a state of crisis, and which highlight a broader pattern of cities acting as engines of democratization in Latin America (cf. Berney, 2010; Gilbert, 2006; Gutiérrez et. al., 2013). In Latin America, political, social and economic changes have been taking place in major cities for decades, increasingly making these important sites for producing and analyzing democratizing changes, especially as principles of more direct participation became embedded in the broader political discourse (cf. Lindert and Verkoren, 2010). In the 1980s, as Colombia was facing a major crisis of state power and legitimacy, Bogotá (as the country’s capital) became a key site for broader national transformations, in large part because of how Bogotá concentrated the worst of Colombia’s problems, but also because of how it responded to them.

These problems stem from Colombia’s history of fragmentation and division (Safford and Palacios, 2002). Carved up by three large ranges of the Andes Mountains, regional cultures have often been more valued than a national identity. This was transformed into political

fragmentation and division through a series of civil wars between the Conservative and Liberal parties through the 19th and early 20th centuries, culminating in La Violencia ('The Violence', a period of fighting that lasted from roughly 1946-1957). Following a military junta in 1958, the National Front was established. Here, the constitution was changed such that all national political positions would be equally split between the two parties, and the presidency would alternate between the two every other term. This had the direct effect of barring other political parties from participating in government, which solidified the powers of an already strong oligarchy, and ultimately led to a violent opposition response in the form of leftist *guerilla* armies such as the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), and the ELN (National Liberation Army). This has caused another spike in protracted violence, particularly in the rural parts of the country where the government historically had little more than nominal control, but also in cities, as urbanization increased, and different forms of violence (and groups involved in its perpetration) were arising. Soon, the Colombian government was once again in transition – this time grappling to include a much wider range of political actors because of the perceived illegitimacy that stemmed from the elitist National Front system, and from this government's failure to assert control over the country. From 1978-1991, the National Front was slowly replaced, and a new constitution was signed in 1991 that expressly guaranteed greater political participation (Bushnell, 1993; Safford and Palacios, 2002).

In sum, despite a highly centralized, elitist form of government, a divided, fragmented Colombian society was facing even more divisive forces in the form of an increasingly pluralistic group of actors involved in perpetrating violence, and making claims to political legitimacy. This led to the consolidation of a fragile state defined by chronic weakness, and multiple competing claims to sovereignty (Legrand, 2003; McDougal, 2009; Safford and Palacios, 2002). These problems quickly became urban issues, as rural civil violence was transformed into urban insecurity Colombian cities burgeoned with massive populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who largely occupied marginal areas with informal settlements (Rueda-Garcia, 2003). A combination of growth mixed with limited resources, and a fragile political system in transition produced a period of 'urban crisis' in Bogotá in the 1980s and early 1990s (Salazar Ferro, 2010).

As I describe in detail below, Bogotá 'miraculously' emerged from this period of prolonged 'crisis' by actively using the promotion and creation of public space as a means and ends for creating a safer, happier, more equitable city. Public space was expanded topographically, but in some ways constricted socially by processes of public space

‘recovery’ which sought to establish a new sociospatial order in the city. Through architectural and ‘pedagogical’ mechanisms, public space was used as a site and symbol for a new urban order – a new political order, and a new social order, coupled with a new, more modern spatial order. Much of this took place in and around the city’s Historic/Traditional Center, which has become the site of major redevelopment efforts that aim to reshape the city’s overall form and curb processes of expansion.

In this chapter, I explore some of the historical developments behind this public space-based ‘urban miracle’, while also trying to challenge/expand on this narrative in two ways: First, by exploring some of the policies and ideals derived from the national level that contributed to new forms of municipal governance (which formed the base of Bogotá’s public space revolution); and second, by going beyond the ‘miracle’ era and exploring how ideals, principles and practices associated with the public space miracle have (or haven’t) been altered in recent years. Before I get into this, however, I want to briefly outline a history of development in Bogotá. This helps establish some historical context for the empirical studies that follow.

3.2 A Brief History of Bogotá

Bogotá is the capital city of Colombia. It sits on a large high mountain plateau (known as La Sabana) in the Eastern Cordillera of the Colombian Andes, roughly in the center of the country.⁶ It has been one of South America’s key urban centers since it was founded by Spanish colonists in 1538, as it shared colonial capital duties with Lima until it was officially designated as the capital of Nueva Granada in 1717 (a huge colonial region including what are now Colombia, Venezuela and parts of Ecuador and Panama).

Bogotá has suffered from a similar problem that has affected other major historical Latin American cities: rapid urbanization during the 20th century. Massive growth rates were spurred by people being forced out of their previous homes either by violence, or by economic necessity, and settling into peripheral parts of the city. The result was a multinuclear city defined by heterogeneity and sociospatial fragmentation (Rueda-Garcia, 2003). This has had an especially profound impact on the Historic/Traditional Center of

⁶ Colombia has a long history of geographically isolated regions, as it is divided by three large ranges (*cordilleras*) of the Andes Mountains. Most Colombians live in, or between these mountain ranges, or along the northern Caribbean coast. Most of the eastern part of the country is sparsely inhabited grasslands, river plains and rainforests.

the city because of a unique set of historical circumstances that combined to produce what Jaramillo (2006: 2) calls the ‘decadence of the downtown’, or the downward spiral of the city center – an argument akin to that of ‘broken windows’ (see also Pérez, 2010).

This is described as a cycle of decline where residents flee traditionally compact city centers due to congestion and insecurity (and a lack of government planning), removing necessary streams of income, and causing a decrease in real estate values and public investment. This then creates more deterioration, congestion and insecurity, and public spaces become ‘taken over’ by informal street vendors and criminals. Jaramillo (2006) describes this in terms of what he calls the Popular Center slowly encroaching on the Traditional Center, which he explains through a historical analysis of shifting land uses and development trends. Jaramillo categorizes these into four distinct periods: the mono-centric period, the suburban expansion period, the period of elites emigrating out of the city center, and the period of decline (i.e. where the Popular Center replaced the Traditional Center). Here, ‘popular’ is a term that describes individuals and activities associated with the poor working classes, especially economic activities in the tertiary sector often associated with informality.⁷

The center of Bogotá remained largely unchanged for almost three centuries. Since its establishment in 1538, the city stayed quite small and defined by its traditional Spanish layout until the 19th century. This period can be called the ‘mono-centric’ period (Jaramillo, 2006) because of how the entire city of Bogotá was condensed in or around a single, coherent urban center. This, however, depended on population stagnation, and from the middle of the 19th century until 1900, the population more than doubled – growing from around 40,000 to about 100,000. By 1928, that number had reached 235,000. This triggered the second development stage: suburban expansion.

Up until this point, the city had been a compact grid with a fairly clear pattern of spatial segregation (where the poor lived on the rural periphery, and the wealthy in the center), although it was not uncommon for some mixing, such as poor workers and landowners cohabitating when ground floor space was used for artisan commercial activities (Jaramillo, 2006). However, with the expanding population, the city itself began to expand north, particularly in the neighborhoods of Teusaquillo and Chapinero.

⁷ Sometimes, ‘informal’ and ‘popular’ are used interchangeably to describe a kind of ‘third sector’ economy (cf. Nyssens, 1997), but planners in the IDPC explained to me that they prefer the term ‘popular’ because it doesn’t carry the negative connotations of ‘informal’, and because it demonstrates the importance of these economic activities (Interview, October 19, 2015).

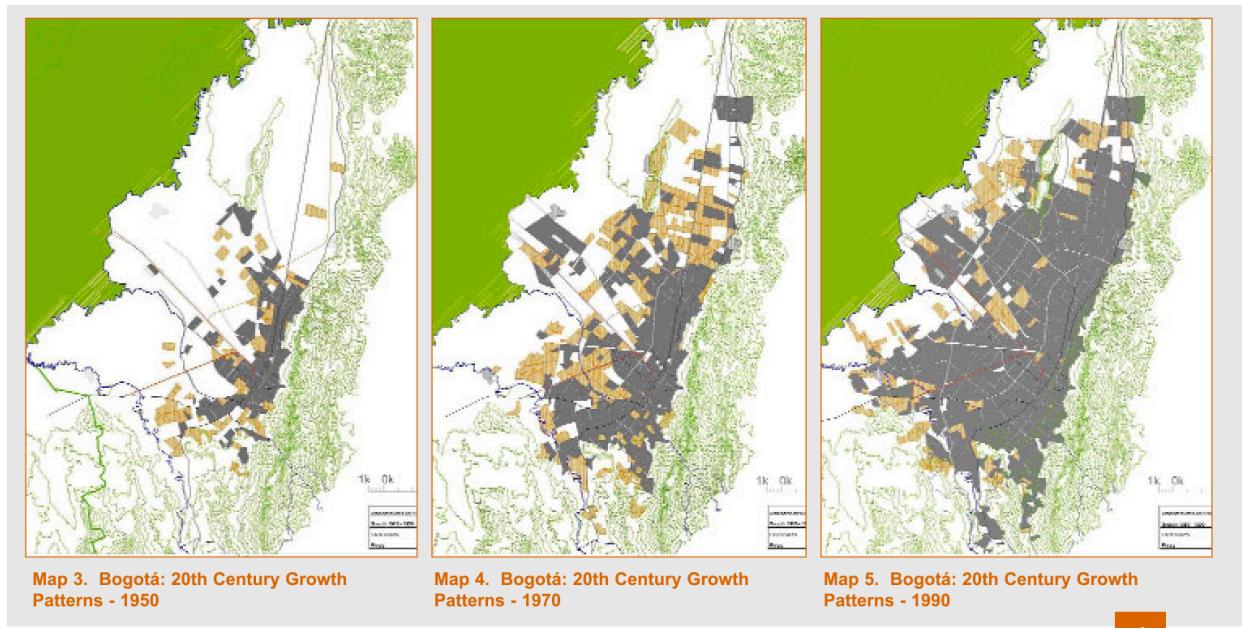


Image 1: Bogotá's Expansion, Source: Rueda-Garcia, 2003

During the 1930s, growth expanded to an average of 3.5% per annum. A slow, small expansion of wealthy residents to the north constituted the beginnings of a kind of ‘suburbanization’, but for the most part, the spatial layout remained largely the same (i.e. wealthy citizens and activities concentrated in the center and poor residents staying on the fringes). However, from 1938 to 1951 growth rates climbed to an average of 5.5%, and then to an average of 7.4% until 1964. Much of this was due to poor rural residents being displaced by the civil war in the 1950s (*La Violencia*). Not only did this place a huge demand on housing, further driving the process of suburbanization/urban expansion, but riots in 1948 (called the *Bogotazo*) damaged or destroyed much of the old city center, and further contributed to a perception of decline and processes perpetuating this.

Essentially, as the city expanded, the longstanding pattern of sociospatial segregation that had defined the city (the rich in the center, the poor on the outskirts) began to shift. Now, the rich occupied expanding lands to the north of the old center, while the poor increasingly spread out to the south. This is the period that Jaramillo (2006: 7) calls the ‘emigration of the elites from the city center’ (author’s translation), and it is a pattern that more or less still defines the layout of the city. Jaramillo identifies two processes in particular that drove this intensifying cycle of *decadencia*: *tugurización* and *inquilinización* (translated as something like, ‘slumification’ and ‘tenement-ification’). This basically involved the older ‘mansions’ of the middle and upper classes being turned into tenement housing, or being abandoned, as housing real estate values plummeted (the

same was true for property values of shops and offices), and the now absent property owners (who had moved north) tried to maximize the economic value of their property. The large population of poor rural residents displaced by La Violencia was a large part of this process, and directly contributed to the ‘popularization’ of certain sectors of the Historic/Traditional center, especially to the west in what is now San Victorino and parts of Los Mártires. Poorer residents increasingly began to live in these parts of the center, and sell affordable goods there – which attracted more low-income residents to the area for commercial purposes. Tenement houses in ‘inner city slums’ were defined by the government as ‘large houses occupied permanently by a number of families, in independent rooms, with collective sanitary services, kitchen and a laundry area’ (Rueda-Garcia, 2003: 11). These played an important role as temporary housing for new immigrants to the city during the 1960s. Overuse and lack of maintenance has caused deterioration since then, diminishing the value and quality of these residences (*ibid*).

According to Jaramillo (2006: 9), the activities and cultures associated with this new Popular Center clashed with those of the Traditional Center, which he describes as the ‘spatial hegemony of the elites’ that had previously been the dominant occupying force in the center. While this elite ‘spatial hegemony’ ‘fled’ to the north, then, the ‘culture’ and spatial patterns of the ‘popular’ began to assert themselves on the center as the new hegemonic form (the period Jaramillo calls the ‘encroachment of the popular center on the traditional center’). The large lower class population that was consolidating in Bogotá, a population that the popular economy catered to, facilitated this. The center slowly shifted from being home to luxury trade goods, and high-level service sector commerce (i.e. financial institutions) to being a center of popular economic activity with a shrinking residential population. As a result of all this, Jaramillo cites a survey that estimated approximately 82% of daily visitors to the Historic/Traditional Center are from the three lowest socioeconomic classes (*estratos* 1-3), compared to 1.3% of visitors being from the highest socioeconomic class (*estrato* 6⁸).

This is ultimately the source of the narrative of ‘decline’ and ‘abandonment’ of the Historic/Traditional Center: the long process of the popularization of its uses and activities (Jaramillo, 2006). Declining residential uses (even of the tenements) helped contribute to a growth of legal and illegal commercial uses that catered to a mostly poor customer base,

⁸ *Estratificación Socioeconómica* is a system of distributing public utility costs and property taxes across six socioeconomic classes that are defined by property value, thus acting as ‘spatially differentiated tariffs’ (Thibert and Osario, 2014: 1331). Middle (3-4) and upper (5-6) class *estratos* (strata) subsidize costs of services for the lower classes (1-2).

especially in the western parts of the *localidad* of Santa Fe and the eastern parts of Los Mártires (Rueda-Garcia, 2003). Many of Bogotá's problems (particularly high crime rates) were associated with the perceived 'chaos' of informality and poverty, which was reproduced by the cycle of *decadencia*.

While persistent processes of physical deterioration and demographic displacement caused the city center of Bogotá to become an increasingly precarious and unpredictable place to live, ultimately creating a space of 'disorder', Pérez also points out that these forms of destruction and disorder were always paralleled by the creation of new orders and modes of control. Pérez argues that the crucial point here is that spaces of citizenship (physical and social) were being imposed, disputed and reaffirmed by an increasingly diverse group of actors (planners, elites, the poor, the middle class) in the city center as part of simultaneous processes of expansion (i.e. of political participation), and contraction (i.e. policing and surveillance of public space) (2010: 60-61). However, unpacking this requires stepping back and exploring broader changes that were taking place in Bogotá, and Colombia more broadly. This is what I look at in the next section.

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, what became known as Bogotá's 'urban miracle' was part of processes that began at the national level – processes of state reformation commonly associated with 'decentralization' that sought to increase democracy and enhance state authority all at once. These represented a new type of order designed in response to a national 'disorder' stemming from pluralistic civil conflict, and a history of political exclusion. The transformations in the Historic/Traditional Center that I discuss in the empirical chapters of this thesis are extensions of this reordering process. In fact, the city center would become the symbolic focal point of these efforts to establish a new urban and national democratic order, as I discuss below and show in my empirical chapters. In the next section, I break down how this new order evolved through a growing discourse of 'citizen participation', and an increased emphasis on strategic planning.

3.3 Background: Behind 'The Miracle'

Many of Bogotá's problems can be traced to the particular nature of Colombia's history, and more specifically its long history of violence. This caused rapid expansion and population growth that saw Bogotá go from a city of 100,000 around the turn of the 20th century to a city of around 8 million today. This caused a number of problems for the city,

culminating into a ‘crisis’ in the 1980s, which Salazar Ferro (2010: 317-319) describes as consisting of eight key features:

1. Increasing insecurity
2. Weakness of public finances
3. Governance problems and lack of transparency
4. Urban segregation and housing shortages for the poorest
5. Obsolete transportation system
6. Unplanned growth
7. The inability to construct and defend public space
8. An ineffective planning regime

As discussed above, the Colombian government was undergoing major institutional changes at this time as part of attempts to minimize violence through expanded democratic opportunity. Following the signing of the new constitution in 1991, and other decentralizing/democratizing changes that took place around the same time (including the popular election of mayors), the problems underlying Bogotá’s crisis were being addressed by a new breed of politicians from a wider political spectrum, and with a new kind of institutional structure to work with – transforming Colombia’s ‘black and white history’ of the Conservative/Liberal two party system into a new era of ‘gray tones’ (Arango, 2008, author’s translation).

This new era of politics and governance coalesced around what Tixier et al. (2013) identify as four key processes: democratization, decentralization, privatization and civic participation. More specifically, these changes can be categorized as:

1. An increased capacity for public planning (particularly addressing issues with public space, unplanned growth, poor transportation and an ineffective planning regime);
2. Changes in social cohesion (specifically dealing with issues of insecurity through citizen culture initiatives);
3. Changes in financial arrangements (more and better managed tax revenues); and
4. Changes in governance and civic culture (changes to political culture within the government and amongst citizens) (Salazar Ferro, 2010)

In this section, I want to explore these changes in greater depth, and show how they produced what became known as an ‘urban miracle’ (Gilbert, 2006, 2015). I show how this proceeded through two primary categories of changes pertaining to the rise of a new kind of technocratic democracy in Colombia (Tixier et al., 2013): policies and practices of decentralization (to establish increased democratic participation); and policies and practices pertaining to establishing a more coherent, technically sound strategic planning

system (known as *ordenamiento territorial*). I explore each of these driving principles in separate subsections below.

3.3.1 The new emphasis on decentralization and participation

Decentralization was used in Colombia to address the political, economic and social issues described above, which as I mentioned were related to a state that was weak in terms of its capacity to assert sovereign authority, and to claim legitimacy as a truly representative democratic government. It was a means for curbing violence by expanding political participation, and also legitimizing state authority by enhancing citizen involvement in democratic processes.

One of the most important decentralizing developments that lead to Bogotá's transformation was the 1986 Municipal Reform Law. This established the popular election of mayors, and abolished the old system of mayors being appointed by governors (as was the case with smaller cities) or presidents (as was the case with Bogotá). Following this, new laws continued to promote further decentralization from the national government to the municipality, and even to smaller urban districts within large municipalities. Law 1 of 1992 subdivided Bogotá into 20 *localidades*,⁹ and established Juntas Administrativas Locales, (JALs, Local Administrative Councils) and Alcaldías Locales (Local Mayors) as administrators of these. Decreto 1421 of 1993 (the Organic Statute) granted even more authority to the city of Bogotá, particularly in terms of managing finances. This power was particularly centralized in the mayor's office through the dismantling of the old system of 'co-administration' (where the city was governed equally by the City Council and the mayor). This system had long been associated with clientelistic practices and corruptions (Gilbert, 2006). The mayor gained a great deal more autonomy from the council, allowing for more flexibility in managing the city, and reducing clientelism (Gilbert, 2006, 2015; Tixier et al., 2013). This is of particular importance, as it shows how changes at the municipal level often entailed less of a top-down redistribution of power, and more of a lateral power shift.

In short, decentralization played a huge role in transforming Bogotá from one of the world's most violent cities to a city that urban planners and mayors look to as a model of 'good urban governance' (Gilbert, 2006). This revolved around the decentralization of

⁹ The Capital District of Bogotá (Bogotá D.C.) consists of 20 *localidades*, or localities, 19 of which are designated 'urban' and 1 of which (Sumapaz), is designated 'rural'.

political power following the 1991 constitution (a realignment of institutional governance), an increased emphasis on strategic planning (a sort of technicalization of governance), and a greater emphasis on citizen involvement in governance processes (the democratization of governance) (Berney, 2010; Salazar Ferro, 2010; Moncada, 2012; Montezuma, 2005; Skinner, 2004; Tixier, et al., 2012). These changes constitute what Tixier et al. (2012) refer to as a model of ‘neoliberal populism’, which combined a new strategic planning system, with a new urban politics emphasizing the role of powerful and innovative mayors, and the increased involvement of more ‘culturally democratic citizens’ (Appe, 2010: 3). Bogotá’s changes were a mixture, in other words, of tactics to make governance and planning more technical and more democratic all at once. Berney (2011) describes the resulting model as a three-tier, top-down hierarchy consisting of three groups: power brokers, experts and users.

At the top, the ‘power brokers’ were the newly empowered mayors. The ‘miracle mayors’ (particularly Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa) were celebrated as ‘political outsiders’ ready to ‘breath fresh air’ into urban politics (Davila, 2009: 55) in their new capacity as coalition builders in the evolving system of politics and governance (Gutierrez et al., 2013). They were seen as a new breed of politicians bereft of problems associated with old party politics, and increasingly empowered by decentralizing legal reforms and the democratic mandate of popular election. More importantly, rather than a government populated by clientelistic practices of nepotism, these mayors depended on a class of ‘experts’ to run the new bureaucracy taking shape – adding to their perceived legitimacy, and enhancing efficiency. In addition to more efficiently and effectively ‘moving projects forward’, Berney argues these ‘experts’ helped ‘instill and bolster hope’ amongst citizens who held deep-seeded trust issues with the government (2011: 545).

‘Users’ (or the ‘popular’ half of the ‘populist neoliberal’ equation) were the citizens who benefited from the changes being made by power brokers and experts. These were involved in the new system in two key ways: increased voting power, and increased opportunities for direct participation in decision-making processes. First, the popular election of mayors with greater unilateral power meant citizens’ votes were more easily translated into policies that reflected their interests. Thus regardless of differences in the specific platforms of elected mayors, they all seemed to carry a similar mandate for ‘strengthening the public sphere and making the city more democratic’, undoubtedly because these were things citizens were voting for (Tixier et al., 2013: 349). Second, ever since the 1991 constitution, the Colombian government has continuously made efforts ‘to

foster ‘culturally democratic citizens’ through decentralization initiatives that encourage participatory mechanisms at the local level (Appe, 2010: 3). There has subsequently been a kind of ‘explosion’ of sites and mechanisms for participation (Hernández, 2010: 85).

These two have tended to work in a cyclical fashion, as some of this ‘explosion’ is directly due to the new powers given to the mayor, and the expanded political competition for the mayor’s office. While participation is mandated in a number of ways by the constitution, it is done in a way that was sufficiently vague that mayors are allowed to manipulate ‘participation’ to fit their agenda. This is in part why there has been a constant growth in the number of participatory mechanisms since 1991: each new administration uses the constitutional mandate of participation to effectively create new areas of citizen *support* for their programs. Therefore it can be argued that, as new forums of participation have been levied by new governments to legitimize their new institutions that were previously seen as ‘weak’ or ‘corrupt’ (Hernández, 2010; Koch and Steiner, 2017), expanding participation to deepen democracy has actually produced the opposite of its (purportedly) intended effect and actually *decreased* interest in democratic participation. It has produced ‘a general skepticism about the potential for real change’, and increased an already ‘deep distrust of institutions and politicians’ (Tixier et al., 2013: 349).

When citizens are constantly confronted with opportunities to ‘participate’, but don’t see results, they feel less inclined to take part in democratic processes. Perhaps more worrisome is that even where participation has generated increased public interest in politics, and initiated a growth in civic culture and respect for the law, it may have done so in order to produce ‘obedient, unquestioning citizens rather than critically engaged actors’ (*ibid*). Some have even argued that this has been intentional, or that expanding participation has acted as a sort of ‘political hygiene’, an attempt to nullify politically surplus subjects and contain dissent (Coleman, 2013), or an exercise in establishing/restoring order (Hernández, 2010). At the same time, it has also been argued that these new participatory spaces have produced new kinds of clientelism and cooptation (Hataya, 2007). They are frequently run by, or through, what Hernández (2010) and Velasquez (2003) describe as a kind of layer of participation professionals installed to act as community representatives, but who in many cases have served to insulate citizens and the state from one another like a buffer between citizens and government apparatuses. Zambrano describes this using the language of ‘public space’, arguing that the problem with the public space in Colombia is that it is part of a representative democracy that sets an absolute divide between the elected and the electorate (2003: 46), or where the public

sphere lacks the ability to assert its will on what Avritzer (2002) calls ‘political society’ (i.e. actors and institutions with the power to make governmental decisions).

Decentralization has been discursively promoted as part of ‘neoliberal populist’ reforms in Colombia that seek to modernize and strengthen a state that has suffered from a long history of weakness, and enhance democratic participation to discourage violence. Yet despite a rhetoric of ‘democratizing’ citizenship by creating a series of participatory instruments, these have often had the effect of generating greater benefits for those in power than the disenfranchised (Hernández, 2010; Koch and Steiner, 2017). In other words, public space in Colombia is not functionally designed to institutionalize democratic decisions in a bottom-up way, like with Avritzer’s notion of ‘participatory publics’. Rather, public space has been about institutionalizing the public sphere, or creating a more democratic citizen that respects the decisions made in the political sphere.

A key area of citizen engagement, or ‘participation’, was in forums on territorial planning (Hernández, 2010). At the same time as authority was being decentralized from the national level to municipal governments, a whole new strategic planning regime was being developed in Colombia, which both promoted a simultaneous rhetoric of modernization and democratization. Here, the idea of remaking citizenship through ‘participation’ was connected with the idea of remaking citizenship through a more ‘rational’ urban space (Berney, 2011).

3.3.2 The New Planning Regime: *Ordenamiento Territorial*

Law 9 (or the Urban Reform Act) was the first major legislative effort to establish a comprehensive strategic planning system in Colombia (Rodriguez, 2012). Previous national planning laws had been more piecemeal in their approach (i.e. focusing on certain issues, like housing) (Maldonado, 2004). Law 9 borrowed from Japanese land readjustment laws, French pre-emption rights and land banks and American construction rights transfer practices to create a new system that was more comprehensive, attempting to establish policies that tied together economic, territorial and social planning (Maldonado et. al., 2006; Rodriguez, 2012). Law 9 also established the principle of ‘rights and responsibilities’, which linked land use categories and development rights to a notion of collective responsibility for protecting the environment, and promoting the betterment of the rest of the city’s inhabitants as a whole (i.e. a general public). Private property should

have, Law 9 stated, first and foremost *social* as well as *ecological* functions, meaning no personal claim to land was more important than land serving the public interest either socially or environmentally (Maldonado et al., 2006). These changes were further solidified in the new constitution of 1991, and, eventually, Law 388 of 1997.

Law 388 of 1997, also known as the Ley de Desarrollo Territorial (LDT), or Territorial Development Law, is the basis of Colombia's current national planning policy. It is basically a policy framework that lays out a framework for how municipalities and other local governments can design and implement new land use plans, or strategic plans that categorize land types, and set development/use rules for these categories. It is, then, a sort of guide rather than a strict set of rules, setting up a new role for the state as a mediator rather than planner. This becomes clear in the four key principles underlying the law:

1. **The social function of urbanism:** 'The state represents the general interest of the public and should be the mediator between the public and private interests. This purpose requires reorganizing the territory and turning planning into concrete action'
2. **The social and ecological function of property:** 'Property (public and private premises) should first and foremost have a social and ecological function. Although the property is private and therefore has some rights, it also has some duties with the city, oriented to protect nature and the well-being of society in general, rather than individual interests'
3. **The equitable distribution of costs and benefits:** 'One of the fundamental principles of land use planning in Colombia is to seek mechanisms that allow a better distribution of the benefits and...greater cooperation from all those who obtained some kind of gain, through the payment of the costs generated by this improvement'
4. **The prevalence of general interests over particular interests:** Decisions taken in the city...by both governments and individuals, must benefit majorities and not a few' (Rodriguez, 2012: 22-23)

The main mechanism of LDT at the city-level is known as the Plan de Ordenamiento Teritorial (POT, or Land Use Plan). This is where actual land use categories and regulations are established for cities, and thus the POT functions as a city's medium- and long-term strategic plan (Rodriguez, 2012; Steinberg, 2002). It has a 12-year life span, covering three mayoral terms, and has three primary functions: (1) the definition of land use strategies; (2) outlining instruments and procedures that structure and coordinate actions taken by the various municipal sectors responsible for planning and development; and (3) establishing programs and projects for materializing these principles (Maldonado, et al., 2006).

Law 388 required that the POT be developed through public consultation in order to translate citizens' knowledge of the local territory into a more technical format with the ultimate goal of having citizens' goals written into the POT. Articles 22 to 24 established that 'the population could indirectly participate in the development of the plan via representatives of the various neighborhoods and community organizations or territorial planning councils made up of members of civil society'. Meanwhile, Article 4:

required administrations to encourage "consultation between social, economic, and urban development interests via the participation of residents and their organizations," including the right to petition, the holding of public hearings, enforcement action, and intervention in the formulation, discussion, and implementation of the plan. (Koch and Steiner, 2017: 173)

Under the POT, you have two medium- to short-term strategic city plans. The Plan de Desarrollo Municipal¹⁰ (Municipal Development Plan) is the four-year development plan made by each elected mayor, and nominally approved by the City Council. This is meant to more directly reflect the campaign promises for which a mayor was elected, ostensibly adding democratic input into the otherwise technical land use planning system. It is, however, subject to the regulations established by the POT. Finally, annual Municipal Budgets and Action Plans are strategic plans that prioritize spending on a year-to-year basis (Rodriguez, 2012). These are dictated by the mayor, but are subject to certain approvals by the City Council.

In theory, this system is designed to ensure 'the collaborative participation of all city agents in the management and construction of the city' (Rodriguez, 2012: 18). It was meant to be an effort in democratizing the city in both its procedural and topographical aspects. This, then, was where the populist neoliberal principles of decentralization and democratization would literally touch down, or be cemented into a new urban sociospatial order.

Topographically, the principle of 'shared rights and responsibilities' seeks to promote a planning and development model that forces developments to be more beneficial for a wider public. In practice, for Bogotá, this resulted in a spatial 'logic' that emphasized 'the strategic redevelopment of the city center and development in the periphery linked by new

¹⁰ The full name is the 'Plan de Desarrollo Económico, Social, Ambiental y de Obras Públicas' (The Social, Environmental, Economic and Public Works Development Plan), but it is always shortened to 'Plan de Desarrollo' (Development Plan) in common parlance, and is best considered as the 'Municipal Development Plan', or 'City Development Plan'.

networks of access' (Berney, 2010: 547). Through more consolidated strategic planning, Berney notes, the city would be made more 'legible'. In the vein of high modernism, a more *legible* city was synonymous with a more *open* city. The new strategic planning system sought to erase internal boundaries and barriers that had created enclosures and divisions (slums, peripheries, etc.), and isolated certain populations, particularly through a new large-scale public transportation network (the TransMilenio BRT), and other public infrastructure projects (especially social housing projects in the urban/rural hinterlands). Yet unlike the high modernist 'total city planning' paradigm, the POT system sought to realign the urban fabric by developing localized land use policies that *enhanced*, rather than remade, existing land uses. In this model, the Historic/Traditional Center would be the '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' (Tixier et al., 2013: 352), while peripheral parts of the west and south would be developed as part of new affordable housing schemes in an attempt to combat informal development and a large housing shortage.

Procedurally, 'participation' in plans was meant to be enhanced in two ways: first, by citizens voting for mayors who could dictate certain aspects of planning in their 4-year Municipal Development Plans. This expanded citizens' ability to exert influence through a system of representative democracy. Second, citizens were granted greater rights to participate *directly* in the formulation of plans. As described above, citizen consultation is legally required for each POT. The same is true for Municipal Development Plans. Before a Municipal Development Plan goes to the City Council for approval, mayors hold a series of participatory events (the format of which is up to their discretion) to seek citizen input. These, however, can suffer from the kinds of drawbacks described above.

The reasons for Bogotá's 'miracle' transformation are a combination of different economic, political, and social elements condensed into a post-modern urbanism that combined both the strategic and tactical (in de Certeau's terminology), or embraced both top-down expert knowledge, and bottom-up experiential knowledge. The POT was not only meant to strategically redistribute public goods, and strategically redesign the city in a way that would better benefit all citizens (i.e. 'the public'), but also, through participatory spaces of public emergence, to inspire and strengthen feelings of citizenship, as well as project an image of modernity, according to Tixier et al. (2013). The development of a more inclusive, more technical planning system, then, was like the ultimate extension of a new socio-spatial order that was being developed in Colombia in response to decades of

disorder and decline. The new planning system, then, offers an ideal research subject to better understand these broader historical processes.

This is best understood in how ‘public space’ has been used as a discourse and a site for unrolling these transformational ideals and practices. As I’ll discuss in the next section, the two mayors most associated with Bogotá’s ‘miracle’ (Enrique Peñalosa and Antanas Mockus) both used ‘public space’ to enact the kinds of topographical and procedural democratic changes discussed here. As Pizano (2003) puts it, discussing these two mayors, policies and discourses for regenerating, converting and producing public space involved more than changes to the physical dimensions of the city, as aspects of social recognition and identity were being incorporated through citizens actively participating in processes of collective decision making.

3.4 Bogotá’s ‘Miracle’ and Public Space: The Model of ‘Pedagogical Urbanism’

The story of Bogotá at the end of the twentieth century is that of a city going from ‘deep urban crisis’ – experiencing institutional issues, as well as problems of insecurity, mobility and public transport issues, a housing shortage and serious social divisions (Salazar Ferro, 2010: 317) – to a city referenced for various ‘global best practices’, or as an ‘exemplar’ of urban planning in Latin America (Berney, 2011; Gilbert, 2006; Montero, 2017; Zeiderman, 2016a). It is a tale of going ‘from chaos to miracle status’ (Gilbert, 2015: 3), or ‘from an example of a failed city to an example of a sustainable and promising one’ (Bocarejo and Tafur, 2013: 3).

In the previous sections, I’ve tried to show how this ‘miracle’ has been part of larger/longer processes of establishing a new populist neoliberal order. A long history of civil war and political exclusion created a weak central state lacking legitimacy, and the response to this was to ‘decentralize’ governance in order to expand political participation, and reassert state authority. In other words, ‘the changes that made Bogotá an admired example were the result of a series of political and social changes, including deep transformations in the city’s urban planning policies and a series of engaged local administrations’ (Tixier et al., 2013: 347). It was ‘the sum of many efforts, some of them coordinated with previous ones, others a response to particular programs, that ended up coming together in a collective project that was not thought through nor structured from the beginning’ (Salazar Ferro, 2010: 325).

Here, however, I want to get specific, and discuss how the processes and policies described earlier were funneled into a public space urbanism paradigm that Berney calls ‘pedagogical urbanism’ (2011, 2017). This is a model based on combining institutional and infrastructural changes with changes to civic culture in an attempt to revolutionize both the social and physical aspects of ‘the city’ through ‘public space’ and ‘citizen culture’ projects and programs, or where ‘culture’ and ‘space’ both played preeminent roles in transforming ‘the city’ (Pérez, 2010). Basically, at the time of the ‘miracle’, ‘a strong emphasis [was placed] on public space interventions as a way to spearhead the promotion of a more equitable city’ (Galvis, 2013: 2). Public space became ‘the *modus operandi*’ of the city’s urban development model (Berney, 2010: 539), increasingly becoming both part of the ‘mystified discourse’ of a better city, and ‘a normative element of the city and in the daily life of its citizens’ (2011: 18). The model of ‘pedagogical urbanism’ is specifically associated with the combined administrations of mayors Antanas Mockus (1995-1997; 2001-2003) and Enrique Peñalosa (1998-2000¹¹). It is these administrations that I turn to next.

3.4.1 The Public Space Mayors and the Urban Miracle: A Tale of Pedagogical Urbanism

Antanas Mockus was an independent mayor with no political history. His background was in academics, as a mathematician, philosopher and president of the National University of Colombia. His policy platform focused on altering ‘citizen culture’, increasing transparency and reducing corruption, and increasing respect for law and order (Gutiérrez et. al., 2013).

In Antanas Mockus’ ‘citizen culture’ platform, the idea was to change the city (institutionally, physically) by changing they city’s *mindset*. More than changing the law, or the city’s street infrastructure, it was about changing the city’s *culture* – ‘its languages, perceptions, customs, clichés and especially people’s excuses’ (Mockus, 2012: 144). Mockus saw his citizen culture policy platform as combining ‘the three regulatory systems of human behavior: law, morality and culture’, or that

¹¹ Enrique Peñalosa is once again serving as Bogotá’s mayor (2016-2019), but the ‘pedagogical urbanism’ model, and other analyses of the ‘urban miracle’, were developed looking only at his first mayoral administration.

The four objectives of citizenship culture were: (1) to increase compliance with norms of mutual interaction, (2) to increase the number of citizens encouraging compliance with norms of mutual interaction, (3) to increase the number of disputes resolved peacefully based on a shared vision of the city and (4) to increase the ability of citizens to communicate through art, culture, recreation and sport. (Mockus 2012: 145)

The ultimate goal (beyond just improving security) was to change the predominant mentality of what Mockus called ‘win all’ (i.e. pursuing personal interests at the expense of others), to ‘all win’ (pursuing collective interests in collaboration with others) (Pasotti, 2013). As Gutierrez et al. put it, ‘Bogotanos were in a prisoner’s dilemma with each other: everybody wanted everybody else to respect the rules of the game and at the same time to have the individual right to transgress them’ (2013: 7). The goal of ‘citizen culture’ was to reverse these traditionally antagonistic politics, and make them more collaborative. Mockus’ ‘citizen culture’ platform, combined with his emphasis on Gestión Pública Admirable or ‘Respectable Public Management’, where the city government ‘vowed to enhance public services and improve accountability’ (Mockus, 2012: 145), a logic of rights and responsibilities and coordinated democratic action between state and citizen actors was created, surrounded by a narrative of ‘public space’.

Broadly speaking, Mockus is credited with contributing to two key (interrelated) changes to governance in Bogotá: the professionalization of government, and the growth of civic pride and public interest in politics. These ideals would become the basis of the ‘pedagogical urbanism’ system, which would be built upon (quite literally) by his successor: Enrique Peñalosa.

If Mockus’ agenda of ‘citizen culture’ can be described as approaching public space and the public sphere as a matter of rational ‘reflection’, then his successor’s approach can be described as one of ‘action’ (Montezuma, 2005: 9). Peñalosa took a more strict developmental approach to public space, earning him the title (for better or worse) of Bogotá’s ‘Robert Moses’ (Cervero, 2005: 27). While Mockus sought to make Bogotá more democratic by altering the city’s mindset (i.e. by altering social and cultural relations), Peñalosa’s main focus was changing the city’s physical form (i.e. altering spatial relations). He sought to do this through two key spatial forms: public transportation networks and public spaces. He saw these as combining to form the essential elements of a more ‘democratized’, ‘human scale’ city.

First and foremost, Peñalosa sought to make the city more publically *accessible*, particularly for the poor. He did this in particular by opening up movement via a new transportation system, which would enhance equitable accessibility in two key ways. The first was by reducing the unfair advantage that private car owners had. In a city where only about 15% of people could afford a car (Cervero, 2005) and only about 14% of trips taken were by car, 95% of road space was still taken up by private motor vehicles (Markow and Moavenzadeh, 2007). This, to Peñalosa, was highly un-democratic. Second, Bogotá was highly segregated, such that the poorest lived the furthest from formal work opportunities.

Thus, to ‘democratize’ the city, he led the construction of the TransMilenio system, what would come to be hailed as the ‘world’s premier bus rapid transit (BRT) system’ (Bassett and Marpiller-Colomina, 2012), or the ‘gold standard’ of BRT systems (Cervero, 2005). Phase I of this system was up and running within two years of being proposed (an astonishing feat in of itself) and carrying 800,000 passengers a day (Cervero, 2005), or about 12% of the city’s total trips taken (Valderama and Jørgenson, 2001).

To Peñalosa, the TransMilenio was the ultimate project for making the city more ‘public’ (i.e. more equally accessible), since the poor cannot afford cars and must walk, bike, or use public transit. A 40% reduction in air pollution was measured, as was a 32% reduction in average travel times, and a 93% drop in bus accident rates (Bocarejo and Tafur, 2013; Cervero, 2005).

This was, however, only half of Peñalosa’s ‘grounded’ (i.e. spatial), ‘quality of life’ focused plan for democratizing the city, which sought to erase spatial segregation issues where the poor were far away from job opportunities and living in substandard housing (Bassett and Marpiller-Colomina, 2012). He also developed the Metrovivienda land bank to purchase land or use eminent domain to buy up tracts of land on the city’s periphery, to then be sold to developers to be improved, parceled and sold as affordable social housing to low-income families. These large tracts of land would be developed in close proximity to TransMilenio *terminales*, or large terminal stations with connections to other types of transit (mainly conventional buses). This, then, was the basis for Peñalosa’s broad urban vision for a more equitable, democratic city: more social housing on the periphery (to replace informal settlements) that would be better connected to the rest of the city through an improved transportation network.

The other part of Peñalosa's 'human scale' city plan was tied to goals of expanding and reclaiming physical public space. As part of this, he restored 1,034 parks, or about 54% of the city's green space, and built three massive new public libraries that were connected to other kinds of public space (Montezuma, 2005). He also developed a new government organization (DADEP, the Special Administrative Department for Defending Public Space) whose primary function was to catalogue public space in the city, and ensure it was not being unlawfully occupied or subjected to exclusionary devices. Although these efforts undoubtedly produced some outstanding results (especially the construction of a massive new park in the southern fringes of the city where poorer residents had a severe lack of green space, new public libraries, and a large-scale expansion of bicycle networks throughout the city), reclaiming public space would ultimately prove to be a much more controversial task than developing a new public transportation system that ostensibly made the city more open and 'public'.

This is where Mockus' and Peñalosa's separate strategies for improving Bogotá combined to produce the city's actual and/or discursive 'miracle' transformation. Public space was at the center of Bogotá's 'miracle' transformation. National policy changes like the 1991 Constitution obliged the state to protect the integrity of public space, and offered protections for people's right to public space, paving the way for mayoral policies like Peñalosa's that sought to recuperate area that had been co-opted by private interests (Berney, 2011). Combining the increased power that came with greater autonomy, and the democratic ideals contained within the decentralization movement, 'public space' became a prominent discourse in Bogotá, and its construction, administration and regulation became central to all aspects of public policy, ranging from education, to transportation, to security, etc. (Galvis, 2013). However, the expansion and reclamation of public space was based on the principle of developing greater formality and order through citizen education, despite (seemingly paradoxical) overtures to expand the democratic power of the citizens being 'educated'.

Berney (2011, 2017) offers perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of how public space became the main space, concept and forum in a new urban paradigm designed to democratize the city, or expand right to the city. She describes the combined efforts of Peñalosa and Mockus as a system of 'pedagogical urbanism' based around, and in, public space (Berney, 2011, 2017). This is defined as 'a mode of planning focused on education and reform...[that] merges social and spatial planning traditions to produce new social and cultural norms leading...to the (re)formation of civil society through an expansion of the

right to the city while creating the conditions for the reproduction of citizens' (Berney 2011: 16).

As already discussed, there was a clear spatial logic to this endeavor, which sought to 'engage the periphery' of the city while 'recuperating the city center' through a system of 'hybrid hubs', 'equalizing networks' and 'educational spaces' (Berney, 2017: 67). Equalizing networks were the new transportation networks that increased connectivity (i.e. the TransMilenio); hybrid hubs were exemplified by the new municipal libraries built in new or existing open spaces by Peñalosa, which sought to increase access to cultural and educational resources, as well as recreational spaces; and finally, educational spaces were the primary sites of citizen formation – open spaces like parks and plazas where different people could interact and learn sociable behaviors through these encounters (2011; 2017).

According to Berney, the 'pedagogy' consisted of two key strategies: the use of 'passive educational devices' (such as signs in parks instructing citizens about appropriate behaviors); and the use of 'active agents', which included security guards, guides, city workers and police, but also individual citizens such as volunteer caretakers and community members who simply decided to take a more active role (Berney, 2011: 22). To summarize how these worked together:

Through programs deployed in public space, citizens learn to interact with and respect others and when visiting public spaces they are encouraged to gather, relax, and forge new shared experiences. This is meant to result in a more unified and positive identification by individuals with the city and with other citizens...Bogota provides a model for ways to encourage the re-emergence of civic life in cities...to enhance the communal spirit and identity of communities, and to increase equity, or opportunities for equity, among different areas of a city through public space projects. (Berney, 2011: 17-18)

'Pedagogical urbanism', in other words, was a model that sought to open up the city (both by increasing access to the center through improved public transit, and through more open public space), and to socialize good citizens through a 'model of conviviality' (Cifuentes and Tixier, 2012: 2). As Berney puts it, these projects 'provided the space and the programming to reinvent civil society through citizen engagement' (2017: 63-64). Its success, then, depended upon citizens being organized according to new topographic and procedural cues, which would encourage them to be part of the new urban order as active, engaged citizen participants.

Critics of this model have focused on the exclusions to access that particular groups have faced, particularly street vendors (Donovan, 2008; Galvis, 2013; Hunt, 2009). Their analyses critique the ‘miracle’ narrative of expanding public space by pointing out how ‘reclamation’ efforts consisted of anti-crime/security discourses, and were often (thinly) veiled attempts to repress informality in public space to make Bogotá appear more as a ‘global city’ (Donovan, 2008). They show how ‘Bogota’s official discourse of planning for equality relies on a limited notion of inclusion’ (Galvis, 2013: 2). As analyses of how *spatial* claims are made by different actors, and take ‘access’ and ‘inclusion’ to generally mean access to ‘inclusive’ (i.e. safe and happy) open public places.

For starters, ‘recovering’ public space entailed new types of exclusions for many of Bogotá’s most vulnerable, including the homeless and street vendors (Donovan, 2008; Galvis, 2013; Hunt, 2009). Street vendors in particular became the target of ‘recovery’ movements, as parts of the city center, like San Victorino, had become both massive centers of informal commerce (legal and illegal), and of violence, with the *localidad* of Santa Fe reaching a murder rate of 497 deaths per 100,000 citizens at one point, roughly equivalent to death rates in an active civil war (Donovan, 2008). Basically, the growth of informal market areas in the city center, paralleled by intensive rates of residential decline, were associated with disorder (in the vein of broken windows theory), and were easy targets for mayors seeking to combine discourses of public space and security (*ibid*). Informal vendors were cleared out of plazas like San Victorino and Plaza España, and were relocated to indoor malls and subjected to new, stricter licensing regulations (Donovan, 2008; Hunt, 2009).

Second, a Haussmann-like urban renewal approach was taken in parts of the city center that became exclusionary on a whole different scale. The Parque Tercer Milenio (Third Millennium Park) project is the standout example of how constructing *new* public spaces could also be problematic. This was a large park built in the city center, built on the site of the former Cartucho neighborhood, which had been ‘a haven for prostitution, drugs, and poverty’ (Berney, 2011: 26). In a ‘militaristic’ operation that sought to demonstrate the government’s power over criminal gangs (Pérez, 2013), the neighborhood was demolished and some 12,000 people were displaced, many of whom simply fled to nearby areas and formed ‘El Cartuchitos’ (little Cartuchos) (Berney, 2011). This was by no means an entirely new strategy in Bogotá, as the Decima (10th Avenue) and similar urban renewal modernization projects were used as excuses to demolish large tracts of the city following violence during the 1948 Bogotazo riots (cf. Pérez, 2013). But the wholesale destruction of

a neighborhood to build a wide-open green space for passive recreation in an area of the city with almost no residents, and which was still synonymous with violence and crime, spoke volumes to how ‘public space’ could be wielded as a developmental weapon by the state. If the Third Millennium Park was meant to be a symbol of a new era (and it most certainly was), its actual symbolic effect was the promotion of new logics and practices of security and order (Zeiderman, 2013; 2016a), at least far more than the promotion of a bottom-up public sphere of influence.

To summarize, Bereny’s (2011, 2017) heuristic model of ‘pedagogical urbanism’ accomplishes a few key things. First, it stands out as a comprehensive exploration of how public space related to Bogotá’s ‘miracle’, and how this tied into broader changes like those I discussed above. Berney’s work highlights the particularly complicated nature of approaching democracy in the contemporary city, and how public space provides both a necessary site and discourse in/through which citizenship and city can simultaneously be produced, and a problematic site/discourse that tends to reproduce a specific narrative of citizenship. Yet if public space, as Berney suggests, was the ‘key site for the reproduction of citizens and a catalytic site for the reproduction of the city’ (2011: 17), this inevitably begs the question: what kind of city and citizen were being (re)produced, and, subsequently, who was in charge of production? What were the processes, or *procedural public spaces* involved in this transformative pedagogical process? In other words, who and where was the participating civil society, and how were they engaged?

These types of questions lead us to the realization that the ‘pedagogical urbanism’ model, despite its ‘citizen culture’ movements, exemplifies a topographical approach to ‘public space’. In part, this is due to the fact that, despite the ‘citizen culture’ movement, most of the transformative changes to the city were taking place in the topographical dimension (a new transport system, new libraries, new housing developments). The solution to social and economic problems was a large-scale transformation of urban space, and an expansion of topographical access to ‘the city’. Thus not only does Berney’s model leave questions about procedural publicness unanswered, the ‘miracle’ public space model also left a lot of social issues unresolved that many, particularly Bogotá’s poorest residents, felt were being ignored.

The next mayor – Luis ‘Lucho’ Garzón – represented another major shift in the city’s politics. Garzón, a former union leader, was the first leftist to occupy the office of mayor in Bogotá. Up until this point, Colombia had remained one of the few countries unaffected (at

the national level) by the broader leftist turn that had been taking hold in Latin American politics (cf. Gilbert, 2008; Goldfrank and Schank, 2009). Nevertheless, it was pretty clear that the vast majority of Bogotanos (low-income and lower-middle-income people) did not feel they had benefited as greatly as the upper classes had from the ‘miracle’ transformations brought about by Peñalosa and Mockus, and with the political climate changing, new political party coalitions were forming and using the decentralization of power to their advantage.

Garzón was a member of the *Polo Democratico Independiente* (Independent Democratic Pole), which would later merge with the *Alternativa Democrática* (Democratic Alternative) in 2005 to form a party known as the *Polo Democrático Alternativo* (Alternative Democratic Pole, or PDA). His Development Plan – entitled Bogotá Sin Indiferencia (Bogotá Without Indifference) – outlined broad goals for establishing a modern, human and inclusive city (Bogotá, 2004). If Peñalosa and Mockus combined to emphasize ‘public’ aspects of the city, Garzón’s administration brought ‘the social’ to the fore of urban politics based on three key principles: the popular participation of citizens in decision-making processes, investment in the priorities of the poor over those of the rich and a more transparent, honest government (Goldfrank, 2004).

Garzón’s major contributions were in the fields of food poverty, healthcare and education. Even Garzón’s critics cannot argue with the results he produced in the field of education: primary school enrollment at public schools went up from 84% in 2003 to 92% in 2006, and from 81% to 89% in secondary schools over the same period (Gilbert, 2008). Overall, through a variety of different educational programs, 180,000 new openings for students in the public school system were created under the Garzón administration. His record was similarly impressive in the field of healthcare. He opened three new hospitals, expanded subsidized healthcare to 336,000 people and began a successful campaign of sending healthcare teams to the homes of poorer citizens (especially in informal parts of the city) to address the needs of the most vulnerable. All of these healthcare measures were bolstered by another of Garzón’s major successes: his Bogotá Sin Hambre movement (Bogotá Without Hunger). By building more than 260 community food centers in the poorest parts of the city (which would provide meals to children, elderly and other needy citizens for free), more than 670,000 people were fed in a huge effort to combat malnutrition, largely in partnership with private sources (like supermarkets) so as to keep costs low (Gilbert, 2008; Tixier et al., 2013).

This is evidence of an important fact: while Garzón and his administration might be considered ‘leftist’, it was a largely moderate government that not only focused on innovative social programs, but also consolidated and continued many of the technocratic programs and projects of its predecessor regimes. This has arguably been one of the more impressive aspects of Bogotá’s governance ‘miracle’, as a case study in dramatic governance change in the Global South: *continuity*, or the ability for powerful mayors with sometimes vastly different agendas to stay the course, and continue with programs and policies of predecessors (Gilbert, 2006).

Nevertheless, this is typically where the ‘miracle’ narrative ends, and usually on a skeptical note (Berney, 2010, 2011; Cervero, 2005; Gilbert, 2006; Montezuma, 2005; Salazar Ferro, 2004; Skinner, 2004). While Berney (2017) and Gilbert (2015), for example, have written follow-up pieces that contain some analyses of continued changes through the last full-term mayor, Gustavo Petro (2012-2014, 2014-2015), these have adopted a negative tone in describing the years following Mockus’ second term. Many, including a lot of planners interviewed for my research, criticize this ‘leftist turn’. In the next section, I explore this ‘leftist turn’, and how it affected the city’s Territorial Ordinance model, and look at how citizens responded to this by re-electing Enrique Peñalosa.

3.5 The Leftist Turn: A new urbanism?

Planners who describe a ‘leftist turn’ usually do so critically. They describe it as a kind of regressive move for the city – a period of ‘decline’, or a period in which the city’s progress was squandered for the purposes of partisan politics and unrealistic idealism. Many argue that the practices and ideals of mayors in the new era have primarily led the city astray, away from the era of Mockus and Peñalosa, which is held to be the ‘most important era of urban development in the city’ (ERU¹² planner interview, 5/19/2014). To be fair, the administration of Samuel Moreno Rojas (1 January 2008 – 3 May 2011) damaged progress made in reducing corruption and establishing trust between citizens and their government. Moreno’s term was cut short following wide-ranging allegations of corruption in public construction contract bids (what became known as the Carrusel de la Contratación, or ‘Carousel of Contracts’).¹³ Yet Gilbert (2015: 8) claims this was part of a deeper ‘rot’, and

¹² The ERU is the Empresa de Renovación Urbana, or Urban Renovation Corporation, the city’s public/private entity in charge of urban renewal master plans.

¹³ In this massive scandal, Moreno and his brother, a Colombian senator, along with other key government figures, were receiving payoffs from the Nule Group, a massive construction firm that had been embezzling

that during the Garzón administration, city council members had once again begun to practice clientelism, appointing friends to key posts and thus destroying strides made in establishing transparency and oversight of public officials. And while Moreno's successor, Gustavo Petro, is seen as returning honesty to the office of the mayor because of his efforts to clean up the corruption installed by his predecessors, his administration was critiqued as being largely ineffective because of the political opposition it faced (and could not overcome), and a lack of experience in his cabinet (Gilbert, 2015). Basically, the a post-miracle narrative has emerged in Bogotá amongst many of the 'experts' associated with the 'miracle', who argue the city has suffered the 'loss' or 'abandonment' of the principles and practices that defined the 'miracle' era. This was primarily attributed to two causes: corruption (which eroded the public's trust in the District), and what one planner referred to as 'zero management' – a result of mayors lacking management capacity, and excessive politicking (ERU planner interview, 5/19/2014).

Moreno is seen as having 'left Petro with a broken city', as one planner put it (ERU planner interview, 5/19/2014), or a 'suffering city' according to another (Fenicia planner, 10/7/2014).

The whole city started to shut down, everything began to fall apart, and the force of this, the impulse, the projection of corruption (that public planning organizations were full of crooks giving unscrupulous contracts to other crooks) onto the highly trained individuals in planning organizations of the highest level, greatly compromised public planning organizations. All this slowed everything down. It all stopped. This mayor is now gone, but the criminal front he mounted still exists, even in the city council. (Programa Progresa Fenicia planner interview, 5/15/2014)

Yet planners attributed the city's decline to more than just the return of corruption. Garzón had introduced an increased emphasis *on social programs* rather than *physical programs* (as planners regularly pointed out in interviews), but also, some say, a return to old politics of patronage and partisanship. It was also criticized as a system of politicking and pandering to a low-income base, akin to similar 'leftist turns' in Brazil or Venezuela. It collapsed the supposedly a-political, technocratic hierarchy of innovative 'power brokers' and 'experts' (using Berney's terminology) that some saw as producing new kinds of state/business coalitions capable of enacting positive change (Gilbert, 2015; Gutierrez et al., 2013; Moncado, 2013).

money from public payments for the Calle 26 TransMilenio route. Moreno and his brother are currently serving prison terms for these (and other) crimes.

Petro's administration faced immediate and fierce political resistance at the city and national levels. Regardless of their value, then, because of his unpopularity amongst both city council members and members of the right-leaning national government, plans contained in Petro's overly ambitious reformist agenda faced immediate opposition. At the national level, political opponents, particularly those in the camp of former president Álvaro Uribe, couldn't stomach the idea of a former *guerilla* holding the office of mayor, much less running for president¹⁴, which Petro (like his predecessors in the mayor's office) did after his time in office. At the local level, corruption had greatly damaged the Polo Democratico's reputation, and they mustered only eight out of 45 seats in the Council. There was also a lot of internal party conflict, latent conflicts left over from the party's origins as a collective/coalition of different political actors broadly categorized as 'leftist' (many Polo Democratico councilors were staunch opponents to Petro (Gilbert, 2015).

Tensions between Petro and his political adversaries reached a boiling point when he was removed from office by the country's Attorney General Alejandro Ordóñez, a conservative ally of powerful former president Alvaro Uribe, for returning privatized trash collection to the public sector. Ordóñez ordered Petro fired for 'violating constitutional principles of commercial competition and freedom' (Associated Press, 2013). Although Petro was reinstated, he had lost many supporters, and some in his administration quit. Furthermore, he had been forced to spend a lot of his time in office fighting legal battles with political rivals rather than working on his plans and projects.

Critics have been quick to point out Petro's failures (Berney, 2017; Gilbert, 2015). This, coupled with strong political opposition to Petro, have left us lacking a critical analysis of his planning platform, and how it compares the model of 'pedagogical urbanism', or the broader 'neoliberal populist' reforms that earned Bogotá acclaim at the turn of the millennium. This is unfortunate because, despite his failures, his attempts to substantially overhaul the POT in support of his goals of 'densification without segregation' represent a paradox. In many ways, they formulate a completely different understanding, or model of 'right to the city' than that imagined in the 'pedagogical urbanism' model. Yet Petro's plans for the center of Bogotá also represented a blend of new international trends in urbanism, and demonstrated the path dependent nature of planning in Bogotá in its incorporation of predecessors' ideals and projects. For the most part, his *Bogotá Humana*

¹⁴ Petro did run for president this year, and lost in a run-off to a member of Uribe's Democratic Center party. Petro's status as an ex-M19 *guerilla* was critical to this, as one of the crucial deciding factors in the election was each candidate's stance on amnesty for former FARC leaders and combatants, as established in the landmark peace agreement signed between the FARC and the government in 2016.

Development Plan continued to promote a broadly conceived ‘citizen culture’ movement, participation remained a key rhetoric, and public works projects were promoted as a means to democratize and modernize the city. ‘Public space’ may not have been the overarching discursive unifier, but opening up the city, or creating an expanded right to the city, remained the core feature. So in many ways, Petro’s plans were similar to those of the ‘miracle’ mayors. However, there were some key differences in *how* he proposed to do this.

To begin to understand this better, it helps to look at exactly what Petro’s Municipal Development Plan objectives were. His Municipal Development Plan (called Bogotá Humana, or ‘Human Bogotá’) contained three primary categories of goals:

1. A city that reduces social segregation and discrimination, where the human being is the central preoccupation of development
2. A territory that confronts climate change and is organized around water
3. A Bogotá that defends and strengthens *lo publico* [‘the public’]

In development terms, Petro hoped to realize these three goals through a new city model based around an ‘expanded city center’ (*centro ampliado*) that would curb urban expansion into fragile hinterlands, and be re-populated through mixed land uses that included large social housing developments. He called this ‘green densification without segregation’ (Bogotá Humana, 2012). Petro wanted to create a kind of ‘positive feedback loop’ between social developments and environmental developments by ‘densifying’ residential uses in the city center (Zeiderman, 2016b). He wanted to ‘mix’ not only land uses in the city center (which is primarily non-residential), but also *populations*, specifically by requiring new projects to include more social housing units. Basically, Petro wanted to re-populate the city center, which has a relatively low density of residents. This in of itself was not a new goal, as it is one of the main principles ensconced in the city’s Plan Zonal del Centro de Bogotá (The Bogotá City Center Plan, established in 2007). This is the main plan guiding redevelopment efforts in the city center, sort of like a smaller POT for the city center, and it includes a number of large housing developments for the Historic/Traditional Center area. What was new, however, was Petro’s more overt emphasis on equitable land readjustment practices for renewal processes, a greater emphasis on social housing in the center, and attempts to greatly reduce building restrictions for city center developments.

One way Petro sought to do this was by requiring *all* new urban renewal development projects in the city to use 10% of their buildable land for VIP housing.¹⁵ In Colombian planning law, two types of renewal are defined: ‘consolidation’ refers to smaller, single-lot urban renewal developments; planes Parciales de Renovación Urbana (or Urban Renewal Master Plans), alternatively, are large-scale developments of multiple lots, and which will have an impact on adjacent urban infrastructure. Master Plans were already required to include 10% VIP, but Decreto Nacional 0075 of 2013 declared *all* new development projects (including single lot consolidation efforts) would be required to have 20% of the total buildable area devoted to VIP housing. To make this more feasible, Petro also did away with building height restrictions for the city center – trying to make these large housing developments more feasible.

While Petro was nominally successful in passing these into law through mayoral decree, he was unsuccessful in his attempts to re-write the POT to include these kinds of laws. The POT is meant to be revised every 10 years, so Petro’s administration was legally responsible for reviewing the technical document. However, critics claimed he overstepped his legal boundaries when he opted to significantly alter the plan with his Exceptional Modifications of the Territorial Development Plan (MEPOT) policy, which he pushed through without City Council approval, and, according to some critics, without appropriate citizen consultation. Additionally, critics claimed the MEPOT did away with many of the good parts of the original plan, lacked an integral public space plan, proposed mixed use developments that would be damaging to residential land uses and generally that the densification goals were simply unviable. The POT was stalled by the national government until the end of Petro’s administration, and many developers, according to one planner interviewed, simply opted to wait for the next mayor and hope for a change in the policy on VIP housing (SDP planner interview, 12/16/2015). Eventually the process of revision was passed on to Petro’s successor – Enrique Peñalosa.

Peñalosa was reelected as mayor in 2015, and will remain in office until 2019. In many ways, not a lot has changed in Peñalosa’s approach to the city. His focus remains on transport (developing new TransMilenio lines, and a new elevated metro), and

¹⁵ VIP, or Vivienda de Interés Prioritario (Priority Interest Housing) is a type of low-income social housing in Colombia. Here, private developers build units whose sale price is strictly regulated by law. Units are sold at a price of 70 SMLMV, or Minimum Monthly Salaries. These particular units would cost 85 million *pesos* to build, compared to the maximum allowed sales price of 40 million *pesos* (or roughly £22,000 vs. £10,000, as per exchange rates in August, 2018). The more common type of social housing that has been built in Bogotá is VIS (Vivienda de Interés Social), which functions in basically the same way, but has a maximum price of 135 SMLMV, meaning it’s unattainable for poorer purchasers.

democratizing the city through public space projects. He immediately repealed the social housing laws and policies that did away with building height restrictions, two of the key reforms Petro had tried to install in his project for repopulating the city center. He also took over the process of rewriting the POT. Here, then, we can directly juxtapose the two mayors' models for the city, and how they envisioned expanding a right to this city.

Peñalosa, in an interview with Berney in between his two terms, declared that public space was 'essential for social justice...the most basic element of a democratic city... A city designed for dignified human life is not dictated by the automobile and remains a livable place for all people, whether rich or poor. Developing bike paths and sidewalks is more respectful of human dignity and more equitable than simply continuing to develop the road network for cars' (Berney, 2017: 98).

Petro, alternatively, promoted a vision of the city in which *housing* would act as the great equalizer. Petro described his urban vision as being based on a Marxist ideological and political background derived from his time as a *guerrillero* in the M-19, and a European education in environmental and development studies. He drew on these two sources to channel the constitutionally based land use mandates that state the social and environmental functions of land outweigh private interests (which he felt had dominated his predecessors' administrations). In an interview, he said he wanted 'to show the whole Bogotano society that another urban paradigm is possible – very different from that constructed city tied up with the private interests of the very predatory market' (interview with Gino Van Begin, August 20, 2014).

Clearly, the two models discussed here do have key differences. The most prominent difference between the two models relate to visions of how space can best be used to serve a broad public interest, and how this land use can best be distributed to maximize equitable access to benefits. It is also a difference of how this space relates to the political economy of planning, and the role that citizens play in 'making' the city. This is especially true of how 'the center' is differently envisioned as a symbolic and real force for integration (i.e. of the whole city, of displaced persons into the city, of the city into global economic networks, etc.). The symbolism and the actual lived reality of how the different models seek to make poorer, more marginalized residents more *central* is key. Yet to some degree, the two models assume the same kind of indirect role for the citizen in shaping the city's spaces. Be it through everyday interactions in public space, or through mixed housing developments that repopulate the city center, the citizen's role in democratizing the city is

as a *recipient* of spatial developments. When Berney describes citizens as ‘users’ in the pedagogical urbanism model, she is affirming this fact. Rather than being active city *producers*, citizens are being ‘allowed’, essentially, to take part in some form of urban democracy through everyday interactions in spaces that are *produced for them*. We must, therefore, as Zeiderman (2016b: 397) points out, be careful to not uncritically apply the term ‘public’ (*lo público*) to spaces or processes in Bogotá, lest we promote ‘taken-for-granted’ forms of democracy rather than actual democratic spaces and processes.

3.6 Conclusions

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Bogotá underwent a dramatic transformation (an ‘urban miracle’) that included rapid decreases in violent crime rates, massive new urban developments, major overhauls of the municipal government and significant efforts to transform citizen culture. These transformations were part of much larger historical processes in Colombia, tied to attempts at breaking with a long history of violence and conflict, and an oligarchical form of highly centralized power. In Bogotá, these changes were strongly tied to public space as both a symbol of democratizing changes, and as part of efforts to totally transform ‘the city’ (both socially and topographically).

In developing her model of pedagogical urbanism in Bogotá, Berney argued that the success of Bogotá’s public space ‘miracle’ depended on a ‘dual role for public space’: the roles of public space as *signifier*, and as *signified*. As Berney describes it,

Mayors created a pedagogical city in which citizens gained satisfaction and meaning from the mayors’ visible innovations in governance and policy as well as new public space types. In return, citizens shaped the city through their participation in its daily life. (2017: 126-127)

Here, then, *signified* public space refers to the role of public space as a highly visible extension of increased mayoral power, and how this power was wielded to benefit ‘the public’. Meanwhile, *signifier* refers to how citizens interact with those public spaces to project their everyday goals – both through public space appropriations, and through participatory planning processes. This language, and the practices and policies it is used to describe, reflect explicit attempts to employ the kind of ‘right to the city’ ideals discussed in the previous chapter. In a way, it shows how the ‘pedagogical urbanism’ model was a kind of post-neoliberal experiment with using ‘right to the city’ as an alternative to traditional liberal democratic forms of citizen/state engagement (Zeiderman, 2013).

Berney's model is key in that it contributes a great deal to understanding how 'public space' was central to this. 'Pedagogical urbanism' explains how public space was transformed into a series of new spatial typologies to affect a positive change on the quality of life of citizens. Yet it is, in this way, a fairly straightforward topographical approach to public space, and its relationship to the public sphere. Berney's is a model that attempts to show how space, and the deployment of symbolism in space, can instruct society. It is, however, not a model that addresses the procedural aspects of citizens' active, intentional involvement in the processes of planning and making these spaces 'public'. Furthermore, where authors *have* looked at the processes of public space production, or its procedural dimensions (Berney, 2010; Gilbert, 2006, 2015; Martin and Ceballos, 2004), they have focused on how decentralizing policy changes surrounding the new constitution have been interpreted and implemented by powerful actors like mayors and their 'expert' bureaucrats. While some has been written on citizen's perspectives on changes to public space (Pizano, 2003; Tixier, et al., 2012), not much has been written on the experience of citizens *participating in* the processes of designing and developing public space, nor the effect that these participatory efforts have had. This, then, presents a gap in our understanding of public space's role in Bogotá's ongoing transformations. This is important because, as Zambrano (2003) writes, this gap has existed in policy approaches to public space, as well. He writes that public space, understood as a scene where citizens can exercise their political rights, has suffered a dramatic reduction in Colombia during the twentieth century. In the case of Bogotá, despite expanded sidewalks, recuperated plazas and newly built parks, the possibility for the citizen to express themselves and participate in the public urban phenomenon has continuously been reduced. He argues that if the problem of public space in Colombia is to be solved, and if fundamental rights described in law are to be put to practice, then the definition of public space needs to be challenged more (Zambrano, 2003: 36). This is exactly what I aim to do with this thesis.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, 'public space' should be addressed as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that is defined as both a space and a process. This is because, on the one hand, strict approaches to segregating public and private spaces/land uses (as evidenced by the failures of high modernism) have actually *exacerbated*, rather than reduced, problems of exclusion and inequality. If we are to make 'the city' a more equitable space, then, the actual practices and places that are meaningful to citizens (poor and rich alike) should be embraced and embedded in processes of *producing* the city, which combines everyday activities (and the knowledge derived from these) with technical

aspects of planning and development (such as knowledge of the law, of infrastructure capacities, of other examples of planning successes and failures, etc.). This is a normative statement that underlies post-modern relational planning theories such as those associated with Lefebvre's 'right to the city' ideal. This is also, however, a statement which dictates a certain analytical, or epistemological approach to 'public space'. If Berney's model shows how expanding topographical public space, and creating new management tools in this expanded physical realm, can 'pedagogically' lead to transformations of 'the city' as a whole (as a society, a space, a government, etc.), then we must also look at how the actors involved in these pedagogical acts are engaging with one another. Who is being taught what, and what kind of publicness does this create? Where and how are these actions taking place, and what does this say about the expansion of topographical publicness? These are the types of questions that I think need to be asked in order to build on the work that public space researchers in Bogotá have already done – questions that will help, as authors like Iveson (2007) and Low and Smith (2006) insist, better connect our understandings of 'public spheres' and 'public spaces' as functional extensions of democratic practices.

In the next chapter, I will introduce the methodological theory and the methods that I use to approach this.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Objectives

4.1 Introduction

The goal of this thesis is to explore the relationship between how public space is imagined and used by different actors in a city that has been hailed for how it has used public space for making the city a more democratic and equitable place – as discussed in the preceding context chapter. As I discussed in chapter two, this entails looking at public space simultaneously as a process, an ideal, and a topographical location. The main research question driving the research and analysis that ensued was this: How did the rationalizing, top-down project of democratizing Bogotá through ‘pedagogical urbanism’ (which describes a new physical public space typology and order) affect participatory public spaces of direct democracy (i.e. participatory planning processes), and to what extent were these processes able to reverse the flow of knowledge to assert a more bottom-up vision for organizing and using the city?

As this is a broad research objective (rather than a specific research question), my approach to the research methodology was to cast a wide net, and adopt methods that addressed public space more holistically. Below, I describe how this entailed a qualitative research methodology that can broadly be defined as ‘ethnographic’, and which is based roughly on a grounded theory epistemology.

I begin by outlining my project’s epistemological basis, and the ethnographic methodology employed as part of this. Addressing political processes and geographic spaces as ‘relational’ research objects (as discussed in the theory chapter) demands a certain understanding of knowledge, and how to access/represent this. Here, then, I discuss how ethnography – as a family of methods, and a theoretically informed reflexive science – provides the appropriate tools for this.

Next, I briefly discuss the practical application of this methodology. I look first at the actual data collection methods that I used. This discussion includes a look at the different parts of the city that I worked in, and the different groups I worked with, and a consideration of what they meant in terms of being a case study (see Lund, 2014). To conclude, I briefly discuss how I analyzed the data that I collected and went about writing up. This outline of the thesis’ course of action helps map the epistemology/methodology

discussed in the first section onto an actual research process to help the reader better understand the empirical data discussed, analyzed and theorized in the conclusions of the thesis.

4.2 The Ethnographic Method and Theory: Establishing an Epistemology

The ethnographer enters the field with an open mind, not with an empty head. (Given, 2008: 288)

Lindner (2006) argues that our experience of the city is a combination of the real and the imagined, or the overlap between the physical world and the ‘urban imaginary’, each bleeding into the other. This, however, presents an obvious research challenge: how does one approach the complexities of ‘the real’ and ‘the imagined’? Typically, methodologies for studying urban imaginaries seek to capture the subjectivity – i.e. the 'voices and viewpoints' – of citizens, or urban inhabitants (Bloomfield, 2006). Ethnography has long been associated with this idea of an emic, subjective voice or perspective. As Ocejo writes,

Ethnographers seek to analyze how people understand their own situations in their lives, examine the connections between their micro-level thoughts and actions and macro-level social structures, and provide generalized explanations for their behavior and for what makes them distinct or similar to other social groups by studying them as they behave in their natural settings. (2012: 3)

Ethnography offers, in other words, a more holistic look at the dynamics of urban life (Jones and Rodgers, 2016).

Yet as much as this internal/external relational perspective makes ethnography a particularly good methodology for studying certain things more ‘holistically’, reflexive debates over the *power relations* entailed in this categorization have also helped make ethnography a particularly good methodology for developing critical theory. This is to say that, ‘taking as given that “knowledge is power,” the political potential of the ethnographic methodology lies in deepening our understandings of the micro-political, relational processes involved in knowledge co-creation’ (Culhane, 2017: 4). This is why I chose to use an ethnographic approach to confront ‘public space’ in Bogotá: it offers both a more holistic way to approach the subject of ‘public space’ (i.e. it allows for a more dynamic discussion of both the processes and spaces entailed in this concept), while at the same time opening up these subjects to a critical examination of power and knowledge. To some

extent, this reflects a growing ‘determination to bring an ethnographic gaze to bear on the cultural practices of states themselves’ in order to better understand how governance is related to space (cf. Ferguson and Gupta, 2002: 981; Gupta, 2012), and how states are defined by their everyday, situated practices of governmentality and bureaucracy (Pérez, 2016).

As ‘ethnography’ has been adopted by an increasing number of disciplines, and thus adapted to a wider variety of epistemologies and theoretical perspectives, it has become an increasingly complex, dynamic set of methodological positions as opposed to a singular paradigm (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Lecompte, 2002). It has become like a ‘family of methods’ that combines description, theorizing, and research in a critical, dialectical way (Willis and Trondman, 2000: 5). I therefore adopt a broad definition of ‘ethnography’, taken as ‘the collection of a wide range of data collected, over a significant period of time, and involving sustained engagement between researcher and participants’ (Lillis, 2008: 367), which is not so much a practice of an expert revealing cultural artifacts (i.e. kinship structures) as it is a joint effort of inventing culture through the relationship between the observer and the observed (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Through a combined practice of ‘thick participation’ (i.e. deep engagement with a specific social subject matter), and ‘thick description’ (a more reflexive, critical form of analysis and writing), a kind of ‘thick analysis’ can emerge, which helps to establish research that is not only trying to capture what is relevant and meaningful to research subjects, but how this relates to the researcher’s objectives, and the broader social world in which both parties exist (Geertz, 1973; Lillis, 2008). This means that research produced in ethnographies is always tied up with *making social* in a way that it is always a combination of knowledge being both ‘internally sprung’ (i.e. emic) and ‘dialectically produced’, or produced by an interplay between different ideas, perspectives and goals (Willis and Trondman, 2000: 6).

This kind of critical, reflexive contextualization is important in a world increasingly understood (if not practiced) as ‘global’ and connected, or where networks and even ideas become contexts in their own right, demanding ethnographies that crosscut dichotomies of local and remote, or near and far, and challenge the paradigm of the fixed, physical fieldsite (Marcus, 1986, 1995). Many have begun to question the way that ‘research setting’, or ‘fieldsite’, or even ‘culture’ is defined and understood in a world defined by interconnectedness (Amit, 2000; Appadurai, 1996; Olwig and Hastrup, 1997). Much as theories of relational space and socially produced place have ostensibly pushed the boundaries of geographic thought, ‘the construction of an ethnographic field involves

efforts to accommodate and interweave sets of relationships and engagements developed in one context with those arising in another' (Amit, 2000: 6). A more 'holistic orientation' has been adopted, forcing researchers to see beyond an immediate scene or phenomenon, and contextualize it in broader social and cultural contexts (Given, 2008).

This is the basis of the idea of grounded theory. Grounded theory is historically rooted in the practice of ethnography, dating back to Glaser and Strauss's ethnographic work on death and dying in the 1960s (Glaser, Strauss and Strutzel, 1968; see also Timmermans and Tavory, 2007; Corbin and Strauss, 1990). It is based on the principle that theories should be built from the ground-up, or that theories developed from the very specific (i.e. small scale contexts, or topically specific phenomenon) can lead to general theories of social life (Timmermans and Tavory, 2007). It is therefore an *inductive* approach to data analysis as it 'begins with general observations and through an ongoing analytical process creates conceptual categories that explain the topic under study' (Marvasti, 2004: 85).

However, following the same line of logic that recognizes knowledge in research as co-constructed by researcher and subject, 'new' theories are always derived in relation to antecedent ones. We therefore must be cognizant of the ways in which our 'grounded theories' are informed by previous concepts, as with Willis and Trondman's (2000) idea of TIME: a theoretically informed method of ethnography. This is a continuous process of shifting back and forth between 'induction' and 'deduction', where a 'register' of observations is in constant conversation with conceptualizations of broader social changes that are not themselves contained in the ethnographic data. Burawoy suggests a similar processes in his 'extended case method': 'The extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the "micro" to the "macro," and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on preexisting theory' (1998: 5).

Lund uses this kind of thinking to point out that while case studies are often presented as 'self evident', or 'natural', they are in fact 'edited chunks of empirical reality' that involve conscious decisions about what elements are included and/or emphasized, and that evolve throughout the research process rather than outside of it (2014: 225).

To help researchers organize case studies during the research process, Lund uses an ‘analytical matrix’ to show how four dimensions of case studies are laid out in a specific relation to one another:

Table 1. Analytical Matrix

	Concrete	Abstract
Specific	Observations	Concepts
General	Patterns	Theories

Image 2: Lund's Analytical Matrix, Source: Lund, 2014

Here, the ‘specific’ dimension is defined as the ‘circumscribed, limited, particular, precise, restricted, singular, special’, or ‘unequivocal’ observations that a researcher makes. The ‘concrete’, alternatively, refers to things that can be defined as ‘actual, authentic, corporeal, in-context, not formalized by the analyst, real, palpable, tangible’, whereas ‘abstract’ refers to ‘conceptual, decontextualized, detached, ideal, ideational, intangible and transcendental’ things (2014: 225). Lund argues that researchers often conflate terms, mistaking the ‘specific’ dimension for the ‘concrete’, and the ‘general’ for the ‘abstract’. As his matrix shows, however, it is where these *overlap* that important analytical and observational processes take place. Lund describes this overlap as a series of movements between the dimensions, or a form of ‘resonance’, and determines that it is through this movement/resonance that we might become conscious ‘of what our work might be a case’ (2014: 225).

An observed event might be a ‘specific’ case in so far as it takes place at a given place and a given time, and it may be ‘concrete’ in that it is something actually observed. Yet Lund’s method points out that this is not enough for social science research. These facts alone do not make a ‘case’ interesting. We must seek resonance between specific, concrete cases within a context and between different contexts, and filter these observations through

concepts (such as ‘democracy’, or ‘public space’) in order to produce theories that help us say something meaningful about the specific, concrete cases studied *beyond* their contextual confines. This, as Lund puts it, helps harness both deductive and inductive processes to simultaneously identify a case (i.e. a specific example of a concrete issue), and subsequently generalize and theorize about this.

Only by shuttling between larger theoretical questions and detailed observations can we institute the problem *and* explain it. It is the *movement* between them and their articulation that produces epiphanies and analytical knowledge. Theoretical questions help to *deduce* critical areas of inquiry, and detailed field research of an *inductive* nature allows us to investigate concrete dynamics. (Lund, 2014: 231, original italics)

Put another way,

Our research has the potential to be a case of many things depending on the configuration of our specifications and generalizations, and our concretizations and abstractions. It is through these analytical movements that the case is produced out of seemingly amorphous material, (Lund, 2014: 225)

This was how (and why) I cast a wide net in establishing the case studies explored here in this thesis. I approached the issue of ‘public space’ in Bogotá as broadly as possible, and tried to let movements between specific/concrete observations mix with patterns, concepts and theories in such a way that something of interest emerged. Because of this, before discussing my research findings (organized into neat case studies in the next three chapters), I want to first look at the actual iterative data collection/analysis/writing process that produced them.

4.3 Doing the Ethnography: Applying the Epistemology to Data Collection, Analysis and Writing

The orderliness of one’s method is easier to establish in hindsight as futile detours can be erased to make it look more coherent and neat than it felt and was at the time. (Lund, 2014: 231)

4.3.1 Being immersed in a social setting: Defining a relational ‘fieldsite’

The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted from August 2015 to November 2016. All of the fieldwork took place within the city of Bogotá. However, to try and develop a more ‘holistic’ understanding of the procedural aspects of public space in that city, my research

efforts brought me to a variety of different physical sites, explored alongside a range of different actors. From the beginning, I decided to keep an open mind about not only *where* I would conduct my fieldwork, but also *what* I would consider ‘public space’ planning and improvement efforts. I wanted to understand how public space as a concept was brought to bear on, and in, other sites and subjects, so I pursued a wide range of opportunities to observe and participate in participatory processes. This would allow me to develop my ‘case studies’ *as my research progressed*, following the strategy of Lund (2014) outlined above.

Ultimately, I explored public space efforts in five of Bogotá’s *localidades*: three in the Historic Center (La Candelaria, Santa Fe and Los Mártires), and two on the peri-urban fringes in the far south of the city (Ciudad Bolívar and Usme). Current and former plans were used to help establish areas of interest. I participated in a wide variety of planning and public space recovery events that included an even wider range of actors and groups. I even participated in a group WhatsApp chat, expanding my research field and methodology to include a sort of ‘chatnography’, or ethnography of a group organized in a digital space (cf. Käihkö, 2018). Some of these ‘research sites’ were directly related to ‘public space’, but others weren’t. I tended to not say no to an offer to attend an event, or give an interview, no matter how tangential it may have seemed. In the end, then, the cases selected here (and the broader context of the Historic/Traditional Center) were selected because of how they emerged as representative examples of observed patterns relating to ‘public space’ planning/development that spoke to concepts and theories similar to those discussed in the theory chapter. A number of planning documents were consulted both during the research, and during the writing up of the research, to alternatively inform questions as the fieldwork unfolded, and as a point of comparison/reference for data collected during analysis. Some were read to provide background information, in other words, while other documents were chosen for analysis when they were mentioned by research participants in interviews, or during participant observation events. Key documents used to provide background information included:

- 1) Decreto 215 de 2005 (The Public Space Master Plan) and the relevant Technical Support Document
- 2) Ley 388 de 1997 (The Territorial Development Law)
- 3) Decreto 492 de 2007 (The City Center Zone Development Plan), and the relevant Technical Support Document

- 4) Decreto 190 de 2004 (The Territorial Development Plan for Bogotá), and the relevant Technical Support Document
- 5) Modificación excepcional de normas urbanísticas del Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial 2013 (Exceptional Modification of Urban Planning Norms in the Territorial Development Plan, 2013)
- 6) Bogotá Humana (Municipal Development Plan for Bogotá, 2012-2016)
- 7) Bogotá Mejor Para Todos (Municipal Development Plan for Bogotá, 2016-2020)

Bogotá's foremost newspapers (*El Tiempo*, *El Espectador*) were also used during the research, and to help establish case studies. They acted both as sources for gauging public sentiment regarding certain issues of interest, and to provide information about ongoing developments that could lead to fieldwork opportunities. Citations of newspaper articles in the thesis are made to reinforce points made by public actors in other fieldwork settings.

Below, I will explore the variety of different specific, concrete examples of groups and events I worked with in greater detail to help better understand how these coalesced into the ‘case studies’ explored in the following empirical chapters.

4.3.1.1 Public Space-Focused Groups

Some of the projects/efforts/groups were more straightforward examples of ‘public space’ than others, where citizens were engaged in participatory processes (initiated either within the community or by the government) of improving or planning a specific park, plaza, street, etc. These are perhaps the most representative of the types of groups/processes I sought to investigate, and they form the core of each of the empirical chapters that follow.

1) Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas: The Parque de los Periodistas (Journalists' Park) is a famous public space in the heart of Bogotá's Historic/Traditional Center. The Neighbors of the Journalists Park (Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas) were founded in the early 2000s to ‘defend’ this public space. The group consisted of local residents and small business owners. I worked with the Vecinos throughout my time in Bogotá as they sought to defend their local public space against the damaging effects wrought by a large ‘floating population’ of university students, tourists, commuters and the homeless. Their main goal was to try and establish a kind of ‘co-responsibility’ with these *flotantes*, and did so by engaging with local institutions (like the Corporation of Universities in the Center of Bogotá, or Corporación de Universidades del Centro de Bogotá), as well as participating in government heritage and public space programs.

Members also participated in a project led by a local university to recover and revitalize a small ‘pocket park’ in the neighborhood. I participated in community planning sessions as part of this project, interviewed various group members on different occasions and participated in major events held in and around the park.

2) Amigos de la Plaza España: Plaza España is the largest plaza in Bogotá, and is located in the Los Mártires *localidad* of the Historic Center, the heart of the city’s *comercio popular*. The Plaza became a central public space focal point, as authorities razed an infamous ghetto in the area, resulting in increased problems of homelessness and insecurity. The Amigos de la Plaza España (Friends of Plaza España) were a collective of local business owners, community leaders and government officials that sought to improve both the physical public spaces of the area, and the image of these, as part of broader efforts to revitalize the Mártires area.

The group led *jornadas de aseo* (community cleanup days), as well as various recreational, cultural and commercial events; participated in a variety of public forums debating public space issues (primarily concerning trash, the homeless, crime and insecurity); organized meetings amongst local community leaders/groups to formalize a response; and hosted a WhatsApp group chat where members could share information, concerns and ideas.

In the months I spent with the group, I followed the group’s progress in the group chat, participated in a variety of public forums, conducted interviews with key members and spent many days in the neighborhood itself as part of organized *recorridos*. Like in the Barrio de Colores, and Parque de los Periodistas examples, however, my interest in Plaza España inevitably brought me into other neighborhoods of Los Mártires, and to engage with other groups/projects.

3) Colectivo Waque: Waque is a word from a language of an unidentified indigenous group in Colombia that means ‘warrior for’, or ‘defender of the trees’. The Collective was an organization of different youth groups from *localidades* bordering the city’s eastern mountain range (Cerros Orientales). I came to know them through their work on recovering two ‘cultural spaces’ in Barrio Atanasio Girardot, on the outskirts of the Historic Center. The group modeled itself after the ‘Minga Popular’, a social movement based on an indigenous form of social organization (the *minga*), which revolves around a community working together, and sacrificing individually, to solve a specific problem. The idea had been adapted to a movement based on the notion of ‘right to the city’, and used by groups to demand greater rights to participate in land planning efforts, particularly in cases where people were threatened by forced removal. In Barrio Girardot, the Colectivo Waque sought to organize the community, and engage the city government, to renovate a local schoolhouse and an outdoor amphitheater, in order to offer public cultural spaces for local youth groups.

I attended planning meetings with the Colectivo, interviewed members and participated in a recovery day (*jornada*) where community leaders and government functionaries worked together to fix-up the Media Torta outdoor amphitheater, and host a musical event.

4) La Candelaria/Las Cruces es tu Casa: An effort led by the IDPC, this was a joint project between local property owners and the city government to restore aging facades in the Historic Center, particularly in La Candelaria and the neighborhood of Las Cruces. Teams of architects and conservation specialists worked together with local residents and business owners in a series of workshops, and *jornadas* (days spent painting facades) to project the historical value of properties and try to make citizens

feel a greater sense of pride in their neighborhood (as a means for reducing graffiti, and other acts of delinquency).

I interviewed members of the Candelaria es tu Casa teams on multiple occasions. I also participated in community education workshops and helped with painting facades alongside government workers, locals and volunteers from a large paint company.

5) Community gardens in Barrio Naciones Unidas: The Lucero area of Ciudad Bolívar has high concentrations of illegal settlements and consolidated informal settlements along steep hillsides in the far south of the city. More than 100 homes were demolished by the IDIGER (District Institute for Managing Risks and Climate Change) because of their precarious location in an area labeled as ‘high risk’ for landslides. The Caja de Vivienda Popular (Popular Housing Bank) negotiated resettlement deals with the families while a joint effort was developed between the Secretariat of Habitat¹⁶ and the District Botanical Gardens to build a large community gardens and walking trails on the hillside where these houses once stood.

Elsewhere in the neighborhood, the Caja de Vivienda Popular¹⁷ led a project known as ‘Barrio de Colores’ (Neighborhood of Colors) as part of public space improvement efforts that included paving roads, making new sidewalks, building a local skate park, and also painting a series of murals and providing paint for residents to ‘brighten’ the facades of their homes. Here, the local JACs (see below) led efforts to organize citizens and get them involved in making the murals, painting facades and participating in community events (such as picnic lunches) organized around the construction of all these public spaces.

Over the course of a few months, I visited the neighborhood(s) affected by these programs/projects many times, interviewing local community leaders and participating in *recorridos* (‘tours’) and meetings with government workers.

Some public spaces and groups engaged with these did not make it into this thesis *directly*, but these were used in the process of resonance described above to help identify and contextualize patterns, and develop generalizations and abstractions around these. The greatest example of this would be my work in the Lucero Alto area of Ciudad Bolívar. As my research unfolded, it became clear that focusing on the historic center would provide a clearer structure to the thesis. This did not, however, mean that the work I had done in the neighborhoods of Naciones Unidas, La Florida, Lucero Alto, Arabia and San Juaquin is not found in the thesis. The public space/public sphere dynamics observed working with leaders from various Juntas de Acción Comunal, as well as government representatives from various organizations (IDIGER, Caja de Vivienda Popular, Secretaría del Ambiente¹⁸, Jardín Botánico¹⁹), have informed my understandings of how publicness in Bogotá is (or is not) enacted through engagements with/in ‘the public space’. These simply

¹⁶ This is the city-level public organization in charge of housing planning, and is the parent organization of entities such as Metrovivienda and the ERU.

¹⁷ The Popular Housing Bank, a government organization that works with residents in informal housing.

¹⁸ Secretariat of the Environment.

¹⁹ The public organization that manages the city’s botanical gardens, and various botanical/landscaping projects throughout the city.

did not fit as a standalone ‘case study’ in the thesis (based on the analytical ‘movements’ discussed above).

Despite the differences between these groups/spaces, I began to notice over time that they all coalesced around a politics of generating *pertenencia*. This was a unifying concept that I found in all groups dedicated to public space recovery or improvement. It became clear that the municipal government and citizen groups alike were promoting public space recovery as a way for developing a better, deeper kind of place relation amongst citizens to improve broader social and physical dynamics in specific neighborhoods. I also began to notice that the Historic/Traditional Center was where these efforts were being most visibly pursued. This is why I began to develop a project around understanding what it meant for actors to develop a greater sense of ownership/belonging in the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá. It was in a broader set of spaces and groups, however, that I began to develop a fuller sense of just how different interests were (or weren’t) being articulated in these processes of developing *pertenencia* through public space projects.

Many of the projects/groups that I worked with were not directly engaged in *public space* planning efforts, but were still examples/sites of active citizen engagement in *urban planning efforts* more broadly. These are the groups I will look at next. They can be divided into two groups. Some were formal participatory organizations that existed as an extension of government policies, legally-established organizations that were directly connected to, but not part of, specific government agencies. These are typically representative councils designed to act as a go-between for a government agency and ‘the community’. Others were more ‘grassroots’ in their formation, formed entirely by citizens without any government mandate. Both, however, can be taken as examples of emergent, procedural public spaces, or sites of citizen/state interaction, and both were key to developing the concept of ‘interests’ into a theory of *perti/enencia*.

4.3.1.2 Grassroots Planning Groups

- (1) **Comite Para el Defenso del Centro:** The ‘Committee for the Defense of the Center’ was a group organized in response to a large urban renewal project known as Ministerios. This project was/is run by the national government’s Agencia Nacional

Inmobiliaria Virgilio Barco Vargas, or the National Real Estate Agency. The Ministerios project is an urban renewal scheme seeking to bring a number of government agencies back to the Historic/Traditional Center from their current location further away. The plan calls for redeveloping an area of six hectares right by other important national government buildings (the president's home/office, the National Capitol, the Supreme Court, etc.). This area is home to a number of traditional businesses located in historic buildings that are in various states of physical deterioration. These, and the small, mostly low-income population of local residents, would be removed for the project, with what group members claim would be insufficient compensation. The group also asserts there was never any citizen participation in the making of the project. Their goal was to unify local actors against the development, in order to insure their interests would also be considered.

The group organized public forums, participated in various public planning events hosted by the government, and also actively engaged with other grassroots organizations. I came to know the group through Michael: a leader and a highly active member who responded to an inquiry I sent to the group's Facebook account. I interviewed Michael and some other members on different occasions, and toured the neighborhood with them on two occasions, visiting with local business owners and residents who would be displaced by the Ministerios project. I also participated in government-led and grassroots participatory planning events with group members.

(2) Mandato Popular del Centro: (Popular Order for the Center) This group was, like the Comite para el Defenso, organized in response to urban renewal efforts that threatened poorer residents and businesses in parts of the historic center. Their motto is 'no decision about us without us'. The group was formed as an explicit response to the Plan Zonal del Centro de Bogotá. This is a strategic plan for urban renewal and densification in the city center that was passed originally in 2005, and which guides the efforts of the Empresa de Renovación Urbana (ERU, the Urban Renovation Corporation), the city's planning agency in charge of urban renewal master plans. The Mandato Popular was an inclusive collective that included members of a wide variety of different groups broadly organized around the idea of getting community input into Plan Centro projects, and especially guaranteeing fair remuneration (most explicitly in the form of '*permanencia*'). The primary organizer was part of the CPL for Santa Fe (see below), and members of the Comite were also there, along with many others. I participated in a large participatory mapping exercise with this group, and interviewed various members.

(c) TUPBogotá: TUPBogotá stands for 'Talleres Urbanísticos Participativos de Bogotá', or Participatory Urbanism Workshops of Bogotá. The group was designed to create locally relevant types of land use plans. These goals were put to practice in a pilot project in the *localidad* of Los Mártires. The group sought to 'de-institutionalize' land use planning in Bogotá, or take the participatory processes out of the hands of government-led processes, and make land-use planning a grassroots, bottom-up endeavor.

To do this, they formed networks of local actors through a variety of initiatives. Some members of these 'networks' were already involved in other planning efforts (like groups discussed below). Efforts included non-planning activities (like helping establish a community library and conducting workshops on recycling and composting), as well as hosting planning events to promote a locally led project of urban revitalization.

I was introduced to this project through Maria, who I knew from the Amigos de la Plaza España. I took part in some of the group's 'participatory workshops', and interviewed Maria (formally and informally) on a number of occasions.

These groups were important to developing my case studies in that regular, long-term engagement with specific examples of participatory planning efforts (e.g. specific groups or events) allowed me to recognize certain patterns. These, in turn, I could analyze using different relevant concepts and theories. I began to see, through these forums, how ‘participation’ was understood and practiced in Bogotá, and thus how different actors’ interests and knowledge can (or cannot) be included in planning/development outcomes. Combined with the ‘institutional’ participatory groups listed below, this was what opened the door to the concept of *pertinencia* (relevance). I began to understand the ways in which people understood the relevance of plans, spaces and democratic participation from a variety of different perspectives.

4.3.1.3 Institutionalized Participatory Planning Groups

Another set of organizations were equally instrumental, and actually acted as a kind of contrast to these ‘grassroots’ efforts. These are organizations that are legally established forums for connecting citizens to government planning efforts. Some (like Juntas de Acción Comunal) have been institutions in Colombia for decades. Others are examples of the participatory ‘explosion’ that followed decentralization principles contained in the 1991 Colombian Constitution. These groups provide interesting contexts for researching procedural aspects of public space because they are typically the groups that government organizations use/approach first when trying to reach ‘the community’. They are sort of the official conduits of community input in planning processes. However, they are also interesting because their members are almost always involved in other, more ‘grassroots’ citizen organizations. They were, therefore, groups that helped to solidify the theory of *perti/enencia* in that they demonstrated how public space and participation were often times used as tools for supporting the initiatives of powerful institutions (private or public) rather than as forums for articulating a bottom-up right to the city based on a collective physical and procedural *oeuvre*. Examples of these groups that I worked with include:

(1) Juntas de Acción Comunal (JAC): JACs (Community Action Councils) are the oldest ongoing form of decentralized participation in Colombia. They have been in existence since 1953, during the period of civil war known as La Violencia. Any territorial area with at least 75 people can apply to have a JAC, and they consist of around 14 individuals, elected by local constituents in elections monitored by the city government.

These organizations are everywhere in participatory practices in Colombia. They are both the government’s main access point for ‘local communities’, and their

members are also usually part of other political processes. Ideally, they act as conduits for their community's interests, as well as for government information reaching into local communities. However, JACs have also been associated with corruption (especially garnering votes for politicians at higher levels, and individuals stealing money or resources meant for community programs).

I worked with JAC representatives in every single one of the cases represented here in this thesis, and in every other area not discussed directly. I conducted interviews with members, and they were frequently my guides to neighborhoods and gatekeepers who informed me of key meetings/events, and introduced me to other actors involved in planning processes (government and non-government alike).

(2) Consejo de Planeación Local (CPL), *localidad* of Santa Fe: CPLs (Consejos de Planeación Local, or Local Planning Councils) are permanent fixtures of community participation and consultation in planning efforts at the level of the *localidad*. They consist of a set roster of leaders representing different social sectors in the *localidad* (e.g. representatives for disabled, LGBTI, mothers, industrial production, commercial businesses, young people, internally displaced persons, the environment, etc.), along with three leadership positions (Technical Secretary, Vice President and President).

Although I worked with CPL members in Ciudad Bolívar, and Los Mártires, I most closely worked with the CPL in Santa Fe. I became involved with the group through the Technical Secretary Edgar, a particularly active member who also ran the Mandato Popular. The main function of the CPL is to consult the local population on the proposed Local Development Plan through structured meetings, and submit a formal written response based on this to the Local Mayor. For the CPL of Santa Fe, the process was designed around a series of meetings in every single neighborhood of the *localidad*, followed by a larger diagnostic session at the end. I participated in some of these *encuentros*, as well as weekly meetings held between CPL members (and sometimes community members), and interviewed different members of the group in the process.

(3) Organizaciones Sociales en Acción por Los Mártires: This group (Social Organizations in Action for Los Mártires) was a collective of individuals from various organizations representing social issues in the *localidad* of Los Mártires. The meetings/events were organized by members of the Social Strengthening (Fortalecimiento Social) team in the District Institute for Participation and Community Action (IDPAC), and representatives from the District Secretary for Social Integration. The group consisted of *gestores sociales* (literally ‘social managers’, but better translated as ‘community engagement officers’) from different government entities, including Health, Mobility, the Secretaría de la Mujer (focused on advancing equality for women), IPES (the Institute for Social Economics), and others. Groups like JACs and CPLs were also represented, as were some non-profits, NGOs and other groups doing social work in the *localidad*. Meetings were held in which ‘diagnostics’ of social issues were discussed, and attempts were made to organize an ‘action plan’ to address the most pressing needs identified. I attended two such meetings, and interviewed key members of the group.

Other formally organized groups I worked with included CLOPS (Consejo Local de Organizaciones de Políticas Sociales, or Local Council of Social Policy Organizations), which dealt with social policy issues and sought to work with different social sectors (e.g. Afrocolombians, indigenous populations, the LGBTI community and the homeless); and

the CAL (Comisiones Ambientales Locales, or Local Environmental Commissions), which organized citizens to address local environmental issues. However, I worked with these groups less exhaustively because they were less directly involved in public space planning and recovery efforts.

Nevertheless, all these participatory groups were key to developing the theory of *perti/enencia* because they showed how the state was often the progenitor of procedural public spaces (i.e. spaces of engaging with a public sphere). This shows how interconnected participation efforts are in Bogotá (between state and civil society), or how difficult it is to distinguish between the interests of the *public sphere* and the interests of the *public sector*. As discussed in the theory chapter, these are not one in the same.

Take the CPL, for instance. Because of the nature of the CPL (i.e. a council composed of individuals representing different categories of interests that is closely connected to the local government by being a legally-defined, permanent entity), it was not a straightforward example of public participation. Clearly, being convened by the state as a mandatory group for citizen participation, the CPL was not ‘grassroots’. Some individuals involved in citizen-led participatory efforts therefore criticized groups like the CPL, or JACs for being too ‘institutionalized’, corrupt and self-serving. Yet members were frequently involved in other grassroots efforts, which makes the separation between ‘grassroots’ and ‘institution’ participation difficult, as well.

Adding to this difficulty was the expansive nature of the government apparatus involved in these processes. Just looking at ‘public space’ alone, there are a minimum of nine district entities with different public space-related responsibilities: The District Planning Secretariat (SDP) is at the top of the planning hierarchy in the city, and has a sub-section called the Taller del Espacio Público to deal with public space planning issues; the IDU (District Institute of Urbanism) is in charge of roads, bridges and other public space infrastructure; the District Institute of Culture, Sports and Recreation (IDRD) is in charge of municipal parks; Local Mayors are in charge of small parks and road works within the *localidad*; the Institute for Social Economics (IPES) works with street vendors; the Administrative Department for the Defense of Public Space and Participation (DADEP) is in charge of inventorying all public spaces in the city and ensuring public space is not illegally privatized by different types of enclosures; the District Botanical Gardens helps plant and maintain trees, flowers and other plants in various public spaces; UAESP and Aguas de Bogotá organize trash collection and cleanup/maintenance efforts of public

spaces throughout the city (which is sub-contracted to various private companies); the Mobility Secretariat runs public transportation (along with the public/private TransMilenio S.A. Corporation); and the District Institute for Cultural Heritage is in charge of maintaining historically and culturally significant monuments and public spaces in the city. Others could also be considered part of this (the Secretariat of the Environment, Acueducto, IDIGER) for their roles in governing environmental standards in publically owned or protected parts of the city, as well. There are other organizations that come into play when *planning* is the subject of interest, including the ERU (Urban Regeneration and Development Company), the Secretariat of Habitat, the Caja de Vivienda Popular and others.

Trying to conduct research on procedural aspects of public space (i.e. citizen/state interaction involving the physical public spaces of the city) entailed conducting research on, or with, a number of these organizations. Interviews were conducted with individuals in a variety of roles in these organizations (community engagement officers, middle and upper-management, planners, etc.), and I also participated in a number of different kinds of events hosted by government agencies, particularly the IDPC. These ranged from *jornadas* for cleaning and painting facades, benches, and light posts, to informative seminars on how to maintain historical dwellings, to consultative sessions for engaging ‘the public’ in planning processes (e.g. for the POT and the Municipal Development plan).

The list of different groups and places could go on, instantiating a much larger discussion on defining my research site/case studies. However, the important point I’m making here is that my ‘research setting’ was never completely fixed, but became more focused over time. I am fully aware, then, that the ‘case studies’ I have pieced together in the chapters that follow are a type of artificial construct. Yet they are artificially constructed based on real observations across a long period of time and a wide range of places and organizations. This gave me a deep field of data to explore when finding examples that resonated across the various dimensions of the analytical matrix I used to develop my case studies. This process of generalizing and theorizing took place both during the research, and after, during the writing up stages of my thesis. These practical matters are what I turn to in the next section to help develop a better understanding of how I turned this broad ‘research site’ into a narrowly focused thesis on the theory of *perti/enencia*.

4.3.2 Data Collection: Making regular observations in a setting, collecting documents, and listening and engaging in conversation

My data collection sought to capture both the physical dimensions of ‘place’ and the procedural dimensions of public debate by using two key methods: participant observation, and interviews. Even though the objectives of this project were to better understand the procedural dimensions of public space (i.e. participation in public space planning, or the way that public spheres influence decisions about physical public space in deliberative settings), I agree with Iveson (2007) that understanding both aspects is essential to developing a more holistic analyses of ‘public space’. This is especially true considering, as discussed in the theory chapter, the evolving perspectives in social theory that embrace a kind of ‘trans-human’ or ‘post-human’ understanding of the social that demonstrate how the human and physical worlds are interdependent (Amin, 2007). Therefore, we should include space and material culture as important research objects in ethnographic practices to better understand the role that place plays in shaping social phenomena (O’Toole and Were, 2008; Pink, 2008).

Considering this, I tried, to the greatest extent possible, to visit the neighborhoods and public spaces that were the *objects* of deliberative processes of planning and development efforts. This was not always simple, however, since many of the places involved in my research were unsafe. This was, after all, usually a/the primary reason for publics to organize around public space issues: real and/or perceived insecurity²⁰. To minimize security problems, I used two key strategies: First, I spent time in the neighborhoods with ‘locals’ (i.e. residents, local business owners, community leaders, etc.). Second, I visited neighborhoods with government *funcionarios* as part of routine, or scheduled visits.

Both strategies offered the opportunity to take advantage of ‘talking whilst walking’, which Anderson (2004: 255) argues helps social researchers harness the ‘co-ingredience of people and place’ in their research efforts. This kind of urban ethnographic practice owes a debt to the works of Baudelaire and Benjamin, and the concepts of the *flâneur* and *flânerie* (Jenks and Neves, 2000), and to later works on ‘psychogeography’ by Debord and the Situationists (cf. Debord, 2005). As described by Jenks and Neves, *flânerie* is a form of

²⁰ As discussed in the context chapter, Colombia had become renowned as one of South America’s most violent nations. Gangs and urban militias became major problems in Colombian cities in the 1980s and 1990s due to activities of left wing guerillas, drug cartels, and paramilitary groups (Gutiérrez et al., 2013). The public space and citizen culture reforms that wrought Bogotá’s ‘urban miracle’ were direct responses to this insecurity problem. Thus, while security was not in of itself an issue of interest to this project, it indirectly dictated the parameters of both research questions, and research methodology.

combined movement-observation in the city that is neither unintentional wandering, nor an intentional journey from A to B. It is also an act that defines its actor – the *flâneur*. Debord's *dérive* functions in much the same way. Both assume a place-based experience that entails co-constitutive processes of place-making and person-making, and as such connect to the ontology of relational space already discussed above. Anderson's point is that ethnography 'harnesses' this purposeful wandering in that the researcher can reflexively interact with not just the spaces, but the way they are constructed by the movements within them (through walking), as well as the imaginative processes taking place within the mind of the wanderer and observer (through talking).

There was a double benefit derived from this practice of 'walking whilst talking', especially as part of planned *recorridos* ('tours') that involved both community leaders and government *funcionarios*. Here, I was able to observe, and to some degree participate in, the processes of citizens and government officials negotiating public space problems or concerns in the very spaces of issue themselves.

Nevertheless, even in cases where embodiment and physical connection to the research is important, the interview itself does more than simply complement the observational and participatory aspects of being part of a research phenomenon (cf. Skinner, 2012). A kind of 'engaged listening' is equally important to engagement in visual stimuli, such as that entailed in observational research (Gerard Forsey, 2010). The conversations I witnessed and had as part of these, and the semi-structured interviews I conducted away from these public spaces, were equally important to establishing an understanding of how publics are engaged and formed through the political processes surrounding the planning, improvement and definition of 'public space'. Indeed, this was always a part of my participant observation practice, as what can be called 'unstructured interviews' were inherently a part of 'walking whilst talking'. Furthermore, more often than not these were the kinds of conversations that helped me develop strong relationships with key informants, such that they led to semi-structured or structured interviews²¹ elsewhere, as well as invitations to a variety of activities and events where I could continue to practice participant observation.

²¹ Formal interviews were recorded with a digital recorder when permission was granted by the interviewee, or where permission wasn't given, answers were recorded in field notes that were typed up later. Informal interviews were recorded as fieldnotes, to be typed up later in a reflexive way.

I also used a kind of ‘chatnography’ as part of my data collection. This can be defined as ‘the online dimension of a broader ethnographic approach, and refers to interaction through instant messaging apps and social media’ (Käihkö, 2018: 2). For months, I participated in a WhatsApp group chat with members of the Amigos de la Plaza España – invited by their founder and leader Andrés – where I was able to observe how a citizen organization took advantage of changes in digital communication technology to develop a public sphere, and also observe ‘conversations’ much in the same way I would in a public forum.

Considering that ‘ethnography seems to compel an address of [a] phenomenon on a multiplicity of fronts’ (Jenks and Neves, 2000: 11), examining public space as a procedural and topographical phenomenon compelled the usage of both participant observation, and interview methods as part of a more holistic methodological approach. This sought to explore not only the place-based experience of the *flâneur*, or ‘walker’ (i.e. the agent of tactical, everyday city making), but also the experiences of public-making members of the government and civil society who, by virtue of her or his participation in planning processes and deliberations in public forums, was actively creating a different form of public city.

Breaking down how I did my fieldwork in retrospect, I can categorize my methods of ‘participant observation’ and ‘interviewing’ a little more specifically. Sometimes, ‘participant observation’ was more ‘talking’ and less ‘walking’. Thus, while one type of participant observation was participating in organized *recorridos* in neighborhoods of interest, I also participated in various *encuentros* (meetings), *talleres* (workshops), *foros* (forums) and *mesas* (roundtables) as part of different planning processes. I also participated in various public space recovery events, where citizens and government agents worked together to improve the physical aspects of a public space, and also try and promote a more active, motivated kind of publicness more broadly. Thus, I can categorize my participant observation as: *recorridos*, participatory planning events and public space recovery events. In total, I participated in approximately 50 such events during my fieldwork.

As part of these, I inevitably held conversations with a variety of people. On the one hand, these conversations functioned as unstructured interviews – a data collection method on their own. On the other hand, this was also a key means for gaining access to other research opportunities, be this as a more structured interview elsewhere at a later date, an invitation to another event, or as an introduction to another individual or group. Many of

the more formal interviews I conducted (which could still be considered only semi-structured in that I never conducted interviews with a set list of questions) were organized in this way. This kind of networking also, however, ended up being not just a research *method*, but also a research *object*, as it became evident that this was not just how I, as a researcher, developed a research field. It was also how citizens, and *funcionarios* from a variety of government agencies, formed networks that could be recognized as types of emergent public spheres. Although I couldn't enumerate the amount of informal conversations I had, I can state that I had conversations with individuals from at least 19 different government agencies; 8 different kinds of 'institutional' participatory groups (like JACs, and CPLs, sometimes with multiple examples of each type, as with JACs from different neighborhoods); and 9 different 'grassroots' participatory groups (like the Amigos de la Plaza España). The more formal, semi-structured interviews are easier to enumerate. In total, I conducted 60 interviews with individuals involved in various aspects of public space planning, maintenance, and improvement, as well as other processes that broadly relate to the praxis of urbanism in Bogotá.

4.3.3 Ethical Considerations: Managing informed consent

Considering the nature of my work (participating in public forums and community events), it was frequently impossible to seek direct informed consent from every single person involved in a research event. Nevertheless, I always made my intentions and role as a researcher as clear as possible to as many people as possible. This was helped by the fact that, as I suggest above, different actors from different groups were involved in many of the same processes/spaces. Therefore over time, people generally understood who I was, and what I was doing. Still, I used a variety of strategies to obtain the greatest amount of consent possible, especially when speaking with individuals one-on-one.

The most direct way I established consent was in formal interviews, or any in-depth one-on-one conversation. Here, I explained in detail what my project was about, who I was, and why I was conducting research, and offered individuals the opportunity to participate (or not). I also gave everyone the opportunity to remain anonymous. Some individuals opted to remain anonymous, but the vast majority did not, and never did I come across someone who did not want to help with my research efforts in some way. With government organizations, where possible, I would submit formal permission (in the form of an online information request) to conduct research, although this generally did not

produce any sort of response. Instead, most of my success came from individual ‘gatekeepers’ who I would meet at various events, and who would agree to talk to me one-on-one.

A slightly less direct form of informed consent was gained in informal conversations. At participatory events, I would always end up talking to numerous individuals. I would always explain my research, and who I was to the greatest extent possible considering the situation. Here, unless somehow otherwise directed by the individual(s), I would automatically grant anonymity, referring to individuals with vague titles in the thesis like ‘participant’ or ‘member’.

Often times, however, I was not given any opportunity to explain my research or offer informed consent. Participating in public forums, for example, I could not directly engage with speakers who would stand up and offer an opinion or ask a question. The same is true of the WhatsApp group chat I participated in for months during my research with the Amigos de la Plaza España. In these cases, I used my best judgment to decide whether or not the information given would/could be damaging to anyone (and pose an ethical risk), while also always keeping in mind that the nature of a ‘public forum’ is such that any willing participants are accepting that their actions and words are being made public. Unless I had previously established permission from someone, therefore, who spoke at a public event, I always anonymize the person’s identity, again using vague titles like ‘participant’ (or, in the case of the WhatsApp chat, the designator ‘Speaker’ along with a number²²).

4.3.4 Developing an understanding of procedural public space in Bogotá through writing and analysis

There was never really a clearly distinct ‘data analysis’ stage for this project. Rather, my thesis project has been an accumulation of reflexive moments, or points in time where because of various external factors (annual reviews, conference presentations, thesis deadlines) I was forced to critically (re)examine what I was doing, or because of the fluid nature of the project’s research sites and objectives, I was always rethinking how things fit together and what they meant. Although I often felt lost during this process, feeling like a

²² In the WhatsApp chat, I could only see the phone number of the person sending a message, unless they were in my contacts list. These individuals were, then, already anonymous to me. I was added to the group chat by Andrés, the chat administrator, who had full control over who was in the group.

coherent ‘project’ was never really coming together, these moments of reflecting on the empirical and conceptual aspects of my project as they developed continued to give my research meaning and shape over time – a pattern which culminated in the process of writing the thesis itself.

The closest thing to data analysis as a distinct project stage came in the months after I left ‘the field. For months after concluding my fieldwork, I was transcribing interviews, revisiting and organizing notes, and entering things into digital format to ultimately organize what counted as my ‘data’. This, however, had been going on *during* my time in Colombia, as well, and has even continued during the writing stages of my project (which has also extended across all other stages of the thesis). I would type up written notes from walking around neighborhoods, and holding informal conversations, on a regular basis. Over time, these notes (along with digital recordings of interviews) were organized, and reorganized, multiple times as I reflected on how the pieces all fit together.

The ideas and concepts informing my work were also evolving throughout, as I continued to engage with an expanding field of literature, and interacted with different academics, throughout the thesis. A month-long visiting scholarship at Columbia University, and various presentations at conferences and other academic events in the UK and Colombia, not to mention regular interaction with my primary supervisor (including an intensive three-day stay at his home!), all continued to help with the ‘analysis’ of my data, and the construction of a thesis ‘narrative’ (i.e. ‘writing up’).

It was through this iterative process of conducting research, engaging with concepts, engaging with other academics, and reflecting on all of this, that the ‘case studies’ that form the empirical chapters of the written thesis took shape. This was also the process that brought the concepts of *pertinencia* and *pertenencia* to the fore. As such, the written product is structured procedurally, as a movement through the different building blocks that create a politics of *perti/enencia* in the urban imaginary and urban praxis of Bogotá.

4.4 Conclusion

The following chapters are, like the research and analysis that led to them, building towards something, embracing the artificiality of that final something in a purposeful way. Public space in Bogotá (like its ‘miracle’ transformation) is not a coherent, fixed concept,

practice, or place. It is always in flux, and its definition depends heavily on perspective – perspectives that are steeped in context. This recognition, as much as the empirical data collected as part of my research efforts, have led to the following exposes on the issues of relevance, belonging and ownership, and how these relate to a recognizable politics of publicness in Bogotá. The cases written up as chapters here were not ‘chosen’ so much as developed through a hybrid research/analysis/writing process, but which retrospectively (and when cast against particular concepts) become ‘cases’ that are representative of the phenomenon of *perti/enencia*.

Chapter 5: ‘Living Heritage’ as the Foundation for *Perti/enencia*: The cases of Las Cruces and Barrio Girardot

Preserving ‘cultural heritage’ has been a key aspect of city center regeneration in Bogotá. Petro pursued this through the Plan de Revitalización del Centro Tradicional de Bogotá (Revitalization Plan for the Traditional Center of Bogotá, or Revitalization Plan for short). Recovering and promoting ‘cultural heritage’ were used as strategies for bringing people together as a community in order to address various social and infrastructural problems in the Historic/Traditional Center of the city. The idea here was that promoting ‘living’ forms of heritage in local neighborhoods would get citizens to recognize the value of their neighborhoods, promoting a greater sense of community and subsequently producing a more active citizenry that would take charge of neighborhood improvement and maintenance efforts and improve citizen-state relations. In other words, getting citizens to recognize forms of ‘living cultural heritage’ would create a cycle of *perti/enencia*, where local planning practices, and the spaces they produced, would have greater relevance (*pertinencia*) for citizens, which would produce a greater sense of ownership/responsibility and ultimately engender a greater affect of belonging (*pertenencia*). These efforts involved ‘the public space’ in three key ways: First, they were pursued through cultural activities held *in* physical public space; second, they included efforts to *improve* urban public space; and third, as collective activities sought by groups with shared interests, they enacted a kind of procedural public space, or emergent public sphere.

In this chapter, I explore two case studies where citizens were involved in these procedural and topographical forms of public making through projects aimed at using, or expanding, ‘cultural heritage’. By contrasting these two, both of which are studies of neighborhoods on the fringes of the officially defined Historic/Traditional Center, I analyze the various collectivizing/inclusive, and alienating/exclusionary aspects involved in the use of ‘heritage’ and ‘culture’ as development strategies.

I begin this exploration by briefly discussing the parameters of the Revitalization Plan. I focus specifically on how the concept of Endogenous Local Development was used as a

tool for establishing relevance amongst citizens (a sense of *pertinencia*) to get them more involved in planning and development processes, and how tying this relevance to public space efforts was used to make citizens take ownership of maintaining and reproducing valuable forms of tangible and intangible heritage found in the Historic/Traditional Center (i.e. develop a greater sense of *pertenencia*, or ownership/belonging).

I then explore a case of cultural heritage recovery in Las Cruces. This is a neighborhood located just south of the Candelaria – the heart of Bogotá’s Historic/Traditional Center (see Image 4). Las Cruces, like La Candelaria, dates back to the 17th century, and is home to nationally registered historical buildings. It is also, however, a marginalized neighborhood associated with gangs, drugs, crime, violence and poverty, and has been physically cut off from adjacent parts of the Historic/Traditional Center by modernizing road infrastructure projects.

In the second case study, I look at Barrio Atanasio Girardot, a coterminous neighborhood to the east of Las Cruces in the Lourdes UPZ.²³ Barrio Girardot, for short, is largely an Estrato 2 residential neighborhood, like Las Cruces. Unlike Las Cruces, however, Barrio Girardot is not considered a part of the Historic/Traditional Center. Thus despite their close proximity, and very similar histories, the two neighborhoods are quite different in terms of how they are approached by the city government.

²³ Unidades de Planeación Zonal, or Zonal Planning Units, are sub-divisions of territory in the city’s Land Use Plan scheme. They generally act as the primary local scale of analysis and plan-making for efforts at the District level, as they are smaller than *localidades*, but larger and less fluid than *barrios*.

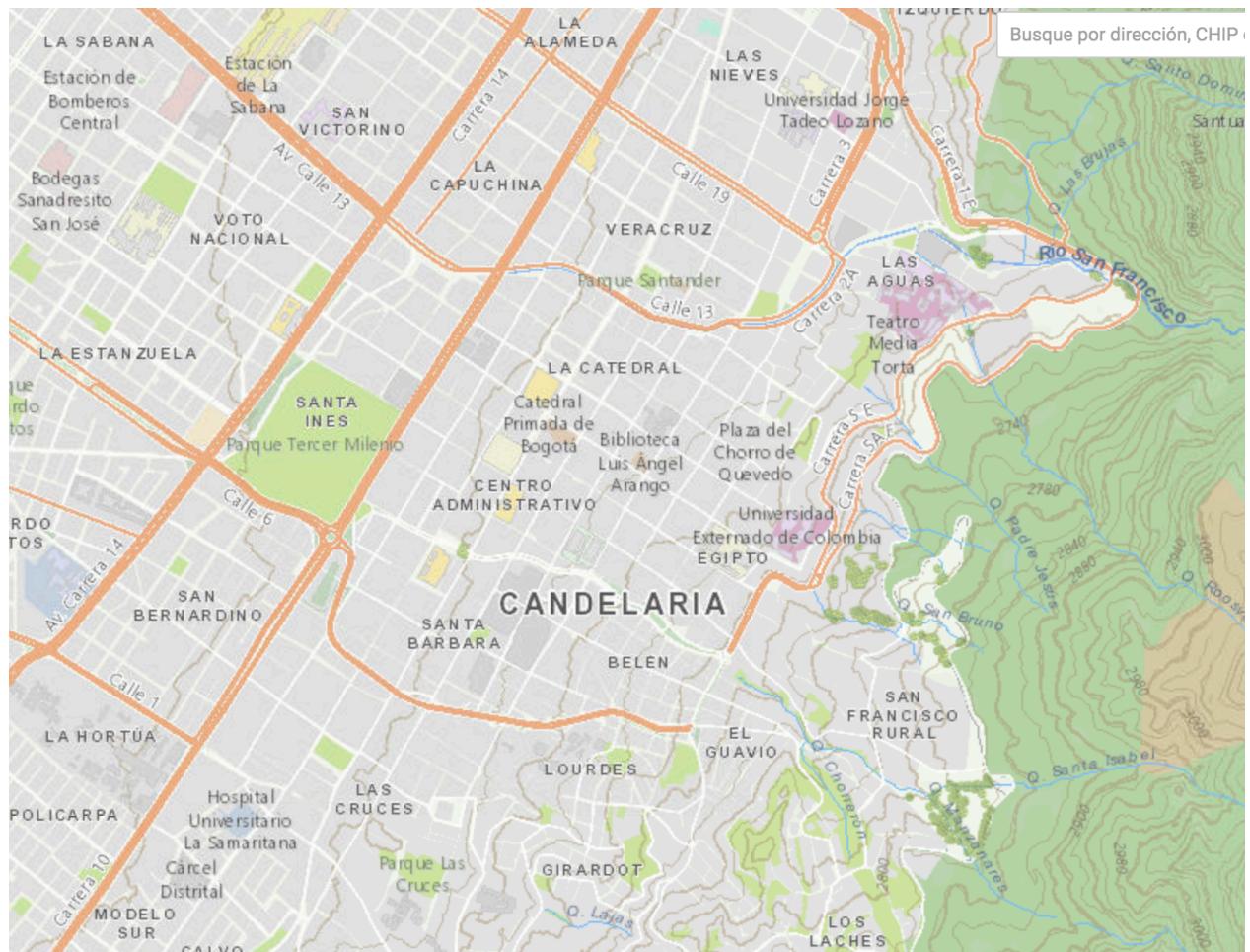


Image 3: Map of the Historic/Traditional Center, Source: mapas.gov.co

5.1 Recovering and Revitalizing Local Cultural Heritage in the Historic/Traditional Center

5.1.2 From ‘Renovation’ to ‘Revitalization’: A Discursive Transition

Petro’s Revitalization Plan is just one in a series of plans for regenerating the city center, but it sets itself apart in how it embraces principles and laws of Territorial Ordinance in order to guarantee a right of *permanencia*. As mentioned in the literature review, one of Petro’s primary urban planning goals was the re-densification of the city center in a more equitable way. This was not just about relocating low-income residents from the urban periphery to the city center, however, but also about retaining the lower-income local residential population and the traditional activities and social institutions of these residents. This is known as *permanencia* (literally ‘permanence’, but better understood as the right to remain).

The idea of *permanencia*, however, had different meanings and functions in different city center regeneration efforts. Sometimes it focused on simply retaining local residents (i.e. not displacing people), while others focused on retaining and promoting a traditional local culture (i.e. preserving a ‘community’ instead of granting housing rights to individual residents). As part of the second approach, the administration placed a greater emphasis on the *intangible*, and *living* aspects of heritage in the center, focusing attention on local cultural practices in addition to the physical, architectural heritage sites. This meant making urban renewal less about new physical spaces that complement existing structures, and more about creating new social spaces that incorporate and promote existing cultural practices.

Pérez (2015) describes how *permanencia* evolved in Bogotá through four distinct development/planning phases:

1. **Modernist Reconstruction:** 1930s-1950s, defined by displacement and destruction in the name of modernization; represented a kind of violent urban reordering that was justified by a specific discourse of removing, sanitizing and eliminating the bad elements in the center of the city (rural transplants, the poor, indigenous, etc.)
2. **Real Estate Reclamation:** 1960s-1980s, focused on repopulating the center of the city through social housing and large housing projects for the middle class
3. **Recuperation of Public Space:** 1990s (synonymous with the ‘miracle’ era), focused on constructing open spaces and infrastructure as a means for recuperating deteriorated and insecure areas; employed language of coexistence, citizenship and democracy, but still functioned through logics of expulsion and exclusion, founded on ideals of order, civilization and urban modernity.
4. **Inclusive Gentrification:** 2000s (synonymous with the leftist era), following the development of the first POT; Following early failures of new institutions such as the ERU (Empresa de Renovación Urbana, Urban Regeneration Company) and the land bank Metrovivienda (designed for promoting social housing projects), which mimicked processes of rent gap gentrification in the global north (i.e. not direct displacement, but displacement by rising land values), the government increasingly tried to curtail private promoters’ use of expropriation mechanisms, trying to push forward redevelopment projects based on participation and inclusion.

Pérez (2015) essentially argues that the Revitalization Plan represents the pinnacle of post-POT era planning efforts in the center because of how it more fully applies the concepts and principles of ‘rights and responsibilities’ that are established in the country’s constitution, and the 1997 Territorial Development Law. Yet in his analysis, *permanencia* is more closely associated with the first, more literal definition described above (i.e. focused on not displacing residents) through efforts to address excessive private real estate speculation, and the abuse of public expropriation/ eminent domain laws. Technically, the promoter (public or private) of a Plan Parcial de Renovación Urbana (Urban Renovation

Master Plan) project only needs to have the agreement of owners with 51% of the land²⁴ within a Plan Parcial to ask for the state to enact eminent domain on the rest of landowners. This had historically led to messy tactics of real estate developers and the ERU negotiating with individual property owners, and buying up properties one by one, to get just enough support (51%) to be able to get a project going. Landowners are compensated with payments based on current land values, which are far lower than the values that will result from new developments, and these payments are not typically enough for residents to remain in the increasingly expensive city center. The common narrative here is that these people are either forced either out of the city entirely, or to affordable housing units in far-off western and southern city neighborhoods. Alternatively, a *permanencia*-based approach known as *gerencia*, or a ‘project management’ approach, seeks to organize landowners in such a way that local residents and businesses would be given real estate options in new developments (i.e. new property in the development instead of a payout).

The prime example of this more inclusive development practice is the Programa Progresa Fenicia project (see Image 4), which was a privately promoted Renovation Master Plan run by the Universidad de Los Andes – one of the largest, wealthiest and most powerful private universities in the country.



Render Vista Aérea del Triángulo de Fenicia, David Delgado Arquitectos

Image 4: Programa Progresa Fenicia Project, Source: Universidad de Los Andes

²⁴ This figure is calculated as 51% of the total land in a project, not as 51% of the landowners.

Los Andes is located in the historic Fenicia Triangle neighborhood. This is a neighborhood of sharp distinctions. Its tightly packed, small 1-3 story brick buildings housing mostly Estrato 2 residents stand in clear contrast to the massive, modern buildings of the university campus – a differentiation made more stark by the campus’ walls, gates and security guards. In an attempt to expand its campus, to protect the real estate values of its buildings, and improve neighborhood/university relations (i.e. break down walls, both literal and metaphorical), Los Andes developed a plan to rebuild most of the neighborhood (excluding a few historically significant buildings) with large modern apartments blocks, and more public space (which the current neighborhood generally lacks).

This project, and the processes of renewal by *gerencia* more generally, are interesting examples of a changing urban regeneration paradigm in their own right, but are particularly important to this thesis because of how they were cast as both complementary and oppositional to the ideals contained in the plans and practices of ‘revitalization’ pursued by the IDPC. There is a constant tension between renewal master planning urban regeneration efforts (i.e. land use densification and modernization), and efforts to promote ‘endogenous’ forms of revitalization that seek to preserve the current people and spaces of the Historic/Traditional center. This raises key questions about who ‘the center’ belongs to, and what it means to different groups of people with different ownership claims. These are ultimately questions of belonging – of both who the city belongs to, and of who belongs in/to the city – but they are also questions of *relevance* in so far as they demand introspection on the problematic of how, and in what ways, the city matters to different people that can all be called its public.

This tension is captured by way the Petro administration described their plans as shifting the narrative from renovation to revitalization (Secretaría Distrital de Planeación, 2015). Here, the term ‘renovation’ was seen as carrying a strongly modernist sense of physical determinacy (associated with ‘urban renewal’), whereas the language of ‘revitalization’ was seen as containing stronger social and economic connotations, or as constituting a more dynamic and holistic approach (Gartner, 2015; Rojas, 2004).

In a way, then, the two are framed as opposites. ‘Revitalization’ is framed as a more endogenous, bottom-up development approach that breaks with traditional modernizing tactics of urban renewal (like Haussmann’s Paris) and high modernist principles of land use segregation through more ‘inclusive’ tactics of incorporating current residents and their mixed land-use practices. Yet this is a false dichotomy. In practice the two approaches

were complementary. Renovation was simply reframed as *part* of revitalization processes, which were meant to address larger social and environmental issues. Renovation Master Plan projects were promoted quite literally alongside the IDPC's revitalization projects, which emphasized the permanence not just of residents, but of *el entorno* (literally translated as 'surroundings') – a term used in Bogotá frequently that describes the combined physical and sociocultural aspects of a neighborhood. Yet this was often an antagonistic kind of complementarity, at least in the process of planning. As one IDPC planner explained it:

With projects like Fenicia, the difference is, to me, a structural one. From the *gerencia* perspective, building the city is about responding to a community in a very specific way – in terms of technical elements of how many square meters they will contribute, and how many they will get. The focus is on *ordenamiento territorial*, and looks at costs and benefits. Yes, it seeks to include the local populations from the beginning, and they are part of structuring the plan, but these projects don't capture the totality of the process – the complexities of all the other processes with the population that lives in the territory. (Eloisa, 10/19/15)

For the IDPC (Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural, or District Institute of Cultural Heritage), the organization in charge of the Revitalization Plan for the Traditional Center (and more broadly responsible for identifying and preserving different types of heritage in the city), 'revitalization' and 'permanencia' meant preserving not just residents and physical heritage, but also intangible heritage, or the culture, customs and practices of local residents. For the ERU, in charge of pursuing the *renovation* goals contained in the Plan Centro, or for privately-managed projects like Fenicia, this meant big new master plan developments that allowed *people* to remain, but also changed land use patterns (density, intensity) such that it also altered physical and social urban forms. For the IDPC, expanded under the Petro administration, this meant a planning process that focused on 'strengthening endogenous culture and capacities', as they framed it, or getting local communities to recognize and leverage their own cultural values in such a way as to promote economic wellbeing and protect their neighborhoods from encroaching development. One way this was pursued was through a discourse of 'intangible' and 'living heritage' as a means for improving areas of the city defined as historical preservation areas/sites by the POT.

In other words, if *permanencia* is the key underlying principle that unites the various strategies involved in the Revitalization Plan, then the *structural* difference between them depends on the extent and ways in which plans and processes understand the relationship

between social, economic and cultural practices and their built environment. It promoted a topographical, *property-based* discourse of *permanencia* in projects like Fenicia, but also more comprehensive, procedural forms of *permanencia* that sought to preserve *el entorno* – both the physical and socio-cultural aspects of the Historic/Traditional Center. Here, it was argued that people's relationship to their physical environment (derived from daily practices within these) created a dynamic sense of place, and therefore different strategies were needed to emphasize these procedural, relational dynamics in order to 'revitalize' the center as a distinct kind of place.

Practices associated with this understanding of 'revitalization' and '*permanencia*' are those which this chapter will explore: practices that try to capture, and leverage, a kind of local sense of ownership and belonging as creating, or otherwise being involved with, a meaningful sense of relevance based on living forms of 'cultural heritage', and their relationship to local spaces and processes. As the IDPC was the clear leader of these efforts, I will proceed by looking at how they laid out a 'revitalization' strategy based on endogenous knowledge and practices. I will then explore two case studies where local knowledge and practices are leveraged as efforts to revitalize cultural traditions, and in so doing, revitalize neighborhood spaces and relations. One (Las Cruces) was directly related to the IDPC's efforts, while the other (Girardot) was not part of the Historic/Traditional Center (despite its long history), and therefore efforts to establish relevance through local cultural heritage involved very different processes and state-citizen relations.

5.1.3 The IDPC's Role in the Revitalizaiton Plan

The IDPC established four key principles as the basis of their role in the Revitalization Plan.

1. Endogenous Capacity: To recognize and strengthen capacities of the local population, and local resources.
2. Cultural Landscapes: To understand the landscape as an economic, social and cultural tapestry when planning the construction of space.
3. Identity and Permanence: To recognize resident population groups as the base for making proposals, and for transforming the territory.
4. Diversity and a Multi-Scalar Approach: To take actions that work across the articulated scales of the city and its micro-territories, and to maintain and augment a diversity of population, uses and activities. (IDPC, 2015)

These principles were translated into five key strategies, around which its 50-odd employees were organized into different ‘teams’. These strategies were:

1. Local Cultural and Economic Development
2. Integrated Housing Improvements
3. Re-naturalization and Environmental Improvement
4. Integrated Public Space and Sustainable Mobility
5. Recovery and Conservation of Cultural Heritage

The teams organized around these strategies worked on a series of projects that were described as ‘nodes’ (see Image 6), or central, physical sites spread across the Historic/Traditional Center in order to ‘tie together all the axes’ of the strategies (Aylen, interview, 5/23/14).

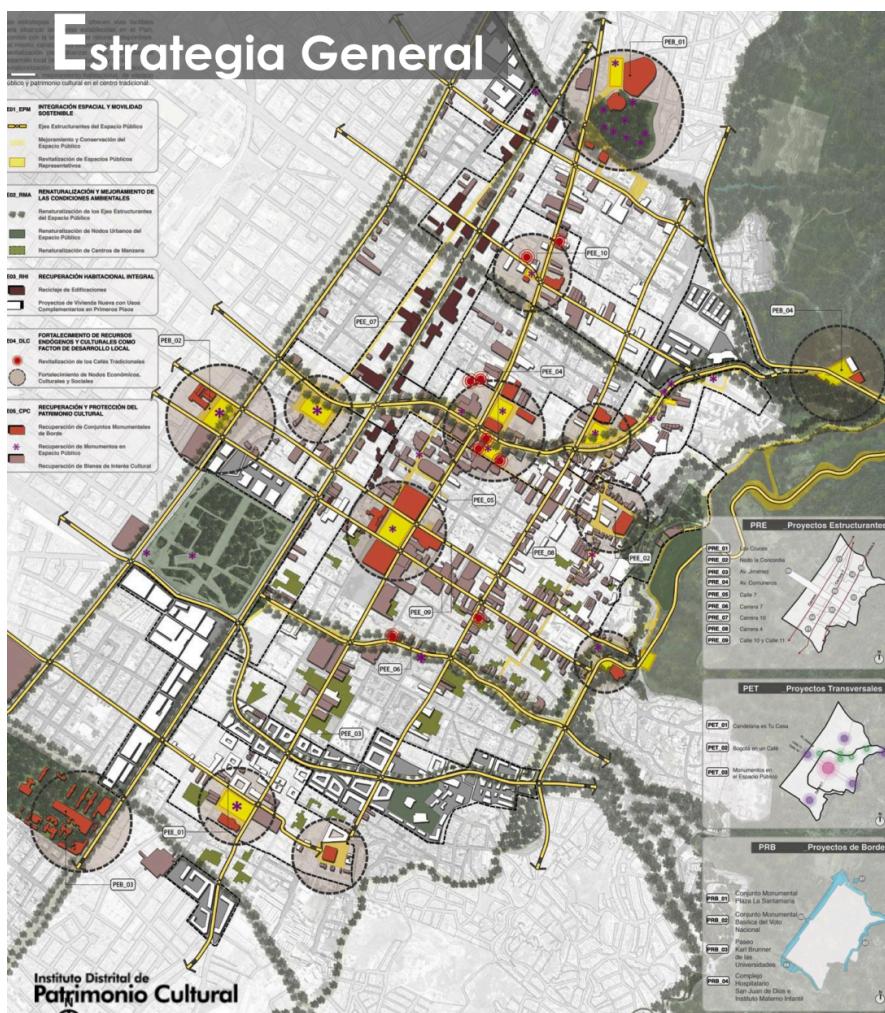


Image 5: Map of IDPC Project 'Nodes', Source: IDPC

The ‘integrated public space and sustainable mobility’ strategy and the strategy of ‘renaturalization’ combined conventional (i.e. topographical) and unconventional (i.e. procedural) public space tactics. In an interview with Diego Cala, Director of Public Space

in the Secretariat of District Planning under Petro, he described to me how public space is ‘connected to everything’, or is ‘like a network’ that joins all aspects of development together. He described this as being as essential part of Petro’s planning and development goals.

The most important thing we’ve done during these past four years with public space is to overcome the sectorial vision of ‘public space’ – seeing it as a distinct sector or component of ‘the city’ – and incorporate it as a dimension of all aspects of territorial planning. (Diego, interview, 1/13/16).

The IDPC outlined two particular strategies for using public space to develop a more active citizen culture:

1. Strengthening a sense of community through public space appropriations and participation in the construction of public space, and
2. Recognizing local cultural practices and manifestations as part of the local landscape, including immaterial culture (IDPC, 2015)

These approaches connected physical public space goals with procedural ones: it developed a local kind of ‘endogenous’ understanding of a particular place, and used this knowledge to develop projects through citizen participation. This was developed further by the Local Development team.

The Local Development team leaders described their purpose as developing a deeper understanding of economics at the neighborhood scale, and how these function as a kind of relational ‘economic circuit’ that includes informal and formal economic practices. Dario, a Local Development team member, explained how the IDPC understand the Historic/Traditional Center as ‘a mountain’ of different micro-cultures that exist in direct relation to a physical network of micro-territories. Their goal was to help local residents and businesses strengthen their position in this ‘circuit’, especially as a defense mechanism against large scale developmental changes in the center that were altering the dynamics directing its flow (interview, 8/19/15).

They pursued this through what they described as ‘an experimental plan type’ called *planes de vida* (literally, ‘plans of life’, better translated as ‘life-based plans’). This was a type of initiative originally used in working with indigenous and Afrocolombian communities in rural parts of the country. It was an attempt to exercise a ‘right of self-government and autonomy’, as Dario explained, allowing groups to ‘build their own

development plans not through legal planning mechanisms, but through a recognition of their own culture, their vision of the territory, their own organization vision of their communities' (Dario, interview, 8/19/15). It was meant to be a true bottom-up planning initiative in that it not only granted communities certain rights to influence the development of their neighborhood, but also to influence planning processes and practices themselves. Their goal, as planners, was to facilitate the organization of these plans, which, as Dario explained, was framed as an effort of 'recovery':

There are a lot of cultural attributes that must be recovered, and must be strengthened, so that at the end of the day they will serve these neighborhoods as instruments to protect themselves from any type of intervention, or from any type of change in the city that could affect the *permanencia* of the communities. (Dario, interview, 8/19/15)

Yet because people mistrusted development processes and renewal plans, fearing their residential or economic situations would ultimately be unfavorably altered rather than preserved or improved, it was hard to find willing participants. This meant it was both hard to have a truly community-led process, and it was hard for planners to get a better grasp on endogenous cultural and social dynamics in order to make plans that they thought would be more beneficial for these communities. Because of 'a lack of interest', they had to rely on working with individuals they called 'key actors': 'leaders in various fields' (Dario, interview, 8/19/15). These were essentially local community leaders already active in participatory governance processes – usually in more than one way. The IDPC and other government agencies depended heavily on these embedded community leaders in developing relationships with 'the community'. The result was that despite the organization's efforts to establish innovative means of engaging local citizens (through efforts like cultural recovery, and *planes de vida*), 'participation' in IDPC plans began in much the same way as it did for planning in Bogotá more generally: through forums where citizens would be taught about government initiatives, and asked for information/feedback of some sort. This was framed as a two-way pedagogical street, or as an opportunity for the IDPC to simultaneously be educated, and to educate.

As Ana Yolanda (Director of Participation and Anti-Corruption for the IDPC) explained, this always started with making sure citizens were aware of the projects, plans and laws pertaining to 'their territory'. But in addition to making sure they know about the plans and projects, the idea was to give citizens the opportunity to *retroalimentar* (give feedback) on the plans and projects. As she put it, 'what the technician knows from sitting behind their

desk is nothing compared to the knowledge the citizen has about what will be successful in their territory' (interview, 10/29/15). This was described as a *gana-gana* ('win-win') scenario: the citizen 'won' because they became better informed, and the IDPC won because they got information about local territorial dynamics that could make their plans better. This was a standard understanding of 'participation' in Bogotá, at least in theory. Basically all kinds of 'planning' require a process of consultation.

This 'win-win' logic was also extended to more active public participation forums, such as *talleres* (workshops) and *jornadas* (volunteer workdays) to try and create a different kind of feedback loop. The ultimate goal, as described above, was that citizens would become actively involved in efforts for upgrading or maintaining local public spaces in order to generate a stronger sense of community around a 'recovered' sense of shared cultural heritage. A secondary goal here was that citizens would be able to continue carrying out endogenous, local development strategies and ideals after the administration was gone. Getting citizens more actively involved was about *sustaining* revitalization efforts. A mayoral administration could only pursue its goals for four years. However, by making citizens feel more responsible for their *own territory* through collective, active forms of citizen participation, and by making these processes and spaces seem more relevant to citizens by emphasizing their attachment to them through a shared history and culture, they could have a far longer lasting effect.

What I want to do now is look at how all this functioned in specific projects in and around the Traditional Center of Bogotá. The first case study I look at is Barrio Las Cruces: one of the organizing 'nodes' around which the IDPC's broader goals were being pursued. One way in which the IDPC engaged the neighborhood was through a competition where different artistic and cultural organizations presented projects that they thought captured the living heritage of the neighborhood, and were rewarded with funds and assistance from the IDPC to turn their proposals into professionalized final products. Two were chosen: a documentary about the history of hip-hop in the neighborhood, and a short auto-biographical history of the neighborhood, a book of the neighborhood's living history that was written based on interviews with older residents. These groups not only made books and movies, however, they also organized events to improve public space, and artistic events that took place in local public spaces. Thus I look at these projects as examples of the IDPC's strategies for Local Development and Integrated Public Space.

The second case study, by contrast, uses culture to capture local meaning in a very different way. Barrio Antanasio Girardot borders Las Cruces, but is not included within the official boundaries of the Historic/Traditional Center, and is thus not part of the Revitalization Plan. Citizens here organized themselves around ‘cultural heritage’ in a different way than in Las Cruces because of this, seeking government assistance for the recovery of two important cultural spaces in the neighborhood: an outdoor amphitheater that had not hosted events in years, and had become a site of squatting and illicit activities; and an old abandoned two-room schoolhouse that had once served as a community center. Citizens wanted to reopen the amphitheater for local cultural events (like concerts), and wanted to make the Librovia schoolhouse into a community youth center for developing cultural skills.

By comparing these two cases, I look at how citizens were engaged in various kinds of ‘participation’ in relation to the idea of shared ‘cultural heritage’, how ‘public space’ was an object and organizing concept that brought these citizens and processes together, and how the state’s role in supporting these efforts was essential to establishing their legitimacy, and reinforcing their ability to be expanded and reproduced.

5.2 Case Study: Las Cruces

5.2.1 Background

Las Cruces is a neighborhood located at the southern edge of the Historic/Traditional Center (see Image 4). Its boundaries are la Avenida de Los Comuneros to the north (connecting it to Barrio Santa Barbara), Calle 1^a to the south (Barrio San Cristóbal), Carrera 3^a to the east (Barrio Girardot and Lourdes) and Carrera 10^a to the west (San Bernardo).

The neighborhood’s origins date back to the beginning of the colonial era. In 1655, a sanctuary called el Señor de Las Cruces was established there, the first recognized urbanization effort in what is now Las Cruces neighborhood. It remained largely rural, however, until the 19th century. As the city expanded throughout the 19th century, Las Cruces became an important industrial area, and became consolidated as one of the city’s principle *barrios obreros* (‘working class neighborhoods’). It was home to artisans producing a variety of products, but due to its semi-rural character, and proximity to clay

deposits, it was a particularly important producer of brick and tile, with 22 such factories existing in the neighborhood by 1890 (Beltrán, 2002, author's translation).

The neighborhood has always been considered peripheral. Early on, through the Colonial and Early Republican eras, while the nearby Candelaria housed the city's elite institutions and residents, Las Cruces was an industrial and rural area for centuries. In other words, early in its history, Las Cruces was *literally* marginal – representing the urban/rural fringe. It was occupied primarily by farmers, indigenous peoples, laborers and factory workers. Over time, however, as local industries disappeared, neighborhood dynamics changed. Eventually, as the city expanded and urban economics shifted, literal/physical peripheralization was supplanted by new types of marginalization. With new policies of *estratificación* ('stratification', a system of land values that determines tax rates and qualification for subsidies), which socially differentiated the land, Las Cruces received new tags like '*barrio popular*', 'vulnerable', 'marginal', 'dangerous', and 'no man's land' (Camellos et. al., 2016: 6, author's translation).

These are the types of images, or phrases, that most Bogotanos associate with Las Cruces today. It is strongly associated with gangs, crime, violence and poverty. It suffers, in other words, from a kind of discursive marginalization. It has also, however, been physically marginalized once again, as modernizing renewal efforts (particularly efforts to expand road infrastructure in the center) have cut the area off from other historic/traditional neighborhoods of the center. The first was the construction of the Carrera Decima in the early 1950s. This was one of the largest renewal efforts in the city's history, and the Decima was dubbed 'The Avenue of Modernity' because of how the project fully embraced the scale and architecture of the modernism movement (Murcia and Mendoza, 2010). While the Decima did increase the neighborhoods connection to the rest of the city to the north, it also cut it off from Barrio San Bernardo – a neighborhood with very similar characteristics to Las Cruces (Caicedo, 2016). A similar rupture occurred with the expansion of the Avenida de los Comuneros in 2007, which cut the neighborhood off from Belen and La Candelaria, its neighbors to the north. The neighborhood was also negatively affected by another major urban renewal project: the demolition of the infamous El Cartucho neighborhood in 1998 (a small neighborhood to the northwest, notorious for being ruled by drug dealers and addicts), which produced an influx of homeless and street-level drug trafficking in the area.

Urban renewal has a long history of contributing to the further marginalization, or the ‘consolidation of degradation’, in Las Cruces (Caicedo, 2016). It has been increasingly cut off from the rest of the historic center, and has continued to suffer from socioeconomic issues, as well as a lack of government attention. This has created a mistrust of renewal efforts amongst a lot of local residents, fears which were stoked by plans for the neighborhood included in the 2007 Plan Zonal del Centro de Bogotá (Plan Centro for short). Many residents in Las Cruces and nearby neighborhoods have organized against this plan because of the large-scale changes it seeks to make.

This is where the Revitalization Plan, and the idea of culture as a defense mechanism, became relevant for citizens in Las Cruces. The new plan, while still pursuing many of the goals included in the Plan Centro, emphasized Las Cruces as a part of the Historic/Traditional Center, and established new opportunities through different types of interventions. Las Cruces is therefore a good example of how the IDPC has increasingly promoted the idea of ‘living heritage’, or emphasized the *processes of heritage production*, as opposed to simpler forms of historical preservation.

5.2.2 The Cultural Heritage Projects

An open competition was run by the IDPC to fund projects related to cultural heritage, under the aegis of a program called ‘Apropiación del Patrimonio Histórico Urbano del Barrio Las Cruces’ (Appropriation of the Historical Urban Heritage of the Las Cruces Neighborhood). The two selected projects were a book called ‘Hecho en Las Cruces: Por la Permanencia en el Territorio’ (‘Made in Las Cruces: For Permanence in the Territory’), and a hip-hop documentary called ‘De la Cuna al Hip-Hop’ (‘From the Cradle to Hip-Hop’).

The official strategy for Las Cruces was called ‘neighborhood integration’. ‘Integration’, here, meant both creating a more integrated internal community, and connecting the neighborhood more fully to broader renewal plans for the Historic/Traditional Center (specifically, emphasizing the neighborhood as a transition zone between the historic Candelaria, and a major urban renewal project known as Ciudad Salud, or the Health City²⁵). The IDPC frames this as an attempt to reestablish a kind of ‘urban fabric’ (a term

²⁵ Ciudad Salud is a large, ongoing project that seeks to renovate the old San Juan de Dios hospital, and also develop new healthcare facilities, on the southern edge of the Historic/Traditional Center. It is meant to become a primary site for healthcare services, and a historic renewal project for one of the city’s nationally-listed historical monuments (San Juan de Dios). It is also a public space project insofar as the current San

used frequently in IDPC plans, and in interviews with IDPC members). For the IDPC, promoting cultural schemes like the grant for these projects was a means for establishing a kind of social fabric, which they sought to sustain (i.e. make ‘permanent’), and thus help make the new territorial fabric that would result from combined preservation and renewal efforts that much more successful.

The book (*Hecho en Las Cruces*) was a project of the Collectivo Artístico y Cultural Abya-Yala (Abya-Yala Cultural and Artistic Collective, CACAY, or simply Abya Yala), a group of young women and men focused on using art and culture to promote peace, and bring awareness to people’s potential for being agents for change in their own lives, and in their local communities. They saw the funding scheme as an opportunity for extending this ethos, as they explain in the book.

The objective of this booklet is to contribute to the recognition and visibility of the spaces, knowledge, practices and traditional trades of the Las Cruces neighborhood, from the experience and history of its inhabitants – who are its protagonists – to strengthen the neighborhood’s identity and its empowerment for the defense of the territory. (2016: 7)

In December of 2015, the group got more than 80 local residents involved in an auto-ethnographic exercise they called *cartografía social* (‘social mapping’). They conducted interviews, took pictures, and participated in local community celebrations/activities to record the evolving, living history and culture of the neighborhood from the point of view of its inhabitants.

The second product – ‘De la Cuna al Hip Hop’ –was similarly a historical, ethnographic endeavor, but it focused specifically on the history of Hip Hop in Las Cruces and the role it has played in positively benefiting the local community. As two brothers (Juan Pablo and Julio Cesar) from a local rap group called Nazari Sound told me, it was music that got them involved in the idea of improving *el entorno*. It was music that ‘changed their way of thinking’, and ‘got them thinking about making a better community’ (interview, 9/20/16). This was the message promoted by the documentary: that hip-hop music (and its associated art forms of dance, and graffiti) function as sources of interconnection and community development. As another local rapper put it ‘Hip-Hoppers propose social transformation through what we do, beyond dancing, singing, painting. There is a social construction that

Juan de Dios compound is closed off, and when reopened, would provide a large amount of green space in a part of the city that has very little.

allows us to grow as people and contribute to our territory' (Camello et. al., 2016: 15, author's translation).

These projects and their participants did not just seek to record and share the significance of cultural history. They also sought to actively (*re*)produce it, or to actively participate in defining what culture and heritage meant in terms of the relationship between the people (community) and space (neighborhood) of Las Cruces. In both cases, these groups not only sought to recover cultural heritage through the mediums of film and print, but also public space, through community-led (and government-supported) improvement and beatification efforts. Processes such as this were established to 'recover' the neighborhood's cultural history, and this was done both through, and to encourage, active forms of physical improvements: using artistic representations alongside cleanup efforts to add significance to physical public spaces in the neighborhood. Importantly, this was done in order to defend the *barrio* from encroaching development. It was seen as an act of defiance against a powerful force of planning and development ('urban renovation') that seemed blind and/or impervious to the (cultural) values of local residents, seeing only the (economic) value of local buildings and spaces. It was about creating a Las Cruces *community* that would stand up to defend its *territory*.

Here, then, there is a clear connection in these efforts between the (physical) neighborhood and the (sociocultural) community, and this connection was not just abstract, but rather was established in practice, through actions to maintain, or improve, the broader neighborhood (known commonly as '*el entorno*'). In other words, efforts to 'beautify' (*embellecer*) the neighborhood, or to maintain it, were in effect seen as efforts that produced 'the neighborhood' as an extension of the individuals in it. These efforts were where the attachment to the physical space of *el barrio*, established in living practices, was a bridge that connected past to present, and people to environment. It was where *el barrio* became *el entorno*, or *one's own environment* – one's meaningful surroundings, or the setting for one's personal narrative and this narrative's connection to a broader community. The physical *barrio* became connected to the social *comunidad* through this collective cultural endeavor. Preservation was about people and their practices, not about old buildings. 'After all', the young woman concluded, 'we are the heritage' (Abya Yala member, community meeting, 9/17/16).

At its most basic, this praxis of community-led, community-focused public space recovery manifest itself in efforts to establish a more attractive neighborhood aesthetic. This

consisted of a two-part strategy. The first part of the strategy was their physical intervention of ‘recuperating the street’, which primarily entailed addressing aesthetic problems of garbage/sanitation (which were associated with crime and insecurity) through improving the physical conditions of public space. It was about changing the aesthetics of public space *as a community* in order to change the social psychology of its inhabitants (who would, in turn, prevent future abuses). The second strategy revolved around providing the social tools needed for the reproduction of these activities, namely developing leadership skills and a culture of participation. This involved promoting citizen culture, not through a series of government-led initiatives, but through locally led projects that required citizen knowledge and skills, as well as the desire to use these for the betterment of the neighborhood. Combined, these were the sociocultural and physical aspects of *el entorno* that groups like Abya Yala were trying to change through their artistic and cultural endeavors.

Abya Yala and local hip-hop groups articulated these two goals through public space restoration projects that they organized themselves, with other community members, and which were infused with their own cultural values, even if the restoration projects themselves were fairly straightforward and simple. Efforts began with identifying areas where people were illegally dumping trash. Groups would clean these areas up, and remove all the trash. The next step was installing a piece of art where trash had been accumulating, with the idea being that people would be less willing to dump garbage on, or in front of, a piece of artwork that was locally produced. Not only were these now beautiful works, but they were *their* works, something from their own neighborhood/community. Various street corners, walls, alleys and staircases were transformed from images of dereliction and decay to brightly colored works of art, and symbols of life. Local *grafiteros*, who are a part of the local hip-hop culture, painted murals, and made planters out of old recycled tires to literally bring life to the streets.



Image 6: Public Space Recovery Efforts in Las Cruces, Source: Author

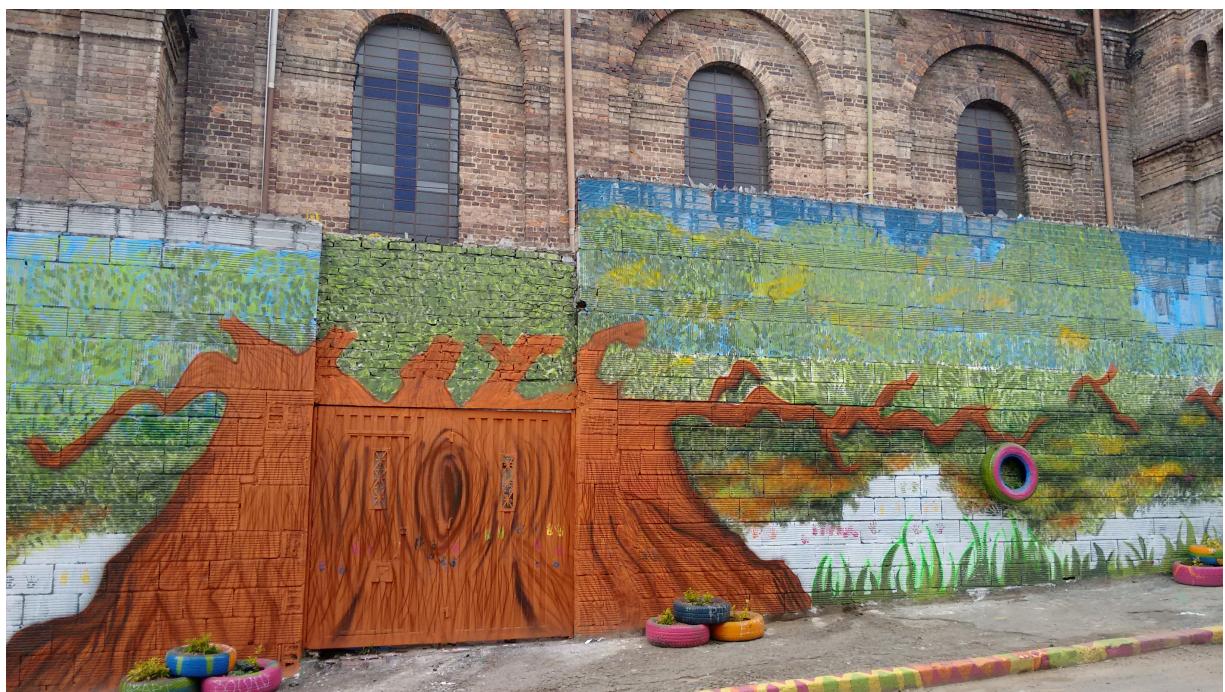


Image 7: Public Space Recovery Efforts in Las Cruces, Source: Author

This was not framed as efforts to recover some detached, abstract sense of ‘history’, however, but as an attempt to reclaim, and renew, a more personal kind of ‘memory’. ‘*El tema de la memoria es muy importante al proceso*’ (‘memory is very important to the process’), the young woman from Abya Yala announced when presenting the group’s book to the community at an event hosted by the IDPC and the local JAC (presentation, 09/17/2016). A more personal connection to the neighborhood’s history was essential to promoting a more holistic type of *permanencia*, as the young woman explained that

‘knowing the history, and sharing the history, is a tool to prevent our *barrio* from just becoming towers’. Emphasizing the importance of ‘*memoria*’, rather than ‘*historia*’, suggests a more intimate relationship with a place. Remembering is a more active form of history *making* – a personal process of relating oneself to the story of a place. It helped establish a greater sense of ‘community’ by making people feel more connected to the histories of others, and also established a kind of *pertinencia* (relevance) for processes of recovering neighborhood public spaces, as ‘the neighborhood’ became a more cohesive physical place with which individuals had a more personal relationship. This relevance was reproduced and reinforced through efforts to improve physical public space, efforts which became part of processes of establishing a *memoria* associated with an active local public sphere. In other words, locally led public space recovery was used as a tool of representation and symbolism by a ‘community’ that was emerging as such (i.e. being produced) through the very efforts of representation (i.e. spatial production). This was bolstered by, and helped reinforce, a strong sense of *pertenencia* (ownership/belonging) for the neighborhood, as the young woman from Abya Yalla explains:

Our houses, architecture, plaza, parks, are important, and are more than just buildings or spaces. This, these, are mine and yours. I’m not leaving because this is my home, this is my territory. We are the ones that take care of the neighborhoods, and should be allowed to stay. (Abya Yala member, community meeting, 9/17/16)

I was invited to join in on efforts to ‘take care’ of the neighborhood on a couple of occasions. On one occasion (7/9/16), I (along with members of the IDPC and volunteers from a large paint company), helped local homeowners paint facades of their historical homes. On another (9/25/16), I was invited to a recuperation *jornada* (‘workday’), where members of the two projects that had won IDPC grant money were recovering a small neighborhood park called Parque San Rafael Lote 1 (see Images 9 and 10).

The park is a fairly typical example of parks classified by the POT as ‘pocket parks’ in Bogotá, which are parks listed as ‘neighborhood scale’ and therefore the responsibility of Local Mayors. Paths made of paving stones separated three strips of grass, and a few large trees were scattered throughout, providing shade for some cement benches that sat facing an open area of pavement. A handful of young men and women were dispersed throughout, working individually on painting the facades of buildings surrounding the park. Some were covering previous tags with a fresh coat of white paint, while others were painting intricate murals. Under the trees, a few women had a large kettle boiling over a fire that sat in a portable metal fire pit. They sat peeling potatoes and chopping vegetables

for a stew. Elsewhere, a few young men (whom I recognized as members of some of the rap and break dance groups that were responsible for the documentary, *De la Cuna al Hip Hop*) were setting up some speakers. Soon the small park was filled with music.



Image 8: The Las Cruces Pocket Park Jornada, Source: Author



Image 9: Graffitero Painting a Mural in Las Cruces, Source: Author

I was given a choice by a woman from Abya Yala upon arriving: help paint or help peel. Considering my lack of artistic talents, I chose the potatoes. While peeling, I talked with some of the Abya Yala members and an older woman, who it turned out was the mother of someone in the group. She hadn't lived in Las Cruces long, but said she really liked it because of the 'strong sense of community' they had (Anonymous *Jornada* Participant, 7/9/16). Idra, one of the Abya Yala members, agreed, and said there is a lot of support for the cultural efforts that the groups here today are making, including from the Junta, and from older residents (interview, 7/9/16). Today's event was a case in point. It had nothing to do with the District (who she described as 'stingy'), and was completely self-initiated and self-funded. They had gathered all the resources for the day together from local residents and businesses, through things like donations and discounts, but also from their own pockets.

This is where the strategy of recovering public space tied into the second strategy of establishing a sense of community, and developing local leaders who will help expand and reproduce improvement efforts – a dual process described as *formación* ('formation'). Tin Tin, a representative of the local Latin Fury breakdance group, explained this during the presentation of the documentary – breakdance, hip-hop, music and art in general, are about more than just culture. They are opportunities for *formación*. The artistic processes I was observing were producing talented, multidimensional young people with skills beyond the art they were practicing, and at the same time, generating a sense of community. There was an entire process that went into a day of painting murals, and it included a lot more people than just the artists making them. Putting this process together took social skills pertaining to leadership and organization.

Yenny, a local activist and researcher, framed this as artistic groups 'teaching more than just art'. In their efforts to organize and improve their neighborhood, and in dividing up different responsibilities amongst themselves, they were learning valuable leadership skills, which included community-organizing skills. These skills were subsequently seen and learned by other young people that got involved in their activities. As Yenny explained, these kinds of groups were 'trying to do something more' than just art, 'taking actions that really mean something'. Hip-hop in particular, she said, 'has been adopted, adapted and applied by local young people to the context of their own world, their own stories, their own *barrio* (Yenny, neighborhood tour, 8/27/16).

This is representative of how cultural heritage is used to incite active processes of *formación* and *memoria*, which are the driving forces behind creating a personal sense of *pertinencia* (relevance) as a means for improving collective *pertenencia* (ownership and belonging). Efforts to beautify public spaces were attached to processes of re-writing a living collective historical narrative in such a way that an actually existing form of ‘local cultural heritage’ was being produced through active cultural practices. This formed a stronger sense of community around public space, and made the actors involved part of an emergent public sphere. The case of Las Cruces, then, seems to be an ideal example of what the IDPC’s plans sought to do in terms of ‘endogenous local development’ to both integrate a local community through tangible (i.e. public space) and intangible (i.e. cultural practices) forms of connection and sharing.

However, it is significant that these efforts were supported by the IDPC, or that the ‘endogenous’ efforts described here were also connected to institutional efforts for establishing bottom-up state-citizen relations. This is very different from the case of Barrio Girardot, which was not included in the IDPC’s revitalization efforts. Next, I want to look at how citizens engaged with one another, local public spaces, and a large, complex municipal government apparatus using local cultural heritage as a tool for *formación* in a scenario where they weren’t invited to do so as part of a government grant scheme. I use three ethnographic vignettes of three separate events to explore how this process differs from the one described here, and what this says about the role of *memoria* and *formación* in public space-centered development schemes.

5.3 Case Study: Barrio Girardot

Barrio Atanasio Girardot (generally referred to simply as Girardot, or Barrio Girardot) is a neighborhood in the UPZ of Lourdes in the *localidad* of Santa Fe, sitting just to the east of Las Cruces (see map). Lying on the steep western slope of the Cerros Orientales (Eastern Hills, the mountain range forming Bogotá’s natural eastern border), the neighborhood is far less connected/accessible than Las Cruces, despite its proximity. It is like a maze of steep, narrow streets that often end in a staircase, a retaining wall or a sharp, grassy slope.



Image 10: Street in Barrio Girardot, Source: Author

The first time I visited the neighborhood on September 24, 2016, to attend a meeting with the Colectivo Waque (a local group of young community activists), the taxi driver scolded me for going to a place I shouldn't. He himself appeared a bit nervous as he drove around a neighborhood he clearly was not familiar with, trying to find La Librovia – a former schoolhouse that had been abandoned, and which the Colectivo wanted to convert into a cultural center for young people. He insisted the neighborhood was ‘super dangerous’, referring to it as an ‘olla’ (a term used to describe dangerous places where drugs are sold and consumed openly, where gangs are prominent, and where violent crime is persistent). His sentiment was reinforced when we stopped at the CAI²⁶ to try and get directions to the place. The first two police officers had no idea what or where the place was. A third, wearing a bulletproof vest, walked over and said he knew the place, but did not seem sure he wanted us to go there. He approached the car and questioned my reasons for visiting the neighborhood. I explained I was going to an event, and after a short pause, he seemed to tentatively approve, nodding slightly, and backing away. He still couldn't offer any help,

²⁶ Comando de Acción Inmediata, or Rapid Action Command Post, these are small pop-up police stations located in public parks, plazas, and along streets throughout the city. They are trucks, or small huts, where a few police officers are located, meant to be the first responders for problems in particular neighborhoods.

however, as he did not know exactly what the place was I was talking about (he tried to direct me to the local Casa Comunitaria, the headquarters of the Junta de Acción Local). We continued wandering, however, and after a bit more driving, a woman who we flagged down walking on the street pointed us in the right direction. I soon recognized some of the young men from events in Las Cruces, and told the cabbie to let me out. He again entreated me to be safe as I paid the fare.

La Librovia was a small single-story building on top of a hill. The front was painted white with a teal strip around the bottom, while the sides and back were covered in colorful murals. A brick retaining wall with the word ‘free’ spray-painted on it sat in front of the building, separating it from the street below. The inside consisted of one large room, dimly lit by a single bulb, with a rickety old wooden ladder leading to a low-ceilinged loft. The walls were covered in graffiti – different tags and murals, mostly promoting some type of positive message (e.g. promoting peace).



Image 11: Exterior of La Librovia, Source: Author

When I walked in, I found some old folding chairs set up in neat rows, and two young men trying to splice some wires from the ceiling light together to get the electricity for a projector. I chatted with the few individuals there, and soon, a few others started arriving. There was a woman from the Instituto Distrital de Participación y Acción Comunal (IDPAC, District Institute for Participation and Community Action), but she was the only government representative present. This was in stark contrast to most of the other planning

events I had been attending, which were usually flush with blue jackets emblazoned with the ‘Bogotá Mejor Para Todos’ slogan of the Peñalosa administration (which was currently transitioning into power). She had her young daughter with her, who looked to be maybe 5. A small handful of young people showed up, some of them from a group of *grafiteros* that had been at various events in Las Cruces (although these were the only faces I recognized from the neighborhood next door). The others were members of the Colectivo Waque – the group hosting the meeting today. A couple of older men arrived as well, who were part of local JACs.

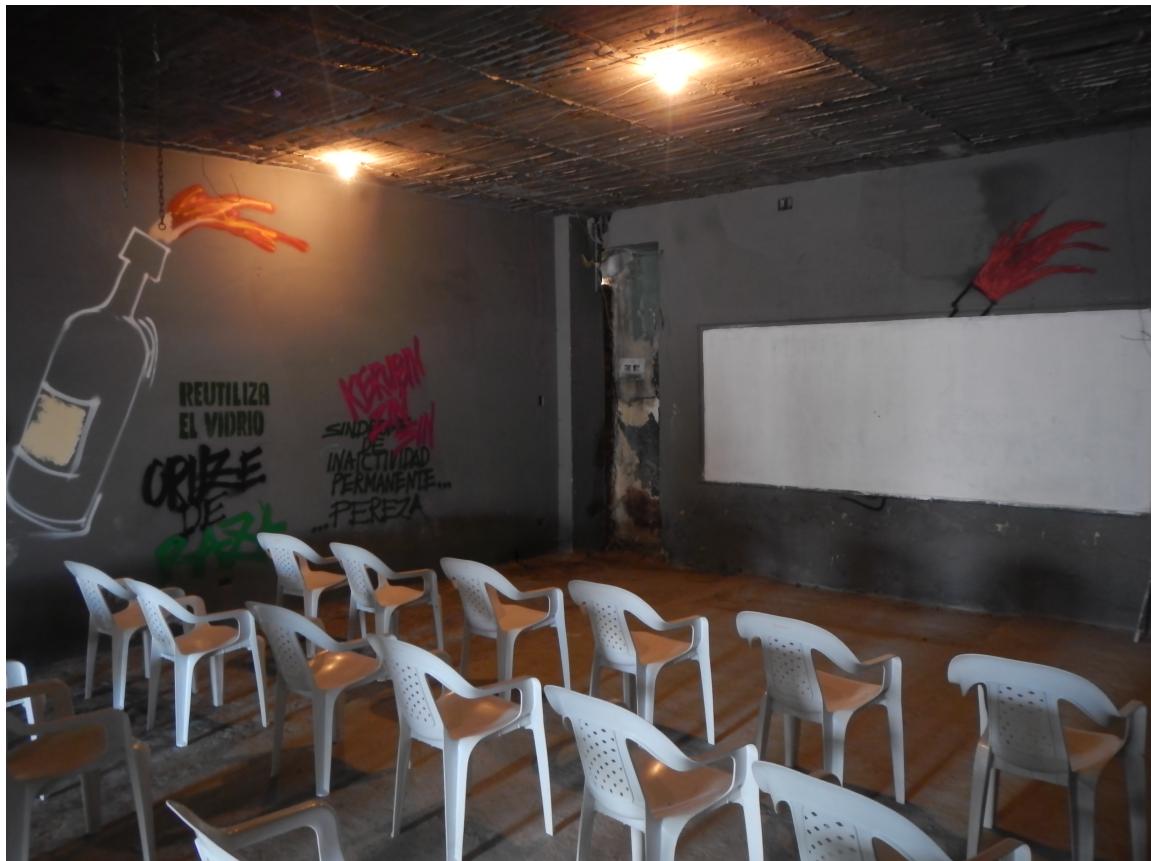


Image 12: Interior of La Librovia, Source: Author

I had met the young man fiddling with the wires at the Las Cruces book and documentary launch. He was the one who tried to convince Las Cruces residents that they should work together to improve the area. His name was German, and he appeared to be the person running things, along with the assistance of another young man (Daniel) and a young woman (Natalie). After finally getting the electricity sorted, and once enough people have arrived, German began the proceedings.

First, he introduced the group. ‘Waque’, he explained, is an indigenous word meaning something like ‘warrior for/defender of the forest’ (German, Colectivo Wacque meeting,

9/24/16). The name emphasizes their environmental goals, which center on wanting to protect the vulnerable forests of the Cerros Orientales. This was not the only connection the group has to indigenous culture, however. German explained that the group was modeled after the *Minga Popular* social movement.

Minga was another indigenous word that referred to collective efforts, whereby everybody in the community committed all their resources and time to achieve a common objective. In recent times, it has become a word associated with movements of solidarity amongst marginalized people (e.g. indigenous communities, Afrocolombians and rural *campesinos*). It has become popularized around Colombia as a name used for grassroots movements, in particular movements resisting neoliberal development practices (Chavarro and Tyrou, 2016), and can be seen as a reflection of the post-1991 constitution era of government trying to embrace land ‘as a foundational principle for indigenous and Afro-Colombian worldviews’ (Reichel-Dolmatoff, 2017: 13). It had been adopted by these (and other) groups as a means to challenge the predominant land use and land use planning systems. This was made quite clear in a video we watched about a group called ‘La Minga Popular por el Derecho a la Ciudad y lo Público’ (People’s Movement for the Right to the City and Publicness) – a citizen movement in Cali where citizens had organized to fight against private developments that would displace poor residents. German explained that the Colectivo Waque was modeled after this idea of a ‘right to the city’, and they wanted to organize people to make their own plans and neighborhood development practices (Colectivo Wacque meeting, 9/24/16).

In the video, different people from the Minga Popular were interviewed about their efforts. ‘It’s a collective effort’, one young woman says, ‘where everyone commits a little to getting something done’. ‘It’s about empowerment’, a young man states. An older gentleman explains how it’s about being able to experience ‘different processes and perspectives’. Another says its ‘something from our ancestors’. They explain how it is a fight against ‘displacement’ and ‘dispossession’, both of which are being forced on them by ‘the state’, the ‘municipality’. They are joining together, using this collective mentality, this collective force of power inherited from generations of ancestors, to establish their own *ordenamiento territorial* (zonapublica, 2014). This, German explained, was what the Colectivo Waque wanted to do by recovering these local community spaces, and getting the neighborhood involved in the process.

The goal for the day, German explained, was to discuss how to go about recuperating two cultural spaces. They wanted to figure out how to ‘re-open the doors’ of the old cultural center we were in (in order to create a ‘cultural space’ for young people, cultural groups, or any kind of social movement), and to think about how they could re-open the nearby Media Torta Amphitheater to host different cultural events. These spaces, he emphasized, would be for all, and ‘would not be under the control of any flag, any central authority’ (Colectivo Wacque meeting, 9/24/16).

Today was meant to be the first step in the planning processes, trying to figure out *how* they could/should go about this. One problem was resources. The one *funcionario* present (the woman from IDPAC) made it clear that they, as *funcionarios*, don’t manage money, but that various entities might be able to provide materials. In other words, there was no specific funding (like the *becas*, or grants, that funded the ‘Hecho in Las Cruces’ and ‘De la Cuna al Hip-Hop’ projects), but they could search around and see what kind of physical resources (like equipment) different government agencies might have for them to use. The first stage was also, however, about figuring out how to organize ‘the community’ around these efforts, or how to get neighborhood support. The two appeared to be connected, however, as the discussion turned to how low levels of participation were a key reason why they did not have funds like this in the first place. German insisted that ‘when the *funcionarios* have an event, and they see that none of us show up, they think we don’t care. They say: “there’s nobody here!” So we need greater community presence’. The IDPAC rep reinforced this, telling the group about how important it is to ‘tell the story of their efforts, of the neighborhood, tell people about the importance of the neighborhood and the spaces they are trying to recuperate, and how these have symbolic importance’.

An older man named Hugo chimed in here. Hugo was the JAC president from another nearby *barrio*. I recognized him from a participatory planning event hosted by the Secretaría Distrital de Planeación²⁷ earlier that day for the new POT: The First Citizens Forum for the Territorial Ordinance Plan Revisions for the *Localidades* of la Candelaria and Santa Fe. As this (long) name suggests, this was the first in a series of participatory events held by the city government for revisions to the POT, which the Peñalosa administration had decided to organize by grouping *localidades* together based on proximity (rather than deal with each individually). Hugo lamented that a lack of

²⁷ The city government agency at the top of the planning hierarchy.

community interest and support, *and* a lack of government support for participatory processes, were both to blame.

They call it participation, but I only saw 10 people from Santa Fé there, from a *localidad* of how many thousands? They are planning for us, but without us, and we have to be very careful to not let this happen. We need to create assemblies in each and every neighborhood, get together and think about what to do with the *territorio*. We should be doing our own studies together, identifying problems and what is needed.

Hugo's speech brought things to a kind of crescendo, and acted as a sort of final summary. He emphasized how fixing up the physical public spaces of La Librovia and the Media Torta would help to 'create a cultural circuit'. It was about connecting people within the community, and to the communities in surrounding areas, through the medium of 'culture', taken to mean a collective manifestation of shared practices and ideals. This was like a mirror to the IDPC's plans for 'integration' in Las Cruces, but the mechanisms for achieving this here were quite different, at least as different as the neighborhoods themselves.

In the end, promises were made to organize the next step: a *mesa interinstitucional* (inter-institutional roundtable), where a wide range of government agencies would send representatives to meet with a 'strong community presence'. At the meeting, specifics could be laid out in regards to who has the capacity to do/provide what for recovery efforts, and how things would move forward with organizing a recuperation *jornada*.

5.3.1 Mesa for the Media Torta

The next event was held at the Casa Comunal in Barrio Girardot on September 27, 2016.²⁸ As promised, it was quite the 'inter-institutional' roundtable: five members of the JAC were present, along with five IDPAC reps, two police representatives, two people from the Secretaría de Integración Social²⁹, two representatives from the local mayor's office, and one representative each from the IDU; the Secretaría de Salud (Secretariat of Health); the Secretaría de la Mujer (Secretariat of Women's Issues); the Secretaría Ambiental

²⁸ *Casas Comunales* (Community Houses) are local community centers controlled by the relevant Junta de Acción Comunal. However, while the JACs have control over access/scheduling (they literally hold the keys), these are designated as 'public spaces', and are therefore property of the city and subject to city budgetary and developmental policies.

²⁹ The organization in charge of creating social policies for integrating the city's most marginalized inhabitants more fully into urban society (e.g. the homeless and IDPs).

(Environmental Secretariat); Aguas de Bogotá³⁰, and the Jardin Botancio. From ‘the community’, there were a handful of young men from the area. Some of these were members of the Mesa de Grafiteros de Santa Fe (a collective of young graffiti artists from the area), a local theater group, and other artistic groups I did not recognize.



Image 13: Casa Comunal, Barrio Girardot, Source: Author

Before the meeting began, I found myself chatting with the *gestor social* from the IDU, who explained what his job was. *Gestores sociales*, he explained, are essentially the ‘mouth and ears’ of government organizations. Their job consists of relaying information in two directions: First, *to citizens* in the territory they’re assigned to (which in his case was the three *localidades* of the Historic/Traditional Center) about what the IDU does (their plans, goals, vision etc.), and second, to relay information *to the government* (IDU *gestor*, interview, 9/27/16). This second function is more complex, as on the one hand it entails relaying information to other *funcionarios* from different agencies at meetings such as this, while on the other, it means relaying information about/from citizens and other agencies back to their own agency. In principle, these representatives connect with others from the other sectors of the government, and with community representatives, to negotiate plans that work for all. It is a kind of collaborative/communicative planning strategy that seeks to make rational, agreeable decisions about territorial planning endeavors. In reality, however, it can be far more chaotic and far less ‘collaborative’. Today, the *gestor social* from the IDU explained, appeared to be one of those times.

³⁰ The public contractor in charge of public space cleaning and maintenance.

He claimed that IDARTES (Instituto Distrital de las Artes, or District Institute for the Arts) was the administrator of the Media Torta (or the agency responsible for it), but pointed out that they were not present. His argument was that all the different *funcionarios* from the various Institutes and Secretariats present could only do so much without ‘the guide’ present (i.e. the central authority). What he meant by this was that they had resources they could commit, but they couldn’t actually promise these unless they had the permission of the overseer of the public spaces. When I asked him why this ‘central authority’ was not present, he simply shrugged and said: ‘exactly’. However, when the IDU representative stood up to voice his concerns about this to the rest of the crowd, an IDPAC representative defensively claimed that all relevant organizations had received invitations, and it was up to them to send representatives. Furthermore, a disagreement ensued over whether or not IDARTES was *actually* the administrator of the space. Others seemed to believe it was the IDR (Instituto Distrital de Recreación y Deporte, District Institute for Recreation and Sport). It did not matter, however, because they weren’t present at the meeting, either. Eventually, it was decided to just move forward.

The IDPC and JAC seemed to emerge as the new central authorities for the proceedings, and soon, a three step process was decided upon: First, a short discussion to outline the problems; second, a *recorrido*, or neighborhood ‘tour’, which would entail a visit to the two key sites to demonstrate problems; and third, a final discussion back at the Casa Comunal (after problems had been identified, and observed in person) about what each entity could do to help.

The JAC president, Gregorio, started things off by describing the history of the Media Torta and its current state. The amphitheater had originally been ‘gifted’ to the neighborhood by the government during the construction of the Avenida Circunvalar,³¹ more than 30 years prior. Now, it ‘sat abandoned by the government’, as no events had been held there in years, and it had reportedly been taken over by squatters who were using it as a center for illicit activities (particularly drugs). In a way, he explained, the space had always been a symbol of the government abandoning the people in the neighborhood. It had been given to the community by the government as a kind of ‘white elephant gift’,³² as

³¹ This is a north-south road in the Cerros Orientales (Eastern Hills) whose planning began in the 1960s, and which was built starting in 1981. It was designed as a means for connecting the north and south of the city, pitched as a way to reduce spatial segregation, but it entailed a massive amount of displacement of informal settlers who had made homes in the Cerros Orientales.

³² A term referring to a gift that is actually burdensome to its recipient.

he put it, because it had actually been detrimental to the local community (Gregorio, Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16). Its construction (as a consolation for larger destruction caused by road construction) itself displaced a large number of residents who had (illegally) been occupying the hillside in informal settlements. It was, then, representative of a kind of ‘systematic violence’, as one JAC representative put it later, against the neighborhood (Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16).



Image 14: Media Torta, Girardot, Source: Author

Nevertheless, Gregorio emphasized that it had become a rich site for local culture and sociability. In addition to artistic events (like plays and concerts), it was where neighbors would go to celebrate major holidays and festivals, and had become a unifying space for the local community as well as a site for cultural recreation. Combining its current state of disuse/misuse, and its history as a site for bringing people together, he concluded that this was therefore an ideal site for promoting the mayor’s goals of ‘recuperation’, and continuing the principle of cultural ‘recovery’ that had been inscribed in the Revitalization Plan as laid out by Peñalosa’s predecessor, Petro. Gregorio and the JAC, in other words, recognized an opportunity to capitalize on the current administration’s plans and goals, building on principles established by the previous administration, and were trying to leverage this into something more beneficial to the local community.

After the community had been given the chance to make their case, the *funcionarios* took over. The first of these to respond was Fernando, the head *gestor social* of the IDPAC for the *localidad* of Santa Fe. It was becoming clearer that the IDPAC was the de facto organization in charge. Being the District entity in charge of JAC/government relations, this made sense. He agreed that yes, Peñalosa *was* emphasizing ‘recovery’ efforts, and that their job – as a kind of ‘connector’ between communities and the administration – was to make sure that this could be done *entre todos* (‘together as one’). He described how important these *recorridos* and *mesas* were to ensuring these goals (IDPAC *gestor*, Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16).

The representative from the Local Mayor, who spoke next, had a different approach, however, and insisted that ‘a lack of community participation was 90 percent of the problem’. He insisted that the Local Mayor was willing to help, but ‘the community’ was not putting in the necessary time and effort. They lacked a sense of *pertenencia*. He did admit that this was at least in part due to everyday problems people faced, namely lacking extra time and money to commit to redeveloping their neighborhood spaces on their own. Still, he lamented, the ‘sad truth’ was that, without these commitments, things would stay more or less the same. He did, however, credit the JAC with being an exception to this rule. It was ‘the rest of the neighborhood’ that was to blame (Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16).

The discussion continues like this for a while longer, but soon, we are headed to the amphitheater. The *recorrido* was about a ten-minute walk up the hill to the theater from the Casa Comunal, during which time different participants formed small groups and chatted casually. Once we arrived, people sat on the cement bleachers, and our time was spent learning a little more about the theater’s history. Hugo talked about the kinds of events that used to take place there, and how they have been lost, like the festival of *chicha*³³ makers (*chicherros*), which was lost when the community of *chicherros* was displaced by the housing clearance. Hugo also talked about current, living forms of culture in the neighborhood, particularly hip-hop music, and how the space would benefit the community with events he called ‘*festivales de vida*’ (‘festivals of life’) that promoted these forms of ‘our own culture’. Gregorio wrapped things up by entreating the *funcionarios* – ‘with their great knowledge’ – to do whatever they could to help them fix things up so they could see

³³ An alcoholic beverage made from fermented corn.

these changes made. On our way back to the Casa Comunal for the final stage of the day's proceedings, we briefly stopped at the Librovia, but spent even less time there than at the Media Torta. Again, Hugo expanded on the history of the building, and an emphasis was placed on how important this building could be to the community with the help of the *funcionarios* and their organizations (Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16).



Image 15: Barrio Girardot Recorrido, Source: Author



Image 16: Recorrido in the Media Torta, Source: Author

When we returned to the community center, the plan was to discuss what each *funcionario* thought their entity could offer to the process of recuperating these buildings. This proceeded in a very ad hoc fashion, but each *funcionario* took a turn and said something about what they could, or would like to do. Integración Social, for example, said they could help by coordinating with the Gerencia de Jovenes (Administration of Young People), connecting young people from other neighborhoods and projects with the young people and their efforts here in the community. But Gregorio reminded them that what they really needed were material resources. And not just paint, he said, as people keep talking about getting things to paint the theater. ‘Paint is superficial’ he said, and would be a ‘poor investment’ equated to addressing ‘shallow problems’. He challenged: ‘We should invest in fixing deeper physical problems. What will the paint matter without electricity, or water in the bathrooms? Let’s not waste the investment on shallow fixes like paint’.

So inevitably, the discussion turned to money. The head IDPAC rep reminded the JAC members that *funcionarios* did not have the authority to manage money, and couldn’t provide any. What they *could* provide, however, were materials and human resources. He suggested that, to get funding, the Junta should devise a plan, and talk to the local mayor’s rep who earlier had said the mayor was always willing to help. They should set up a meeting, and have a clear ‘management strategy’ before they go in, to have a better chance at getting funding. For his part, Rafael said that they (the Alcaldia Local) would support the effort (meaning with money), but the key question was who would manage the resources. It would be best, he said, if it was the Junta. No more specifics were given, but this was an important moment, even if it passed quickly, as one of the main criticisms of Juntas (made regularly by other citizens actively engaged in participatory processes) was that they are corrupt, and are only after money to ‘line their own pockets’ (Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16). In a separate interview with Gregorio, I asked him about this. He addressed this issue by saying that they were a ‘new administration’ (Junta elections had just taken place), and that people ‘just needed time to see that they were for real – that they were actually pursuing the community’s best interests’ (Gregorio, interview, 10/19/16).

Eventually, the conversation turned back to a lack of community participation. The IDPAC *gestor social* outlined the important role the JAC needed to play in fixing this.

We don't know the community, so we need you, local leaders, to help us. Without you, all our efforts are nullified. We need to work hand-in-hand as *gestores* from different government entities, but in the end, it is the community leaders that we really need to be working with. We, as the IDPAC, can only help by generating lines of communication and connection between the community, *gestores* and the central administration. (Gestor Social from IDPAC, Mesa for the Media Torta, 9/27/16)

Then, the representative from the Health Secretariat spoke up, and suggested that people probably just don't know about these kinds of events. Everyone agreed that this was a recurrent problem, and that it affected both 'the community', and the *gestores sociales* from different organizations (a lack of information and communication). Regardless, the Health rep said, the responsibility was on the JAC to 'get these lines of communication established'. The IDPAC, and the other *gestores* present, would do their part by networking within the District government apparatus, but the Junta needed to do their part and get 'the community' out and involved.

This discussion concluded the day's events. It was decided that for the next step, there would be a *jornada* for fixing up the amphitheater, which would also function as a musical event where some local bands would perform at the end of the day. The idea was that people would appreciate their work more this way, that it would draw more people to the event, and therefore have a bigger positive impact.

Here, we are beginning to see how the dynamics of participatory planning for local public spaces play out in Bogotá. Problems of inter-agency discord and a lack of community interest combine to make recuperation and maintenance efforts very hard to sustain in a planning and development environment where groups essentially need to present coherent, organized, marketable projects to gain outside support and make change possible, and where individual government agencies are limited in what they can do by policies governing the use of resources. The lack of a clear central authority exacerbates this, especially as communication is never well organized, and the roles of different groups/actors involved are usually unclear. Normally, as the comment made by the representative from the Secretaría de Salud suggests, this responsibility falls to a group of *gestores sociales* and community leaders, especially from Juntas de Acción Comunal. These interact in a form of horizontal integration, seeking to enact vertical integration both below and above (i.e. in 'the community' and 'the government'), with the *gestores* expected to organize a coherent government response, and the JAC expected to organize

‘the community’. I witnessed this pattern of structuring citizen-state interactions regularly throughout my research in the Historic/Traditional Center, both in overt discussions on the subject, and as a matter of fact in how participatory practices played out. JACs (or an equivalent government-sponsored participatory organization) were expected to gather ‘the community’ to inform them of planning processes, and bring them to the table to participate. They were, essentially, expected to form publics as an assembled audience, and as an emergent force of public opinion.

Before unpacking this any further, I want to look at the next step in the recovery process: the *jornada* for the Media Torta, which took place weeks later in early November. The *gestores sociales*, or government representatives, sought to organize resources and support from within (and between) their respective organizations, and the JAC turned to focus on organizing ‘the community’ for the upcoming public space recovery event, which I describe in the following section.

5.3.2 Jornada for the Media Torta

On a sunny day in early November (November 6th, 2016 to be precise), I arrived at the Casa Comunal in Girardot (once again, after discouraging remarks made by my taxi driver) to find a few people from the Junta and a number of *funcionarios* I recognized milling about in front of the building. Bagged lunches were being offloaded from a van, provided by someone from the District, and some men in overalls were lugging paint supplies up the hill. A few others stood around smoking cigarettes and casually chatting with Gregorio, laughing and smiling. I made my rounds and said hello to people I knew before heading up the hill to see what was going on at the amphitheater.

Nothing much appeared to be happening. At the paved basketball court/football pitch combo that sits just below the amphitheater, a group of men and boys from the neighborhood were playing football (see image 18). Some people from the Health Secretariat sat off to the side, apparently giving out free vaccines for pets to anyone who would bring their dog or cat by. German and Colectivo members were there, in addition to some JAC members and a few government *funcionarios*. Someone explained to me that others had been sent off with a bullhorn to walk the streets and try to encourage more people from the neighborhood to join in. They said they’d been going door-to-door for weeks, posting flyers, and trying to get people interested. Still, the only ‘community

members' I could see present were people getting vaccines for their pets, and the guys playing football. I went up the hill, hoping for more. Inside the amphitheater, a handful of people in overalls were working away, mostly painting, but some appeared to be fixing various things. Many more sat on the stone bleachers, talking, checking their cell phones, looking bored. I headed back down the hill.



Image 17: Footballers in Girardot, Source: Author

Here, back at the basketball court/soccer pitch, I began talking to Daniel, one of the young men from the Waque, and an older woman about the lack of community presence. They postulated that the community center was simply 'too hidden'. Maybe people just did not know where to go? However Daniel also admitted that there is a lot of mistrust of 'these kinds of institutions', which referred to both the municipal government organizations present, and the JAC. He said this was especially true amongst young people, but that 'the community' in general shared this sentiment. Unfortunately, he adds, people still lack a *sentido de pertenencia* because of this. 'But this is a new Junta', he explained (just as Gregorio had). 'We just have to prove that what we are doing is for everyone, not just for ourselves' (Daniel, interview, 11/6/16). The woman, who was from IDPAC, agreed, and explained to me, 'this is just the first step. Each time it will get better. People will start to see what we are trying to do' (IDPAC representative, interview, 11/6/16).

Soon, German decided to kick things off. He gathered everyone together in a circle in the middle of the football pitch/basketball court – which meant asking the guys playing football to take a break. He invited them to join in. They did not leave, but they did not join in, either. Rather, they sat off to the edge of the pitch/court and watched with light curiosity, but mostly just talking to one another. German began by explaining the goals behind the recuperation of the amphitheater: bringing the community together through cultural activities. Next, he and another woman performed an indigenous ritual that he did not really explain, but seemed to be some sort of prayer of thanksgiving. We all then introduced ourselves. The men and boys sat watching the proceedings, still with a mix of incredulity and disinterest painted on their faces. A jeering point of the finger and sneering whispers were signs of how they felt about the event. They appeared impatient, clearly wanting to get back to their game.



Image 18: Opening ceremony for the Media Torta Jornada, Source: Author

After the short ritual/opening ceremony, people returned to either the amphitheater or the community center. I hung around for a while, waiting for more people to arrive, and talking to different people, trying to get a feel for what was going on. But not much happened for the next hour or so. People either worked, or hung out and chatted. I couldn't help but notice that most of the 'work' was painting – what Gregorio had called a 'shallow', 'superficial' fix. Eventually I decided to leave, feeling happy to have been a part of a really great project on a nice day, but also sad and disappointed that there was such a

low turnout, and the recovery efforts seemed to be quite minor. Hopefully, I thought to myself, it was just as the woman had said, that this was just the ‘first step’. Yet the image of the guys playing football stuck in my head, as did the parade of local residents coming and going to get their pets vaccinated.

5.4 Conclusions

This chapter explores how an expanded definition of ‘cultural heritage’ was used in Bogotá to try and develop more inclusive types of urban ‘revitalization’ in the Historic/Traditional Center. Underlying this effort was extending the principle of *permanencia* to account for more than just buildings and residents, but also intangible elements of a shared cultural heritage. This was the basis for attempts to enact, and reproduce, a stronger sense of community, and to empower this community by promoting new types of citizen participation that involved endogenous forms of planning. The primary mechanism behind this was a kind of ‘cultural recovery’, or making people more aware of cultural values, which consisted of two key processes: *memoria* and *formación*. Here, creating and leveraging a historically-derived (but still ‘living’) shared culture functioned as a means for creating a greater sense of *pertinencia* (relevance) amongst local residents, which could act as an impetus for an endogenous type of ‘territorial ordinance’, and effectively produce an emergent community of shared interests in the process. The hope was that this process of making things more relevant would encourage the emergent community to take *ownership* of local issues (i.e. develop a greater sense of *pertenencia*). This, in turn, would produce a new generation of empowered community leaders that would reproduce the *pertenencia* cycle themselves, establishing a socially sustainable loop of citizen participation. As Ana Yolanda (the director of citizen participation at the IDPC) summarized it,

This is work that takes years of generating awareness, of trying to instill a sense of *pertenencia* amongst citizens regarding their territory. Trying to make them understand that their territory is important to the Revitalization plan because they are *part of* the heritage of our city, the people that live in it, and they need to know they won’t be displaced. But more than this, they need to be part of the development activities taking place in their city. We are trying to establish co-responsibility with citizens for this reason. The idea is not that we paint a façade. It’s that the community understands the *importance* of the façade, and of a well-maintained territory in general. It’s that they take charge of maintaining it. (Ana Yolanda, interview, 10/29/15)

As this quote suggests, the procedural approach to developing stronger public spheres through a cycle of *perti/enencia* was played out in topographical public space – which became the symbolic and physical force for ‘integration’. Public space acted as a ‘node’, or was meant to be the space that connected different physical parts of the city (different buildings and different neighborhoods), *and* it was meant to be the space that connected citizens. It was the site where a community of shared interest could emerge through their shared cultural practices, and also where *pertenencia* could be instilled through maintenance and recovery efforts.

By looking at actual examples of this strategy being deployed (i.e. the cases of Las Cruces and Girardot), we can see where it succeeds, and where it starts to break down. In the case of Las Cruces, local artistic groups acted as a conduit for the IDPC’s goals of establishing a cycle of *perti/enencia* through a funding program and institutional support. A community of shared interests was consolidated around local artistic practices, and this community functioned as a base upon which neighborhood recovery efforts were organized. Yet strong, centralized support for these efforts appeared to be key in helping these groups succeed.

Contrast this with the case of Barrio Girardot. Despite being connected to Las Cruces, Girardot is not part of the Historic/Traditional Center in large part because its almost equally long history is more one of consolidated informal development than that of Las Cruces. Without being included in the Revitalization Plan, Girardot could not be directly included in the IDPC’s efforts, which meant they could not *directly* benefit from the organization’s commitment to endogenous planning based on self-defined values, as established by living forms of everyday local culture. So while the *ideals* contained in the IDPC’s permanencia-based approach to ‘revitalization’ may have successfully been transferred to Barrio Girardot, the *mesa interinstitucional* shows how confusing and *ad hoc* *actual practices* of citizen-led, endogenous planning efforts can be without the kind of strong, centralized support that the groups in Las Cruces had from the IDPC.

Nevertheless, in both the cases of Las Cruces and Girardot, we see strong cadre of community leaders and citizen activists who were strongly committed to the *perti/enencia* processes, and who were able to successfully organize support from the municipal government to perpetuate this. Despite low turnouts at *jornadas*, and complaints over a large lack of citizen support, the individuals involved in these case studies were committed to the long-term process of developing a greater sense of relevance for planning processes

amongst local residents, and a greater sense of ownership, through high-visibility projects in public space. Still, the lack of citizen interest in these processes raises legitimate questions about the nature of ‘relevance’ in these revitalization efforts. Just who exactly are these processes (and the public spheres and public spaces they produce) relevant for?

This question becomes more clearly problematic in other parts of the Historic/Traditional Center where populations are far less homogeneous than in the residential neighborhoods of Barrio Girardot and Las Cruces. In the neighborhoods looked at here, the majority of local actors for whom ‘endogenous’ planning efforts and public spaces are being made more relevant are residents with similar socioeconomic characteristics. In other areas, however, with a greater mix of land uses, a much greater mix of actors are involved. In the next chapter, I want to explore what a *perti/enencia* based ‘revitalization’ effort looks like in one of these mixed neighborhoods.

Chapter 6: Los Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas and Germania Para Todos: *Perti/enencia* negotiated as ‘co-responsibility’ between residents and *flotantes*

In the last chapter, I used two case studies to show how a new type of revitalization is being developed in the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá based on a sense of *perti/enencia*. This is a type of local(izing) politics that seeks to attract more citizens to participatory planning processes by making the processes and their developments more relevant to local populations by generating a stronger sense of community, and subsequently leveraging this sense of community as a tool for generating greater responsibility amongst citizens. Public space was used as the physical site for this to take place, and as a symbol for the kind of social and political integration that *perti/enencia* entails. In the cases of Las Cruces and Girardot, a sense of *perti/enencia* was established around a community of local residents – a relatively homogeneous group. However, in many parts of the Historic/Traditional Center where the government is trying to pursue revitalization efforts based on an enhanced sense of *perti/enencia*, residents are a minority of the population using public spaces on a daily basis – just one type of actor in a highly heterogeneous field. Here, then, establishing *perti/enencia* becomes far more complicated. This is made even more complex when powerful private institutions are involved.

This chapter explores the dynamics of a politics of *perti/enencia* by looking at how it is established (or pursued) through an ideal of ‘co-responsibility’ between local residents who ‘live’ the Historic/Traditional Center, and a massive *población flotante* ('floating population') of visitors that ‘use’ the Historic/Traditional Center on a regular basis. I look at this through the case of an organization called the Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas (Neighbors of the Journalists’ Park, or the Vecinos from here on). This is a group of local residents originally formed as a group dedicated to ‘self-defense’, or to defending their local public space against a supposedly problematic ‘floating’ population. Over time, however, they transformed their goals and efforts to form a kind of ‘co-responsibility’ with the main source of *flotantes* in the area: a group of large private universities. In the negotiations pursued as part of this, public space acted as a site, subject and object of

debate, or a place in which, and a concept around which, procedural publicness was enacted.

I contextualize this by exploring ongoing changes to the broader public space of the Avenida Jimenez, a key corridor in the historic center of Bogotá that has been at the center of redevelopment efforts in the city for decades. The Parque de los Periodistas is a small plaza that sits in the middle of the Jimenez. It is a diverse space that is representative of many of the issues related to debates over urban renewal/revitalization in the Historic/Traditional Center, and is therefore a good example of how public space is used to both encourage redevelopment, and as a means for organizing citizens against it.

I focus my analysis of the Vecinos by exploring a specific case of citizen participation in a public space project called ‘Germania Para Todos’, or Germania For All (named for the neighborhood of Germania where the project took place). The project was led by a foundation called Soy+Ciudad, in conjunction with planning faculty and students at Jorge Tadeo Lozano University (one of the largest private universities in the Historic/Traditional Center). The foundation’s main goal is to encourage citizen participation in public space projects in a different way, which is to say by designing public spaces with the community as opposed to with the community’s feedback. They sought to put this principle into practice with a group of master’s students in urban planning, who were working on the project as part of coursework on participatory development. Community members and civic leaders were invited to participate in these efforts in three sessions from April to May 2016. Ultimately, while the main goal of the project was to revitalize a small park in the neighborhood, those involved also described it as an opportunity to build bridges between the university and the local residential community. It was, in other words, meant to create a greater shared sense of *perti/enencia* by establishing a greater sense of community between antagonistically related groups through addressing problems with public space in the topographical and procedural realms.

This case study acts as an excellent example of the tensions that exist between a massive *población flotante* that visits (and leaves) the center every day, and a population of local residents that ‘live the center 24-hours a day’, as one local resident and community leader put it (interview, 11/5/2015). These tensions revolve around a difference in understanding about whom the center *belongs to*, and what this kind of ownership means in terms of responsibilities of care. The Jimenez corridor sees easily 1-2 million people pass through every day, while the residential population of the *localidades* this avenue passes through is

much smaller – measured in tens of thousands, rather than millions. There is also a huge disparity between average socioeconomic status, with local residents registering as some of the poorest in the city, and visitors usually hailing from the middle and upper classes. This makes the Avenida Jimenez a major confluence of different interests, actors and spatial appropriations, and with the Jimenez corridor being a centerpiece of larger redevelopment and planning efforts, a central ‘public space’ in both topographical and procedural senses of the term.

6.1 Introducing the Avenida Jimenez de Quesada

One of the key projects in the Revitalization Plan was restoring the Avenida Jimenez de Quesada (Jimenez de Quesada Avenue, or Avenida Jimenez, for short). This *alameda*, or broad tree-lined avenue, is one of the most iconic public spaces in Bogotá, and its massive renovation under the first Peñalosa administration (and how this exemplified the public space-driven model of urbanism that was behind the city’s ‘miracle’) has been the focus of many authors (Berney, 2010, 2017; Cervero, 2005; Cifuentes and Tixier, 2012; Tixier et al., 2013). In so far as it remains a focus of planning and development initiatives, it represents a project that bridges both the ‘miracle’ years, and the post-miracle leftist era.

Avenida Jimenez has been described as ‘the most important axis of the city center where many cultural, educational, financial and administrative institutions are located’ (Cifuentes and Tixier, 2012: 6). At one end, the avenue abuts the Cerros Orientales. Here, along the Cerros’ steep slopes, you will encounter most of the 27 institutes of higher education that are found in the center. You will also find the entrance to the Monserrate mountain monastery (a famous holy site and destination for local and international tourists), as well as the upper reaches of the Candelaria –the main tourist destination in the city. Further west, you encounter the main north/south corridors that grant access to the city center (the Septima, Decima, and Caracas Avenues), and the primary national and municipal government buildings (presidential palace, congress, supreme court, city hall), as well as many museums, and commercial and office buildings for large businesses. At the far western end of the Jimenez, you’ll find the San Victorino commercial district – the largest center of *comercio popular*³⁴ in the city, and one of the city’s most well known concentrations of social and physical deterioration and marginality (Carbonell Higuera, 2011; Sabogal Bernal, 2006).

³⁴ The buying and selling of cheap, largely Colombian-made products to individual consumers, and wholesale. This is also a term associated with informal businesses and street vendors.

The road itself breaks with the traditional Spanish grid block design that defines the rest of the old city center. This is because it originally followed the Rio San Francisco from the Cerros Orientales down through the city. It actually defined the borders of the original city, as the Spanish colonists built the original town plaza directly between the Rio San Francisco, and the Rio Augustin. However as the city expanded, the importance of these rivers declined, and they had essentially become open sewers and garbage dumps by the beginning of the 20th century (Tixier et al., 2013). Despite canalization efforts to improve conditions, these gaps that cut across the expanding city were also impeding traffic (which needed to use bridges), and so they were eventually filled in. The Jimenez sits on top of what was once the Rio San Francisco, which is the reason for its meandering pattern. The area was heavily damaged following the 1948 Bogotazo riots,³⁵ and many traditional, colonial-era buildings were replaced by large modern offices.

At the end of the 20th century, famous Colombian architect Rogelio Salmona designed a renewal project for the avenue to make it into what is now known as the 'Eje Ambiental' ('Environmental Corridor'). This was one of the largest, most visible public space projects of the Peñalosa/Mockus era, and of the Plan Centro. In his design, Salmona intricately laid patterns of red and tan brick with concentric designs that would underlie rows of trees along the wide, winding avenue, and the Rio San Francisco, which would be re-instated as the centerpiece of the throughway as a descending canal flowing from the Cerros towards the Center. Originally, the design was for a pedestrian-only street, but a TransMilenio line was eventually added, and private automobiles can drive on certain sections. The transformation of the space was significant, as the new waterway and vegetation made the area greener, the pedestrianization and introduction of a TransMilenio line to parts of the avenue got rid of the heavy traffic that the corridor had previously been associated with, and the whole project was meant to be the flagship example of the Plan Centro. It was meant to 'restore historic memory', 'contribute to the construction of civic values', and build a greater 'sense of belonging' (Tixier et al. 2013: 377). The social effects have also been significant, as land uses previously aimed at lower-income consumers (mostly local residents) have increasingly been geared towards university students, tourists and wealthier consumers in general (*ibid*).

³⁵ The Bogotazo riots were riots that followed the assassination of populist Liberal party presidential candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9, 1948. Hundreds were killed, and major damage was done throughout the center, causing a great number of residents and businesses to leave. This is considered the beginning of a long period of decline in the center, and was also a trigger for major urban renewal efforts.



Image 19: The Redesigned Eje Ambiental, Source: Wikipedia

As the flagship public space project of the Plan Centro, the Avenida Jimenez/Eje Ambiental restoration project was a representative example of how public space was being used to integrate the various aspects of renewal efforts in the new POT-era planning regime. It integrated all of the plan's principle goals in a variety of modernizing development efforts, including private real estate ventures, often at the expense of traditional local residents, who are largely in Estrato 2. This, therefore, raises questions about what kind of citizen the public spaces of the Historic/Traditional Center are meant for, or whom they are meant to benefit most directly. Who, in other words, is envisioned as the most relevant actor with the greatest sense of ownership and belonging?

It's worth noting that the residential population in the area is small. The *localidad* of La Candelaria, for example (the area most commonly associated with the Historic Center), has a population of 23,615 residents, while estimates of daily visitors to the Historic/Traditional Center are around two million. Petro's goal of 'densification without segregation', and the Plan Centro's objective of 'a center to live in', both reflect the desire to increase the residential population of the center. The question, however, is who will make up this new residential population? As discussed previously, there were some key differences in how Petro's Revitalization Plan saw this, and how the Plan Centro frames this. It is a question of how much institutional weight is being put behind 'traditional'

residents and their associated activities, and new residents and/or visitors and their associated activities. With major Renovation Master Plans at both ends of the Avenida Jimenez corridor, and a variety of different smaller revitalization projects in between, the Jimenez concentrates these issues like nowhere else in the city.

The Jimenez Avenue can roughly be divided into three different sections: The eastern section (running from the foot of the Cerros Orientales, at the entrance to Monserrate, to the Museo del Oro, or Gold Museum) is largely a cultural corridor. The majority of the universities in the center are located on, or near, this end, and this is where the Candelaria tourist district is most easily accessed from the Avenue. There are also major cultural centers, including the massive Gold Museum, international cultural institutions like the Alianza Francesa and the Centro Colombo-American, and a series of small museums. The second section (from the Museo del Oro to the Carrera Decima) is mostly large commercial offices and government buildings. This section also crosses the Septima (7th Avenue), and is one of the busiest, most visited pedestrian intersections in the city. The final section (from the Carrera Decima to the Avenida Caracas) is one of the city's busiest commercial sectors, with dense concentrations of shopping malls involved in *comercio popular*. At each end of the corridor, massive Urban Renovation Master Plan projects exist that combine large commercial and residential developments. The project at the western end (San Victorino) is run by the city's ERU, and includes subsidized housing and *comercio popular* developments. At the eastern end of the corridor, near the Cerros Orientales, large private universities have become key actors involved in negotiating different perspectives on, and practices of, urban regeneration. Large private universities like La Universidad de Los Andes, La Universidad del Rosario, La Universidad del Externado and La Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano are major real estate holders around the Jimenez corridor and have prestigious reputations and wealthy, powerful alumni and students. It is not just because Los Andes wanted to 'connect what they taught with what they did', as the director of the Fenicia project told me in an interview (4/27/16), that they developed the Fenicia Triangle Renovation Master Plan. They were also looking to protect their real estate investments, and also make the area safer and more comfortable for their students.

Universities have also been able to exert their influence on publically-run Renovation Master Plans. The Manzana 5 project had originally been a joint venture between the Colombian and Spanish governments – a project where they would highlight shared cultural roots through various cultural spaces. This was meant to be an emblematic project

of the Plan Centro – like the Jimenez. The goal was to consolidate tourism and culture into a large site (5800m^2), articulating the surrounding universities, plazas and local businesses with the Eje Ambiental, at the Centro Cultural de España (Franco, 2015). The Agencia Española para la Cooperación Internacional y el Desarrollo (AECID, The Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development) was to fund the project, but after the global financial crisis, the Spanish government eventually backed out, and the project became focused on housing – specifically, temporary student housing. The only ‘cultural’ space remaining is the Cinemateca Distrital – a district film archives.

In addition to being a symbol of culturalism, Manzana 5 was meant to be an exemplar of *gestión asociada*, or the inclusive kind of land readjustment schemes that have made the Fenicia Triangle Master Plan so famous. However, when negotiations with local property owners broke down, the government ultimately used a legal tool called ‘administrative expropriation’ to complete the project. This, as established by Article 68 of Law 388 of 1997, is a tool for use in situations where it is deemed a public necessity to move forward with the project in a rapid fashion, where the government can force land sales even for privately-led projects (Hoyos and Pinilla, 2015). This is different from ‘judicial expropriation’ in Colombian planning law, which is where the state (or more specifically, a state entity empowered by law) can acquire real estate for itself or a third party in cases that have been established as a ‘public need’ in the POT (Rodriguez, 2012).

In the end, a consortium of private developers (called QBU) bought the land, paying 10 times the amount the ERU had paid for it (Hoyos and Pinilla, 2015). Now, instead of a ‘cultural hub’ in the center of the city, a massive student housing complex called ‘City U’ has been constructed. City U consists of three large towers with room for 1800 students, and more than 1700m^2 of ‘exclusive communal space’, such as gyms, banks, game rooms, cafes, restaurants, a food court, a grocery store, etc. – a grand total of 47 commercial ventures. Los Andes has rented one whole tower for the next ten years, while three other large universities in the center (Rosario, La Tadeo, and El Externado) have also tied themselves to the project to provide housing for their students. These towers are like their own little cities, with restaurants, shops, sports facilities, recreation centers, and more, all behind walls and policed by private security guards. Rooms in these modern towers run from 950,000 to 1,750,000 Colombian Pesos per month (USD 350-645, according to exchange rates in July, 2018). This is comparable to prices in Chapinero, one of Bogotá’s most expensive sectors, where a one bedroom apartment averages around 1,200,000 pesos, as opposed to a place like Bosa (which like the Jimenez corridor is largely Estrato 2 and 3),

where a two bedroom apartment costs on average 770,000 to 900,000 per month (Acosta, 2017).



Image 20: CityU Towers, Source: cityu.com.co

The Fenicia Progress Program (the urban renovation master plan that exemplified the inclusive kind of real estate development known as *gestión asociada*) explicitly sought to avoid this kind of expropriation-led gentrifying initiative, but with the Fenicia Progress project literally just up the street from City U, the two are both part of a broader effort: specifically, to increase a specific kind of commercial activity and real estate user in a particular part of the Historic/Traditional Center based on the redevelopment of an iconic public space. Amongst local residents, these practices created both optimism, and a sense of mistrust and disillusionment. Time and again, I was told by local residents of how universities would try to bully people out of their homes through tactics like buying up adjacent properties, and letting these deteriorate and sit empty to the point that they were attracting squatters, and making other nearby residents' homes less valuable and less safe. It was not that residents did not want a nicer, more modern, better organized city center. They just did not want to be excluded from the benefits being created in what they saw as 'their' neighborhood. This was exacerbated by the fact that, in addition to these types of real estate *processes* creating mistrust between actors trying to establish a deliberative public sphere where they could negotiate their different interests, the real estate *developments* that had already been produced have themselves created direct forms of *exclusions* in the physical spaces of the city.

Most of the quality open public space in the Veracruz/Las Aguas neighborhood is either directly or indirectly exclusionary of local residents. Access to university campuses in the center is strictly controlled, and these are where the vast majority of ‘green space’ can be found. The parks, football pitches, running tracks, libraries, cafes, etc. inside these campuses are beautifully designed and maintained ‘public spaces’ that are only accessible by students, faculty and their select guests.



Image 21: Interior green space at Los Andes University, Source: Pinterest

Additionally, because the redevelopment of the Jimenez corridor has focused on the massive *población flotante*, the other open public spaces (plazas and smaller *plazoletas*) as well as pseudo-public ‘thirdplaces’ (private businesses for social gathering such as cafes and restaurants) use softer tactics of exclusion insofar as they are designed for, and largely occupied by, a very different consumer base.

A third aspect of exclusion involves security. Most of the security apparatus in the neighborhood is set up around daily commuters. This private security force not only faces legal limitations to what they can do (as established by constitutional law), but they secure only spaces that they are hired to, and only during hours that those spaces are active. Residents complain this does little to help them, as security is only hired to protect students, and ultimately reduces their overall safety, making their own public spaces more difficult to access.

These issues highlight tensions between different concepts/practices of public space *ownership* and public space *relevance* (or *perti/enencia*) in the Historic/Traditional Center. To explore this in greater depth, I look at how a broadly-defined group of local ‘residents’ perceived and reacted to renovation developments and public space interventions directed by private universities along the Jimenez corridor.³⁶ I focus in particular on a group called the Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas, and on a park renovation project jointly led by urban planning students at La Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano, and a foundation whose mission is promoting participatory planning projects. This is a case of a ‘resident’ population confronting a ‘floating’ population of commuters, as well as cases of individuals organized as a community organization confronts large institutions, both using public space as a means for negotiating conflicts over relevance, ownership and belonging in the Historic/Traditional Center.

6.2 Los Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas and the ‘*Población Flotante*’

El Parque de los Periodistas (the Journalists’ Park) lies at both the geographic center of the Avenida Jimenez, and at the center of controversies and debates that surround it. It is one of the key topographical features along the avenue, being the largest of the few small open plazas that line it, and it is home to two of the area’s main transportation features. Carrera 3 (Third Avenue) is a principal route north/south route running along the Eastern Hills, which meets up with Calle 19 (19th Street) just above the park – a major avenue going east/west through the center. Both are primary routes for private automobiles and conventional buses entering/exiting the Historic/Traditional Center, and routes that connect the area with the rest of the city. Additionally, the Las Aguas TransMilenio station is located at the north entrance to the park. It is one of the city center’s main BRT stations

³⁶ This definition includes both people living in the neighborhood, and people who own small businesses there.

and one of two stations that services the cluster of universities in the area. This has made el Parque de los Periodistas one of Bogotá's most heavily trafficked, and subsequently most diverse public spaces.

The park has been identified as one of five key historic sites along the Jimenez Avenue to be restored under the IDPC's Revitalization Plan, and as such, has received a large amount of financial support and government attention as part of the historic preservation efforts entailed in Petro's revitalization plan. Most of this involves the restoration of the park's main monument. At the center of the park sits a statue of the city's founder – Jiménez de Quesada – within a stone Templete (temple) designed in the guise of the ancient Roman Temple to Vesta. Housed under a stone cupola propped up by Doric columns, with an ornately carved cornice and a bronze statue of a condor atop, the Templete and statue date back to the late 19th century, when Italian architect Pietro Cantini was commissioned to do a statue of the founder in commemoration of the first 100 years of the Republic. After being moved multiple times (including to as far away as the city of Tunja in the Departament of Boyaca), the statue and Templete made their way to the park in 1958 (Torres and Delgadillo, 2008). It is considered one of the most important monuments in the city, and like many other monuments, suffers from vandalism. As the Templete had become covered in graffiti, money was committed to cleaning the monument, as well as the park surrounding it. This involved various events being held in the park that brought government workers and volunteers together in attempts to generate a kind of *pertenencia*, or a sense of ownership that would cause citizens to care for the monument after its renovation.



Image 22: Parque de los Periodistas and Templete, Source: Author

As a center of a wide range of everyday activities, of historical heritage, of institutions with great wealth and power (private universities and government agencies), and of high real estate values, the park is like a microcosm of the broader issues and opportunities surrounding the Jimenez corridor. It is, therefore, critical as both a site and subject of public debate and participation.

One group actively involved in these debates is the Vecinos. The Vecinos was formed in the early 2000s, shortly after the Jimenez was renovated to become the Eje Ambiental. Their main reason for organizing was ‘self-defense’, specifically defending themselves ‘against the damages being done to us by the huge population of daily visitors passing through our neighborhood every day’, Lirian Marulanda explained to me. Lirian, it became clear, was sort of the unofficial leader of the group. As she put it,

The group was a product of the social problems caused by daily visitors – the *poblacion flotante*. Initially, the idea was to defend ourselves against the damage that was being done to us by them. A group of us local residents got together and formed a resident committee, and started to get these dynamics going. A man from the community began to employ some workers to clean up the park, and pay for a

security guard. This was the start – what started to generate dynamics of self-defense in the area. (Lirian, interview, 11/4/2015)

Originally, then, ‘self-defense’ was a fairly straightforward concept. The ‘neighbors’ were a council of local residents, who felt their personal security was being threatened by the massive population of visitors coming to their neighborhood every day, a group also responsible for doing damage to their local public space. They formed an organization to defend *their neighborhood* against practices/people they viewed as harmful, again, as explained by Lirian.

They leave garbage here. They sell and take drugs here. They invite beggars. We are not the ones giving money to them. Really, it's the people getting off the TransMilenio that are doing these things, not those that live here. Our group was born out of the anxiety caused by these issues of insecurity. (Lirian, interview, 11/4/2015)

Soon, however, the group evolved into something much larger and more complex. As Lirian described, this was precipitated by (or in) forums of public discussion and debate:

From here, the issue was carried on in meetings, discussions, etc., and eventually an association was started that was not just about defense, but also about participation and social commitments. Group dynamics were opened up, and other people started to participate, big companies with interests in the area, for example. (Lirian, interview, 11/4/2015)

This expansion/evolution resulted in the Vecinos becoming a ‘highly multi-disciplinary group’, as Lirian put it. Put differently, they were becoming like a network of different groups, or an ‘association of associations’, as another member put it (Albeiro, interview, 11/10/15). This resulted from the group expanding to include ‘not just residents, but stakeholders as well, basically anyone with interests in the area’ (Nikolas, interview, 11/4/15). It was becoming a public sphere that consisted of more than just neighbors, or at least which embraced an expanded understanding of ‘neighbor’, especially in the case of small local businesses. These fit easily into the original logic of the group because like residents, they had what was considered a deeper connection to, or appreciation for, the neighborhood, or a more vested interest in it. Essentially, while the focus may have shifted away from an explicit, straightforward goal of ‘self-defense’, it was still structured around a dichotomy of *población residente* and *población flotante*, and its purpose remained to address social problems associated with the latter. Rather than talking about defending *against* this population, however, the narrative shifted to developing ‘co-responsibility’

(coresponsabilidad) with this group, through new ‘group dynamics’ of participation. One informal interview I had with some group members demonstrates this particularly well.

On January 26, 2016 we sat in a small café/Middle Eastern restaurant owned by one of the group’s members (Albeiro). Almost every meeting I had with group members took place in this café. It was the kind of place where I could schedule an interview with one member, and pretty much be guaranteed that others would be stopping by, and invited to join us. The café is one block north of the Parque de los Periodistas on Avenida 4. As we sat and talked, we were regularly interrupted by noise and dust from a large construction project across the narrow street. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they were building a large tower for student housing. I sat with Lirian, Oscar, and Nikolas, drinking coffee and discussing the differences between the ‘local’ population, and the *flotantes*. It became clear the greatest group of *flotantes* with whom the Vecinos were concerned were students. This made sense as the universities brought the greatest number of daily visitors to this part of the Jimenez corridor. They explained to me how the problem with students was their lack of respect, and how the universities themselves largely failed to try and instill this in their students.

Lirian: All the social problems that we have in the center of Bogotá stem from the 1.7 million visitors that come to the center every day. It's a very different thing to live in the neighborhood than to use the neighborhood. They're two different concepts. The floating population uses the neighborhood. They come for the day to work or study, and then they leave. They have no pertenencia, so they have no problem throwing their garbage on the ground, or buying drugs and encouraging the dealers here. They deteriorate the neighborhood. We are trying to stop this deterioration.

Me: What about student housing, like with Manzana 5? Is this part of the problem? I mean, they will be living here, but I guess not for very long. Will they have the same connection to the neighborhood?

Oscar: Manzana 5 is not the problem. Look, these students are going to come one way or another. The thing is we need to develop a culture of respect, of taking time to care about the area. Universities have a responsibility to make it clear that this is patrimonio, and people can't treat it like shit. They can't be walking around drunk, vandalizing with graffiti, taking drugs, urinating in public, etc.

Lirian: Yes, them living here is not a problem. The problem is a lack of co-responsibility between the universities and the community. They don't care, for example, that the students are the ones buying and using drugs. It's the idea of coresponsabilidad social. We've had many, many discussions with the universities, with Los Andes, El Externado, El Tadeo, etc. And we've made it clear that to us, what is bad about the universities is that there is not any co-responsibility between these institutions and the barrios. (interview, 1/26/16)

The group was not directly opposed to the masses of visitors *themselves*. Rather, the group was against the lack of *pertenencia* that this population had, or the lack of a meaningful relationship with the neighborhood that would lead to a greater sense of responsibility *for* the neighborhood (and in particular its historically significant sites of cultural heritage). It was not an attempt to draw lines *between* a local ‘community’ and a group of *flotantes*, but rather the goal was to make *everyone* part of ‘the community’ by establishing a level of respect and appreciation for the neighborhood through establishing a sense of ‘co-responsibility’. This entailed *caring for* the spaces involved (a term which I would later come to realize held a double meaning).

Essentially, the Vecinos are like a homegrown, grass roots example of how *perti/enencia* is supposed to work in Bogotá’s new scheme of urban ‘revitalization’. A group of citizens developed a great sense of *pertinencia* for their local territory, based on a strong personal relationship with its heritage (i.e. *memoria*), which they subsequently used to promote local forms of public space defense and improvement (a practical politics of *pertenencia*, or ‘taking ownership’). They then became like a node from which this politics could spread, as they sought to reproduce their own cycle of *perti/enencia* through a discourse of ‘co-responsibility’ with other nearby actors.

A key way that the Vecinos sought to accomplish this was by engaging an organization called the Corporación de Universidades del Centro de Bogotá (Corporation of Universities in the Center of Bogotá, or Corporación de Universidades for short), a collection of 10 private universities in the historic center whose self-described mission is:

To promote and develop alliances and projects among its members and with other external allies, in order to make better use of the surroundings of the center of Bogotá in the joint and individual provision of its educational services, the use of rational infrastructure, the execution of academic products and the management of matters of collective interest. (Corporación de Universidades del Centro de Bogotá, 2016)

Because of its mission to ‘develop alliances’, the Corporación de Universidades was an ideal organization for the Vecinos to engage with to discuss their issues regarding the *población flotante* to which they contributed. In principle, they agreed with the Vecino’s desire to create a kind of co-responsibility between their constituent institutions, and the broader local community. They offered spaces for community groups to meet, and had been working with Lirian and other Vecinos for months trying to outline what ‘co-responsibility’ might look like in practice. However, Lirian pointed out that the discussions

had stalled when the de Universidades oración failed to respond to questions regarding the utility of private security guards to local residents. The Vecinos had been able to organize a series of meetings with Corporación de Universidades representatives, and had written up a sort of manifesto describing their position on a range of issues, but when push came to shove, the key demands the group was making had not been met. The Vecinos had been demanding more open access to campus facilities (allowing children to use the football pitches, and green spaces, for example, or allowing local residents to attend performing arts events), which the universities were largely refusing, and more importantly, they refused to try and resolve problems with private security. Meanwhile, different constituent members of the Corporación de Universidades continued to expand their real estate holdings in the center, and exert a greater influence.

This was how things stood between the Corporación de Universidades and the Vecinos when I found out about a project that was being run by one of the larger universities involved in the Corporación de Universidades: La Universidad de Bogotá Jorge Tadeo Lozano (La Tadeo, for short). It was a project called ‘Germania Para Todos’, and it was a public space project co-sponsored by the university, and a local *fundación* that worked on participatory planning projects with citizens (more specifically, public space projects designed in conjunction with citizen groups). This project, which I took part in, provides an excellent case study of different interest groups engaging with one another in and around public space in a complex, diverse sector of the Historic/Traditional Center. Next, I will introduce this project (explain its origins and a little background), and explore an ethnographic vignette of the key meeting that took place between residents and project planners.

6.3 Germania Para Todos

6.3.1 Origins of the Project

Germania Para Todos was the brainchild of the Soy+Ciudad Foundation, which consisted of just four members: a lawyer specializing in planning and public management law; an architect with a masters in urban design and PhD in public space and urban regeneration; an industrial designer with advanced degrees in urban design; and a business management professional with a masters in project management and design. Emerson (the architect/planner) was a professor at La Tadeo, and was the catalyst for the foundation and

university developing a ‘*convenio de cooperación*’ (‘cooperation agreement’) to develop the project. This was an extension of his academic and practical work on the subject of *la gestión participativa en los espacios públicos*, or ‘participatory management of public spaces’. Here, once again, the idea was to ‘design the public space with the community’. This was framed explicitly as an alternative approach to conventional community *consultation* processes, where public space designs were introduced to communities who were then given the opportunity to provide feedback. With Soy+Ciudad, the idea was that public spaces would be designed organically and endogenously, or that communities themselves (with the assistance of planners) would design and make a space that suited their specific needs, rather than being sold on a project brought to them by outsiders.

Emerson told me he had approached the director of the masters program involved in this project and explained who Soy+Ciudad was, and what they did. The director was interested, and decided they should work something out based on the idea that universities have some sort of ‘social responsibility’ to the surrounding community, and that *work* and *thought* must be connected in education. Emerson described to me how he felt academics have a knack for discourse and thinking, but are not always the best at connecting this to action, aka ‘work’. Yet he was also very clear that this education grounded in action was not just something that students needed, but also something the local communities they were working with needed. There was a pedagogical mission here, specifically the need to teach people that ‘public space is for everyone’. Pedagogy, he explained, is always the first, or primary, part of their process, so that *all* Soy+Ciudad projects have some connection to teaching/learning. Emerson knew that they needed an actual, physical space to work with in pursuit of this two-way pedagogical project (teaching the community about public space, and how to use it, and teaching students how to manage a project with citizen participation), and felt a small park just outside the campus presented the perfect opportunity. This was how Germania Para Todos was born. Next, I look at the park itself, before moving on to the first meeting between ‘the planners’ (Soy+Ciudad and students from La Tadeo) and ‘the community’.

6.3.2 The Park

The park itself is a tiny scrap of grass and cement sandwiched between Calle 23, Carrera 3^b (a dead end), and Transversales 3. A row of squat, red brick apartment buildings (some purchased by La Tadeo, and converted into offices) line the western edge of the park on

the dead-end Carrera 3^b). These stand in sharp contrast to the massive white stone and glass Postgraduate Building on the park's southern side. Above the park, heading up hill to the east, sits the busy Avenida Circunvalar – the city bypass road built in the Cerros Orientales in the middle of the twentieth century (see chapter five).

The centerpiece of the park is a circular blacktop pad on top of which sits some playground equipment covered in graffiti, and some cement benches that have almost completely deteriorated, with metal rebar sticking out of large holes where parts of the bench have collapsed. A retaining wall surrounds the pad, dug into the grassy slope that heads up towards the Circunvalar. Trees dot the small area, the whole of which is encircled by a sidewalk with brick lining. The space is well shaded because of the trees and nearby buildings, which also provide the space with a certain amount of privacy – for better or worse.



Image 23: Germania Pocket Park, Source: Author

There is not anything particularly remarkable about the space in either a good or bad way, at least not compared to most other *parques de bolsillo* ('pocket parks') in the city. It had the same kind of playground equipment, the same kind of cement benches. Most are in

some state of disrepair, with graffiti and trash being as constant a presence as visitors. These parks are also frequently inhabited by *habitante de calle*. Yet while the state of the space may be less than remarkable, its presence in the historic center is. There are limited small parks like this in this part of the city. Naturally, this means the park attracts large numbers of students from the university that is literally next-door. So, being right next to the university, being important because of its rarity, and being in a general state of disrepair all contributed to the park being a natural choice for Emerson and his project.

6.3.3 The Meeting

Despite being actively involved with the Vecinos for months, I found out about the project through social media. This did not surprise me much, though, since there always seemed to be a lack of communication between different groups (government and non-government) conducting public space interventions, or conducting participatory planning in general. Yet whereas I'd become accustomed to invitations to events like this consisting of a simple WhatsApp message, or a Twitter post (sometimes accompanied by a simple flyer) with basic information about what, where and when, this invitation came with a comprehensive, 5-page project description. I was immediately interested and a little excited. This seemed like a high level of commitment, and I was eager to see how the idea of 'co-responsibility' that Lirian and the Vecinos had been pushing for played out in an actual joint project with one of the largest universities in the Historic/Traditional Center.

The first meeting was held on 9 April, 2016. I arrived at La Tadeo, found the classroom where the meeting would take place, and was pleased to see some familiar faces: Lirian, Orlando (president of the CPL for the *localidad* of Santa Fe), and a few other regulars at participatory events held in the Candelaria and Santa Fe. Lirian invited me to sit with her, and I did so happily. The turnout seemed pretty good compared to other events I'd been to (about ten people from 'the community', about the same number of students, plus Emerson and his co-founder Samuel, the industrial engineer/designer for Soy+Ciudad).

Emerson began the meeting in the typical fashion: by introducing the project's goals, and the organization. He emphasized how their work sought to build projects 'not just from the perspective of architecture and design, but from the perspective of the community's needs, the needs of the people living in the area'. He explained how important their 'memories' were to the living history of the area, and how these personal experiences were so essential

to designing better public spaces. Samuel follows this up, and frames this in terms of the ‘importance of citizen expertise over that of experts’. This strongly resembles how government-led meetings (like those of the IDPC) would normally start: emphasizing the importance of participation, of local knowledge, and affirming a commitment to valuing these.

If the introduction was typical, so were the first responses from ‘the community’ (more on this below). Orlando, the CPL president, spoke first. He said he was ‘grief stricken’ by the overall lack of public space in the area, and the ‘social problems’ that plague the few spaces they have. He focused his criticisms on the park, but spoke about it in the context of public space in the Historic/Traditional Center more broadly.

The park has been plagued by drugs, alcohol, homeless, street vendors. It used to be a community park, a place where kids would play. Then these problems started. We tried to close the park off, but the Defensoría del Espacio Público de Bogotá [Bogota’s Department of Public Space, DADEP] told us we couldn’t close off public space, so this got torn down. Now, students use it as a parking lot, a place to hang out and eat, to drink and take drugs, sometimes even have sex. There are bottles and needles on the ground. The homeless use it as a dormitory at night. These are the things we are afflicted with every day, those of us who live here (Orlando, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16).

This quote, and this small park, perfectly summarize and reiterate the arguments the Vecinos had been making since they were formed: that social problems were being imported to the area by a *población flotante* of students, homeless, street vendors, and workers, and local residents and businesses were the victims of this. Others voiced these same concerns, using their own examples and stories. Lirian, for one, pointed out how the streets there are full of cars, and that a survey done just the week before showed that 100% of these cars belong to commuters at La Tadeo. Not just students, but faculty, too, were parking there on the street, even though the university has its own parking, ‘just to save 9000 pesos’. Worse than this, though, is that the profits were going to what Lirian called a ‘mafia’ – some group of individuals from outside the neighborhood that were taking money to watch cars parked on the street, essentially turning the public space into their own profitable business, and taking the space away from the neighbors. Another woman, who had two young children with her, described how she couldn’t go to the park anymore after her kids had been offered to buy drugs multiple times. She (like others) said she was tempted to sell her place and leave the area, but was conflicted because she had lived there her whole life (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16).

I had come to find this line of criticism to be typical. These were all real problems that residents faced, after all, and I learned quickly that it was common for citizens to use planning forums (regardless of the specific topic) to voice their concerns over the everyday issues they faced – whatever those may have been. At one point, Orlando actually conceded this. He said, ‘the park is just an excuse. It’s an excuse to work with you guys, to do some joint work between academics and citizens, and to look at issues that transcend the park, to look for solutions that last for years. It’s about the future’. Furthermore, Orlando pointed out, this was the ‘perfect moment’ to take advantage of the situation, because everyone knew the current administration (Peñalosa’s) was going to put ‘a lot of emphasis on public space’, and they were in the midst of putting together the Development Plan (which required citizen participation). Essentially, he was saying they could take advantage of the current administration’s particular goals and strategies to achieve some of their own. This kind of opportunity chasing was a necessary strategy employed by civil society groups I worked with all across the Historic/Traditional Center. They knew their chances for ‘being heard’, as it was often said, were limited, as Lirian explained.

All we can do is get ahold of the Development Plan, and the Local Development Plan, and ask ourselves, ‘OK. What are they inventing in the Historic Center now (because, as you know, this is what they do here)? We know the law, we know what we can do. So we look at the Plan and say, ‘yeah, we can get involved in this, and this, but this other thing we can’t do anything about.’ (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

It was common for community members to demonstrate their knowledge of the legal planning system, their expertise in the technical *and* practical aspects of how things worked. Many people involved in participatory planning sessions such as this (including Lirian and Orlando) had been involved in many types of democratic forums like this, and for many years. Fresh-faced planners who were new hires in an ever-changing municipal government (or in this case a group of students) were seen as lacking this kind of experiential knowledge, and citizens frequently commented on how planners are ‘always changing’. So it shouldn’t have surprised me when Lirian interrupted with another comment/question: did they even have permission to do this?

I’ve been living here for 40 years, and have a great deal of experience with these kinds of things. Because of this, I have three questions: Does the IDPC know about it? Does the mayor, IDU, and local mayor know about this? Third, what is the procedure going to be to get the necessary permissions? There is a Plan de Revitalización that governs the way things work here. I’ve spent a lot of time working with the IDPC on this. We, the community, have done all the evaluations, done all the paperwork, put together proposals for the Parque de los

Periodistas. We know you can't just do whatever you want with public space here, because the whole area is *patrimonio cultural*. We're not new to this. You should know this even better, as professors! And who is going to fund this, manage the resources? Look, it's all fine and good that you come to us with this proposal, you get your masters degrees, get your good grades and graduate with honors, but where is the actual project? Where is the real change? (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

It was at this point that I began to realize that this probably was not going to be the perfect public space project I had dreamt it might be. Yet at the same time, I recognized that Lirian's comments made a lot of sense. I knew Lirian had worked closely with the IDPC for the past few years – helping develop the Revitalization Plan with them in similar participatory spaces to this and fighting hard to get new laws passed to protect the 'cultural heritage' of the area. I had become accustomed to active citizen leaders responding in frustration like this. Yet it is important to point out that this was not an expression of animosity towards the students, the foundation, the project, the universities, or even development in the area more generally. Lirian and the Vecinos were *pro-development*, and respected the potential value of having so many universities at their doorstep. They just wanted a seat at the table when it came time to make decisions about *their* neighborhood. Orlando expressed this kind of sentiment perfectly.

It's not that we want to get rid of the students. We want to work *with* the students. It's not that we don't want development, that we don't want renovation. We need it here! We just want development and renovation done *with us*, with the opinions of people who have lived here for 40, 50, 60 years...So it's really good that you, as masters students, are doing this, hosting these meetings and learning about these things, taking interest in these issues. Because it is not just about a park. Sure, the park is important, but it's just *un puntico* – a tiny part of the bigger picture. (Orlando, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

Despite Orlando's insistence that there were no hard feelings, the students and Soy+Ciudad team began to become a bit defensive. Again, this was a fairly typical occurrence: for the 'planners' to become defensive when their 'participants' are critical. First, Emerson emphasized that the park was not *patrimonio*, and that none of the adjoining buildings would be touched by any of their efforts, so they did not need to worry about the legal restrictions governing heritage, they did not need the IDPC's permission. Besides, he reminded everyone, 'it is our constitutional right to meet. We don't need legal approval to come together as a community and come up with a project proposal. It's our legal right to form a civic association, a neighborhood association' (Emerson, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16).

But again, the local community members with whom they were trying to form a ‘neighborhood association’ pointed out that it was not really about the park. The argument they seemed to be making was that, despite these being efforts to reverse the normal order of the method of participation and start from a ‘local perspective’, this project did nothing to solve the problems they already had – the problems they had long been addressing to planners coming to them seeking their input. People came to talk, but nothing ever changed in their physical, day-to-day reality because nobody actually *listened* to them. To them, getting to know the resident community’s perspective on a little park did nothing to establish long-term solutions *for them*. It did, however, directly benefit the students and the foundation.

So you recuperate the park, you make it nice and beautiful, and then what? The students come back and fill it up again, make it their own personal open-air bar to get wasted. The street vendors come back to sell to them. The *microtrafico* comes back. We continue with the same problems! And you guys, you’ve gotten your good grades, graduated with honors, and moved on. (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

The point that Lirian was trying to make was that it was not just about the park. It was about what ‘public space’ meant more broadly, in both its procedural and topographical forms. She was challenging the participatory principles behind these kinds of meetings between universities and ‘the community’, questioning what kind of impact the community’s participation really had on how public space in the area was seen. It was about whose knowledge and experience was more valuable, and which insights were being ignored. She explained her longstanding relationship with the Corporación de Universidades to emphasize this point, concluding that

The universities know our position well. Our position is very clear. The problem is they don’t *listen*. Why won’t you actually *listen* to us? You use the center. We *live* the center. These are two completely different perspectives (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

One of the masters students went on the defensive here, insisting they were trying to do ‘real, serious work’, and that first and foremost, they wanted ‘to be friends’ with the community. Even more than this, it was about developing a ‘social fabric’ in the area. He admitted to the local residents that they ‘had a kind of knowledge and expertise that they (masters students) couldn’t have’. Furthermore, he capitulated that they, the masters students, could only be part of ‘phase 1’ – the design and development of the park. They

would not, in fact, be around for the long-term maintenance of it. It was ‘the community’ that would ultimately be responsible for sustaining these positive changes.

‘Sustainability’ became a key part of the discussion. Orlando brought it up multiple times as the conversation progressed, always bringing it back around to the illegal, and unsafe appropriations of public space that students were involved in, either directly or indirectly (i.e. getting drunk and high, or inviting street vendors by purchasing goods from them). Yet definitive roles and practices for sustainability were never defined. Rather, as Lirian’s quotes above and the quotes here from this masters student suggest, the planners (students and Soy+Ciudad members) and participants (local residents) were stuck putting responsibility on one another for making this illusive ‘sustainability’ happen. The planners insisted that the local community needed to take responsibility for sustaining the good practices being developed, while community leaders continued to assert that universities were not following through on promises to residents, and allowing the same kinds of problems to continue.

Around this time, however, another public space issue was raised, and the conversation shifted to the enclosure of green spaces by universities, and the limited access that local residents had to these spaces, despite a widely acknowledged severe lack of such spaces in the area of the Historic/Traditional Center. La Candelaria, for example, has just 0.2 m² of green space per person (DADEP, 2016).

We don’t have access to these spaces, but we see them, walk past them, every day. Right here, at La Tadeo, you have this beautiful football pitch behind fences. This is a park that our children could use. Open the spaces! This is all we’re asking. Open these spaces for the community, so the kids can use them. For equality (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

These are, of course, private spaces. They are spaces legally owned by private universities, who have every right to close them off to the general public. Lirian, however, pointed out that if they are saying they want to ‘make friends’ with the local community, why not take actions that symbolize this? Perhaps the exclusions themselves weren’t as important as what they represented. In previous interviews with Lirian, she had intimated that the closure of these spaces was not just frustrating because it denied local residents (particularly children) access to parks that they had to ‘see everyday’, but because it was symbolic of how the local community was perceived by the universities.



Image 24: Fenced-in green space at La Tadeo, Source: Author

In one interview, pretending to address the universities directly, she exclaimed: ‘Why don’t you trust your neighbor? If you wanted to come to my home for coffee, I would welcome you. But you treat us like criminals’ (Lirian, interview, 11/5/15). The group liked to point out how other universities, further north, like the National University (a public university), and La Javeriana (a private university) both had open campuses. La Javeriana even allowed the public to check out books. The idea was that they were treated differently because these universities were located in Chapinero, and Teusaquillo, *localidades* of a well-heeled middle class. More than once during my fieldwork, I was told about an ‘invisible boundary’ that existed in Bogotá, dividing ‘the north’ (symbolic of middle and upper class) and ‘the south’ (symbolic of poverty and decline). Some would put this boundary at Calle 26, some further north at Calle 45. Yet the point was the same: South of this line, there is bad. North, there is good. It was not just equitable access to green space that the Vecinos were fighting for. It was also an effort to change these perceptions.

This conversation tied into another issue relating to security-based exclusions and privatizations: that of private security guards. Lirian began to point out how useless the ‘army of private security guards and their dogs’ were to the local residents. They failed to

actually protect the people who lived in the neighborhood in two key ways: First, they were constitutionally restricted from physically harming anyone, restricting their ability to intervene in acts of crime. They were more a show of force than anything else. Second, they had literally replaced the police in the area. Los Andes had bought a local police station, which had moved to another (wealthier) part of the *localidad* of Santa Fe (La Macarena). Here, she made the same challenge she had to the Corporación de Universidades.

How do these private security guards benefit us? We know how they benefit you, but how do they benefit *us*? In reality, they don't, not at all. I go down to the park, and there is this army of security guards and their dogs. Kids are sitting around smoking marijuana, drinking, people are selling drugs. And they do nothing. They have this huge army of security guards, but if someone steals my cell phone in public, they can't do anything. The constitution says they can't. (Lirian, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 4/9/16)

To Lirian and others at the meeting, security issues in the center were like a double insult. Local residents were treated as security threats by the universities, and at the same time, being subjected to greater insecurity by them. ‘Just because we don't have university IDs, that makes us murderers and thieves?’ she sarcastically exclaimed during one conversation. ‘If the National University can do it, if La Javeriana can do it, why not here?’ (Lirian, interview, 1/26/16). The problem, she said, was the *perception* of insecurity. The poor local residents were seen as a security threat by the universities (maybe not by individual people, but as an institutional policy), while the removal of the local police station and growth of private security guards in the area (who refused to, or couldn't do anything about many of the illegal activities taking place in the area), made residents feel less safe. ‘They have their army of private security guards who set up a one block perimeter around the campuses, and they keep out the homeless and “*thieves*” (she says sarcastically), and we are stuck with them without any protection’ (Lirian). In one conversation, Lirian concluded that, ‘developing trust is very complicated – they don't trust us, we don't trust them’ (interview, 1/26/16).



Image 25: Private security along the Jimenez, Source: Author

At the meeting, things began to wind down at the point that these issues were being discussed. The community members invited continued to make statements along the same lines they had been, and Emerson and Samuel took turns offering counterpoints, with a couple more students adding their two cents to the mix. Many of the students, however, had clearly lost interest. Some were staring at their phones, while others followed along silently with looks of frustration. The same attitude was spreading amongst the community members present. Perhaps sensing this, Emerson soon brought this part of the day to a close, insisting that we move on to the second activity. After about two and a half hours of discussion, we headed to the park itself to perform a *diagnóstico* ('evaluation'). Much like during the *recorrido* in Girardot, we marched *en masse* to the park. Standing around on the cement playground pad of the park, the conversation did not change much from the one we were having inside. If anything, it was just a chance for people to point out the things they had been complaining about, and a chance for Emerson to restate the purpose of the entire project. This was, after all, the reason that *recorridos* were used in so many participatory events: they made it easier to connect problems with their relevant sites. It also offered an opportunity for casual conversations, and as usual, the mood seemed much lighter as we walked and talked.



Image 26: Pocket park recorrido, Source: Author



Image 27: Pocket park recorrido, Source: Author

People pointed out the graffiti, and the damaged park benches. They pointed out the cars parked on the dead end street that ran alongside the park. They pointed out the garbage in the park. Emerson talked about the changes they could make, how they could make the park better. Most, however, like me, were not really focused by this point, and after about 20 minutes, we wrapped things up. I chatted with Samuel and Emerson for a little while about my own research, and they were very interested. They promised to follow up with

me, and we exchanged information. Soon, we, too, said our goodbyes, and went our separate ways.

6.3.4 The Follow Up

A month later, on May 2nd, I returned to the classroom where the first Germania Para Todos meeting had taken place. Today, the second round of participation was due to take place. I was right on time, which meant I was early – a common mistake I made while conducting fieldwork in Bogotá. There were only a few students there, along with Emerson and Samuel. I chatted with them while we waited for ‘the community’. I had met with Emerson since the last meeting to discuss the project and explain my own research to him. Because of this, he knew I had been working with the Vecinos. So after a while, maybe an hour after the meeting was supposed to start, he asked me where they were, and why they weren’t here. I told him I had no idea, and he eventually decided that this second ‘participatory’ session needed to begin ‘with or without the community’. He explained that the teacher was there, the students were there, and they had put together ‘technical data’ on the park project to present, so they had to proceed. Emerson then suggested that I stand in for the community, and pretend to pose challenges like those that Lirian and Orlando had lobbed at them in the first meeting. I did not agree to this, but I did decide to stay, at least for a while, to observe the proceedings and see if anyone from ‘the community’ showed up.

The park was broken down into three categories of ‘technical data’: space/function, population, and elements in the space. Students immediately begin to present their technical assessment of each.

They looked at a photo of the space from 1961, and discussed technical aspects of the terrain, like how the terraced topography of the area could be an advantage that they could ‘exploit’ in order to more fully incorporate the Cerros into the park’s experience. They talked about the surrounding building facades, differentiating between those that are ‘living’ and those that are ‘dead’ (i.e. the post-grad building is ‘dead’ because it lacks direct access). They talked about *arborización* (planting trees), and about connecting the space to mobility patterns (but without sacrificing its quality as a ‘space of encounter’). Eventually, Emerson interrupted to critique the students for being too technical, and

ignoring social aspects of the diagnosis. He suggested they think less about ‘description’, and more about ‘lived qualities’ (Germania Para Todos Meeting, 5/2/16).

Following this interjection, the students began to present their findings on ‘the population’. They broke this down into three groups: ‘direct actors’ were categorized as those that live immediately adjacent to the park in the apartments that abut it; ‘students’ were the second (self-explanatory) group; and the ‘group of universities’ were the third, referring to all other individuals associated with these institutions. Then, in a completely opposite narrative to that of the Vecinos, they described how the ‘student’ population has the most positive impact on the park, particularly by ‘bringing diversity to the area’, and also, through their different professional development efforts, helping ‘bring attention to the park’. The last point they discussed in terms of how different specialists from various faculties could bring their expertise to bear on the park in a variety of ways (e.g. a journalism professor or student writing about recovery efforts, while planning students/faculty such as themselves helped design a better space). This is a complete reversal of the *pertinencia* discussed by residents in the first Germania meeting, where the types of things considered ‘relevant’ to the park not only don’t agree with those presented by the former, but completely contradict them. The students and their activities were what belonged in the park, indeed what made the park good, *not* the residents and their activities.

The students also flipped the script on which population group was to blame for a lack of responsibility, or *pertenencia*. One student said: ‘They always complain that *we* are the problem, complaining about the *población flotante*, but I saw three different residents taking their personal trash out of their house and putting it in the public garbage can in the park’ (Masters Student, Germania Para Todos Meeting, 5/2/16). This, of course, is not only considered gauche, but is also against city ordinance. Another student claimed that dog walkers weren’t cleaning up after their pets. These, they were suggesting, were the real examples of lacking *sentido de pertenencia* for the park.

Before long, I decided to take my leave. My mind was swimming as I contemplated the scene I had just witnessed – a similar, yet somehow completely opposite scene from the one I had observed just one month before. Like the residents, these students had defined a group as ‘others’ based on their relationship to the park, or the ways in which the park was relevant to them and vice-versa (i.e. based on a sense of *pertinencia*). Also like the residents, students had argued that this ‘other’ population was the source of problems

plaguing local public space because they lacked a sense of *pertenencia* (responsibility, ownership). Each group claimed their sense of *perti/enencia* to be the more legitimate. These might not have been the exact thoughts/terms swimming around in my mind just then. These would coalesce much later in my analysis. But it was clear then and there that something was amiss with the combined discourses of public space and participation in redevelopment efforts in Bogotá.

6.4 Conclusions

In Las Cruces and Girardot, we saw how a few local activists worked together with government agents to try and develop a greater sense of community through recovering a shared cultural heritage, and how this was used as leverage in an effort to encourage citizens to take greater responsibility for their local territory. The two efforts (creating a community of shared interests, and making this community more proactive and empowered) revolved around, and took shape in, public space, through organized events that sought to either promote the cultural activities that accounted for a shared bond, or to promote public space recovery in order to make local residents take ownership of their neighborhood. I called this a politics of *perti/enencia* – a cycle of producing *relevance* through endogenous participatory planning and community events, and producing a sense of ownership through public space recovery. Yet very little of the center is largely ‘traditional’ residential neighborhoods like Las Cruces and Girardot, and in places like the Avenida Jimenez, concerted efforts are being made to increasingly ‘mix’ land use types. Most of the Historic/Traditional Center is becoming more like the Jimenez corridor – a bustling center of various land uses that invite an array of *flotantes*, who interact with a growing variety and number of ‘residents’. In these cases, the politics of *perti/enencia* becomes far more complex and problematic than in places like Las Cruces or Barrio Girardot. Here, to demonstrate this, I’ve used the example of a joint park recovery effort between a key driver in the expansion of city center diversification (a private university) and local traditional residents (represented by the Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas).

The Vecinos began as a group dedicated to ‘self-defense’. This was an identity adopted by traditional residents in the area of the Parque de los Periodistas in response to major urban redevelopments taking place along the Avenida Jimenez (specifically, the renovation of the Jimenez as the Eje Ambiental). Thus, this ‘self-defense’ goal was directly tied to urban renewal processes, and a growing influx of *flotantes* that these processes were being

developed for (in addition to a new kind of residential population), which the Vecinos saw as threatening the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the center that they felt a close tie. They framed their place relation as ‘living’ the spaces of the center (in opposition to simply ‘using’ these spaces). To residents, the *flotantes* (i.e. ‘users’ of the center) were increasingly excluding them from physical public spaces (through private security, fences, and certain real estate practices), and from procedural spaces of decision-making (not ‘listening’ to them, and simply pursuing their own interests).

Nevertheless, the group sought to overcome an ‘us vs. them’ dichotomy, pursuing efforts to evolve and expand as a group to becoming a network of ‘stakeholders’ rather than a community group of ‘residents’. They wanted to expand the defining parameters of *perti/enencia* by generating feelings of mutual respect, and subsequently practices of ‘co-responsibility’. They pursued this through participatory forums with the local government, and with the large private institutions involved in new development plans. Local institutions adopted a similar position, as demonstrated by the Corporación de Universidades seeking to develop better relationships with ‘the community’, and groups like Soy+Ciudad trying to create planning processes that were more inclusive of the local resident population. Yet as the case of Germania Para Todos demonstrates, the cooperative, inclusive approach to universalizing *perti/enencia* through ‘co-responsibility’ was anything but simple.

Talking to Lirian after the residents did not show up for the second Germania meeting, it was made quite clear that the Vecinos felt this project had no relevance for them, and would only benefit the interests of the students and the university. She reiterated her point that the students would receive direct benefits form this in the form of grades and degrees, and that the Soy+Ciudad Foundation could promote this as a successful project to help their brand. Yet the problems they wanted to address would not be solved, so there was not any real benefit for them. The students would continue to do as they pleased in/to the local public spaces, and local residents would continue to suffer exclusions as *flotantes* saw their interests literally cemented in the area.

Meanwhile to the students in the Germania project, it was the residential population that represented the main problem, and when efforts to work with the community broke down, they simply chose to pursue the type of public space project that fit their interests and training as architects and designers. Despite admitting to having only a temporary relationship with this neighborhood, they still sought to shape it in their own image, and

demanded that local residents were the ones who needed to increase their sense of *pertenencia* to make public space in the center more amenable to all – a principle that Emerson admitted was the very first thing they taught in their participatory projects. Public space ‘is for all’.

Here, in all this, we begin to see how different groups and their particular interests are perhaps only *discursively* being joined together in collaborative forums of participation designed to make public spaces more inclusive and enjoyable for everyone, and how this creates a problematic reproduction of power imbalances. The Vecinos were an ideal example of the *perti/enencia* that was being sought in places like Las Cruces and Girardot. It was a grassroots citizen group that had a strong sense of connection to their neighborhood, and used this to try and spread a sense of responsibility to other local stakeholders. Yet the goals of this public sphere and their ideals of a better public space were not, in practice, being literally or metaphorically built-in to the new city center landscape because their interests (what they felt as a sense of *pertinencia*) were not shared with the group that had real power in decision-making processes, and the majoritarian power to take over public spaces. In other words, in a public sphere where actors putatively bracket their differences to negotiate a shared sense of *pertenencia*, the differences that define these groups (i.e. the different relevant interests they bring to the table) are never actually abandoned, and the current spatial and social power structures were simply being reproduced.

These types of conflicts raise key questions about a politics of public space and participation based on a notion of *perti/enencia*. In a changing urban landscape that is increasingly defined by diversity (not just of local actors, but also those in charge of planning processes), who are public space developments/projects *relevant for*, and ultimately what does this say about who *owns* the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá? Further, how can people be asked to ‘take ownership’ of a place (i.e. establish a greater sense of *pertenencia* for that place) when their relationship of *pertinencia* to that place is being irrevocably altered? Likewise, how can people be asked to ‘take ownership’ of a place they simply visit intermittently, or which is only relevant to them in a passive, non-meaningful way?

These are important questions to ask, as efforts like the Germania Para Todos project, and groups like the Vecinos, are becoming more prevalent in the center of Bogotá. This is something like a double-edged sword. One the one hand, it shows how pervasive a concept

‘participation’ has become in Bogotá. Groups like the Vecinos seek to use participatory spaces to negotiate interests with groups like the Corporación de Universidades, who purportedly seek to do much the same. Additionally, the Soy+Ciudad Foundation is a good example of how ‘local knowledge’ is, at least discursively, being given greater validity relative to ‘expert knowledge’. In other words, ‘participation’ is being embraced and pursued in both top-down, and bottom-up ways. It is also apparent that public space is key to this, both as a physical site where struggles play out, and as an organizing concept around which different interests can be negotiated. Groups like the Vecinos are organized literally and figuratively around specific public spaces, and efforts led by local institutions to work with ‘the community’ do much the same.

Yet institutional commitments to enforcing bottom-up decisions are clearly still too weak, in large part because they don’t fit with the interests of the institutions in charge. The result can be that citizens are invited to take part in a growing number of sites of publicness (participatory forums and public spaces) based more on a sense of responsibility (*pertenencia*) than relevance (*pertinencia*), or where what is ‘relevant’ is dictated by outside experts (despite overtures to the contrary) while blame for problems continues to rest with ‘the community’ (who are suffering because they lack enough *pertenencia*). This completely reverses the politics of *perti/enencia*, making it not so much a tool to fight against cycles of ‘broken windows’, but for recreating the stigmatizations associated with this kind of theorization.

In the next chapter, I want to explore how these complicated dynamics of *perti/enencia* play out in a different part of the Historic/Traditional Center that is also defined more and more by mixture and change: the Plaza España area of the *localidad* of Los Mártires. Here, a ‘popular economics’ and a more severe history of decline and poverty have combined to create a different set and level of tensions between very different types of residents and *flotantes*. If the politics of *perti/enencia* began to break down as different interest groups struggled to overcome power imbalances in Germania, these problems become far more pronounced in an area slated for major renewal efforts because of its strong association with crime, poverty and decay.

Chapter 7: Los Amigos de la Plaza España: *Perti/enencia* as a potential form of anti-politics

7.1 Introduction

In the early hours of May 28, 2016, before the sun had risen, nearly 2,000 police officers and public officials from various national and city government agencies gathered in the dark just outside a neighborhood in the *localidad* of Los Mártires known simply as El Bronx. At around 05:00, the police moved in, kicking down doors in a massive raid-style operation where every person was removed from the roughly two-block area. Arrests were made, illegal drugs and guns were confiscated, children and animals were rescued from reportedly dismal conditions, and the large number of homeless living in the area were forced out.

El Bronx had become the most notorious inner-city ghetto in Bogotá,³⁷ possibly in all of Colombia. A local English language newspaper described it as ‘The Living Hell at the Heart of Bogotá’ in an article by the same name.³⁸ It was an area described as having been ‘left to rot by the government’, and ‘overrun by drugs and criminal gangs’ (Sherriff, 2018). Enrique Peñalosa referred to it as an ‘independent republic of criminal activity’,³⁹ because as ‘the largest *olla*⁴⁰ in the city’ (El Tiempo, 2016a), it was a neighborhood that the police dared not enter lest they be ‘disappeared’ by the feared *Sayayines*⁴¹ and end up in the ‘chop house’ to be disposed of in a pit of crocodiles (Sherriff, 2018). There were also reportedly torture chambers, and underground smuggling tunnels used for drugs as well as ‘sex slaves’ (*ibid*). True or not, this is the reputation that the neighborhood had. The estimated 800-1,000 homeless living in the neighborhood (usually in a fluid way) further added to the area’s abysmal reputation. In short, El Bronx was synonymous with criminality, homelessness and urban decay, and as such became a prime target of the municipal government as part of urban renewal strategies for the center more broadly.

³⁷ Rueda-Garcia (2003: 8) defines two categories of ‘slums’ in Bogotá, differentiating between ‘inner-city slums’ (‘deteriorated zones within the central city’), and areas ‘which correspond to the initial stages of the non-planned processes of urbanization in the peripheral and marginal areas’ of Bogotá (mostly on the southern fringes of the city).

³⁸ <https://thecitypaperbogota.com/bogota/el-bronx-the-living-hell-at-the-heart-of-bogota/13666>

³⁹ Speech given at the Foro Sobre el Tema del Habitante de Calle, October 29, 2016.

⁴⁰ See footnote 4 in Chapter 5

⁴¹ The name of the local gang that ran the Bronx neighborhood.



Image 28: El Bronx, Source: *El Tiempo*

This is what brought 2,000 police and social workers to the *localidad* of Los Mártires on the morning of March 28. Enrique Peñalosa had decided that the neighborhood had been left to rule itself long enough, and as part of campaign promises to increase security, recover public space, and redevelop the center of the city, it was decided the time had come to demolish the city's greatest example of urban blight.



Image 29: El Bronx Raid, Source: *Colombia Reports*

The immediate fallout was a mixture of praise and anger. From my own experience, it seemed that Bogotanos were glad to see the government take action against crime and make the city safer. For local residents and businesses, however, the flow of homeless and

drug dealers out of the relatively contained Bronx area and into adjacent neighborhoods caused alarm, and enticed a strong response. They did not want to see another Tercer Milenio/El Cartucho fiasco – a similar case of inner-city slum clearance from Peñalosa’s first term as mayor (see chapter three).

El Cartucho had been an infamous *olla* in the nearby Santa Ines neighborhood. It was the largest inner-city slum in its heyday, with a population of approximately 12,000 socially marginalized inhabitants (Berney, 2011) including poor migrants, tenement dwellers and street vendors, but also a powerful illegal drug market controlled by local mafias (Pérez, 2013). It was the city’s most notorious haven for criminal activities and also largest concentration of homeless. In what has been called the Third Millennium Operation (Pérez, 2013), this population was cleared out in a ‘militarized’ way (i.e. by a large police force, similar to the Bronx Operation) to build Parque Tercer Milenio (Third Millennium Park).



Image 30: Parque Tercer Milenio, Source: skyscrapercity.com

This park was meant to be an icon of a new social order in the center, and also mark a first step in much larger renewal plans (i.e. a new spatial order for the center). Yet rather than heralding a new era for the city center, many of the 12,000 individuals from El Cartucho spread out to surrounding neighborhoods, establishing what became known as *Cartuchitos*

(mini Cartuchos), the largest of which became El Bronx (Berney, 2011). Furthermore, large development projects never came (or are coming very slowly).

In the aftermath of the Bronx operation, it seemed like much the same was happening. People in nearby neighborhoods (San Bernardo, La Estanzuela and Voto Nacional) began complaining about ‘mini-Bronxes’ popping up on their blocks. A nearby public space, Plaza España, became a symbol of this issue. It was a key refuge for the homeless displaced by the Bronx clearance in the immediate aftermath. Some felt, as Thomas Graham of Colombia Reports put it, that the Bogota police had simply ‘swept the addicts out of the Bronx and into Plaza de España’ (2016). However, the temporary camp that the homeless had made there was short lived. Police in full riot gear dispersed the settlement on the morning of May 30th, which incited a brief conflict between police and the plaza’s occupants, a few of whom threw bricks dug up from the plaza at police officers and tossed Molotov cocktails.



Image 31: Homeless Encampment in Plaza España, Source: El Tiempo

This did not, however, get rid of the homeless population; it just prevented them from developing a large settlement in the middle of the plaza. Local *comerciantes* (small business owners) in the area began reporting increased instances of crime and a fear for their security. Some were forced to close up shop, at least for a while. Eventually, a public outcry emerged over a perceived ‘complete lack of planning’, as some local business owners told me in an informal conversation in August of 2016. Critical *comerciantes* claimed that rather than fixing the problems of drug dealing and homelessness, these problems had simply been moved to other areas – areas like Plaza España that unlike El Bronx, they pointed out, had legal residents and legitimate businesses in them.

Problematic as the Bronx operation fallout may have been, however, many also saw it as an opportunity. Just as we saw in the last chapter, when the Vecinos saw the pocket park project as ‘an excuse’ for engaging with universities, groups here saw an opportunity to take advantage of a strong institutional interest in the area, which was unfolding alongside, or within, discourses of inclusion and participation. Citizens saw an opportunity to latch onto nascent planning processes, and assert their interests through various participatory measures. One group in particular (Los Amigos de la Plaza España, or Friends of the Plaza España) used the government’s emphasis on public space recovery to connect their own interests to broader area transformations. As a mixture of local business owners, representatives from local participatory councils, government *funcionarios* and politicians, this was a highly diverse group that not only had to negotiate its interests with the municipal government, but also internally, struggling to develop a unified sense of *pertinencia* (relevance) around which they could build a stronger public sphere of influence (a group more willing and capable of taking ownership of local issues, or developing a stronger sense of *pertenencia*).

Essentially, the Bronx operation was, like the Third Millennium Operation, billed as a first step towards recovering the city from criminal elements and establishing a new public order. Yet it also involved reconnecting a disconnected, marginalized and stigmatized space/people to rich historical roots, or bringing it more fully back into the folds of the Historic/Traditional Center – something enhanced by the area’s inclusion in the Revitalization Plan (like with Las Cruces). Here, under the auspices of inclusive planning practices (i.e. ‘participation’) and public space reclamation/beautification, the politics of *pertenencia* was meant to take over for the ‘militarized’ forms of asserting a new order⁴² that the Bronx clearance entailed, and instantiate a new citizen-led approach to revitalizing the Los Mártires area. Responsibility for the transformation of the neighborhood would pass from the police (i.e. the state) to local citizens (i.e. they would develop a sense of *pertenencia*), who would use ‘culture’ (like with the groups in Las Cruces or Barrio Girardot) to generate a greater sense of shared place attachment (*pertinencia*) to the area’s customs and history, producing a sustainable cycle of convivial sociospatial production.

However, as we saw with the problems the Vecinos faced, here we see how a politics based on developing a greater sense of *pertenencia* becomes problematic when it is about demanding greater *responsibility* from citizens without proper institutional channels for

⁴² The language used by Pérez (2013) to describe the Third Millennium Operation.

allowing citizens to assert their own relevant *interests* (i.e. *pertinencia*), particularly when a large mixture of actors/interests prevents a strong unified public sphere from emerging. Here, a public sphere (the Amigos) becomes a vehicle for promoting a state agenda, rather than a group of private citizens organized to critique and control this agenda, based on a politics of consensus and collaboration surrounding the discourse of ‘public space reclamation’ in the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá.

7.2 Background

Urbanization of the Mártires area dates back to 1580, when it was associated with the San Victorino parish – one of the four parishes that made up the original colonial capital of Santa Fe de Bogotá. It was the most ‘rural’ of the four, or the most modest in terms of urban development and population (it was mostly ranches and farms), but it was also the city’s gateway to the outside world – connecting Bogotá to Sabana Plateau, and, via the Magdalena River, the Caribbean coast⁴³ and the rest of the world (Mejia, 2007). This peripherality made the area a mixture of marginal, rural figures (poor farmers and indigenous especially), but also gave the area an important commercial role. This role was expanded and consolidated in the 19th and early 20th centuries, during the city’s peak growth periods, and has continued to influence the dynamics of the area well into the late twentieth century.

Plaza España has been a key part of this process. Built in 1883, Plaza España was originally known as the Plaza de Madera (Plaza of Wood) because of the sale of lumber in the plaza, which (along with other construction materials) was one of its key commercial draws, along with agricultural goods. Its proximity to the parts of Colombia that produced these goods made it a natural place for this kind of activity, and Plaza de Madera was one of the three most important commercial plazas in the city because of this – a fact which was enhanced by the construction of the city’s first train station (La Estación de la Sabana) nearby in 1889. This brought even more commerce to the area, as it was the first stop for people coming to the city from the countryside to sell their wares. For a while, these developments made this part of the city flourish, and Los Mártires became a neighborhood of wealthy middle- and upper-class merchants living in splendid mansions. However, the area’s commercial character and connection to the countryside had a downside: there was always a strong presence of poor farmers and poor city residents buying and selling raw

⁴³ The Magdalena River is Colombia’s largest, and served as the primary means for moving goods to/from inland cities (like Bogotá) and the Caribbean Coast for much of the country’s history.

goods and materials, and, as the city's gateway to the rest of the country, it became a natural place for poor migrants to establish temporary residences. As this population began to grow in the early 20th century, wealthier residents began moving north to new neighborhoods like Chapinero and Teusaquillo (Suárez, 2010). This exodus came to a head in 1948 following the Bogotazo riots. Following this, the slow trickle of wealthy residents out of Los Mártires became an all-out exodus.

From the 1950s-1970s, the large, abandoned houses of wealthy residents who had left were slowly converted into tenements (*inquilinatos*) as property owners sought to squeeze what little profit they could out of buildings with little perceived real estate value, trying to take advantage of the growing number of rural Colombians coming to Los Mártires after being displaced by La Violencia (directly, or through associated economic hardship) (Suárez, 2010). Accompanying this demographic/housing shift was a shift in the area's commercial character, as the lower-income population living and selling things in the area also attracted poorer customers from other parts of the city. The slow but steady consolidation of these activities and demographics made the area (as mentioned before) the main part of the 'Popular Center' (i.e. center of informal housing and economic activities, as discussed in chapter three). Eventually, the area became the 'black sheep' of the city center (Mejia, 2007).

This history of decline is what drove the organization of the Amigos de la Plaza España in two ways. First, they wanted to halt/reverse the historical processes leading to declining land values, and a lack of a formal residential population; and second, to change the negative image of the neighborhood. Importantly, this was not about erasing the *economía popular* from the area, but about transforming perceptions about this, and altering certain bad practices involved in this. Local *comerciantes* wanted to reaffirm the importance of the 'Popular Center' to the history of Bogotá's development, and reinsert Los Mártires back into the physical and discursive space of the Historic/Traditional Center.

7.3 Los Amigos de la Plaza España

The Corporación de los Amigos de la Plaza España (the group's official name) was formed in defense of an iconic public space much like the Vecinos. It started in early 2015 – a full year before the Bronx operation – when Andrés (a local businessman and land owner) was walking through Plaza España and saw a familiar but frustrating site: what he described to

me as a ‘mountain of trash’. ‘It was like a landfill’, he claimed. He made the decision then and there that ‘something had to be done’. He ‘couldn’t allow this to continue happening’ (interview, 8/20/16).



Image 32: Habitante de calle and garbage near Plaza España, Source: Author

Trash was a key public space issue in the center of Bogotá, and a primary mover in organizing citizens around neighborhood improvement efforts (as we saw with the case of Las Cruces). It forced debates over public space responsibilities and relevance (i.e. *perti/enencia*), which constituted an emergent public sphere confronting the government about how to deal with these issues. Yet while trash in the plaza may have been the impetus for Andrés starting the Amigos, it was (or became) in reality only one part of the group’s larger mission. In a public forum on homelessness in Bogotá hosted by the Procuraduría General,⁴⁴ Andrés gave a presentation where he defined the Amigos as: ‘an organization committed to constant work with the authorities in order to de-stigmatize an area historically stigmatized as unclean and unsafe, through history, culture, sanitation and security’ (PGNCUENTAOFICIAL, 2016). In his own notes, which Andrés shared with me in an interview on August 20, 2016, he was more specific.

⁴⁴ This is the Office of the Inspector General, an independent national-level government institution in charge of monitoring the conduct of public officials.

The main forum for the group was a WhatsApp group chat.⁴⁵ Andrés started this chat in 2015, when he saw the ‘mountain of trash’ in the Plaza, snapped a picture with his cell phone, and brought it to the Local Mayor’s office. There, he was connected with a representative of Aguas de Bogotá, and they formed the chat to try and organize local *comerciantes*, and encourage community action to fight against issues behind urban blight. They created the group and called it the ‘Amigos de la Plaza España’ (Friends of Plaza España). The chat was meant to act as a forum for discussing specific issues facing the community, as well as for sharing ideas and information about how to confront these issues (such that a community response could be formulated).

By the time I joined the group in August of 2016 (a full year and a half later), Los Amigos (the WhatsApp group) had grown from two original members to a group of more than 180 people representing a wide variety of interests/organizations (local *comerciantes*, community leaders from local councils like the JAC, *funcionarios* from different government agencies, high ranking police officers, and even some politicians). Furthermore, Andrés (who remained the clear leader) had refined his goals and formulated a strategic plan for transforming Plaza España from a ‘dangerous, dirty place predisposed to inspiring fear’ into a ‘Plaza of Great Cultural Offerings’. He explained to me how he (and others) had recognized Peñalosa’s ‘love for public space recuperation’, and decided to leverage this to promote their interests. They saw great potential in the area, because of the plaza’s location, size and high land value; the heavy ‘flow’ of people in the area⁴⁶ due to its position, a large hospital and school, and commercial character; a ‘growing sensibility about the actual state of things’ amongst local residents and businesses; the area’s heritage value, defined by its many nationally-listed Bienes de Interes Cultural (BIC, or Properties of Cultural Interest);⁴⁷ a large number of artistic groups and entities already working in the area; and finally, the government’s expressed interest in recuperating public space.

⁴⁵ WhatsApp is a popular communication app for smartphones. It is extremely prominent in Colombia. As such, WhatsApp groups were a very popular tool for organizing participatory efforts.

⁴⁶ This was due to the plaza’s location, but also the large number of commercial businesses surrounding it, and the presence of a large hospital and school on the plaza’s southern and western edges respectively.

⁴⁷ This is an official national list of historically important buildings and monuments.



Image 33: Plaza España, Source: Author

Indeed, the Plaza España area does present a lot of opportunities. It is an extremely well positioned neighborhood in terms of its proximity to the main parts of the Historic/Traditional Center, and its proximity to some of the city's primary transit corridors. It is within a few blocks of three major TransMilenio routes, and the first line of the city's new elevated metro is planned to go directly through the neighborhood. In addition to it being well-located in terms of transportation into/out of the center, it is also just nine blocks west of the Casa de Nariño (the presidential palace), Plaza de Bolívar (the nation's most significant plaza, which is bordered by the National Capital, the city's cathedral, city hall and the supreme court), as well as other key tourist attractions and historically significant sites. Further, official efforts to embrace the living history of the 'popular economy' in the center (like those of the IDPC) were an impetus for groups like the Amigos to promote the area as a historically and culturally significant place all its own. And the area's popular economy was indeed alive and well.

Most of the area is defined by a series of commercial 'clusters'⁴⁸ – a common organizational phenomenon in the Historic/Traditional Center. There are a few large *centros comerciales* (malls) along Carrera 19 between Calle 11 and Calle 13. One sells primarily cheap, locally made clothing. Across the street is a mall full mostly of hardware store stalls. Go a block east, and you'll find malls and small storefronts with a cluster of

⁴⁸ All across the older parts of the city, small businesses are organized into little clusters, such that different neighborhoods or city blocks are entirely dedicated to one type of commercial activity (hardware stores, clothing shops, auto mechanics, optometrists, stores selling curtains, etc.).

liquor distributors. To the west of the Plaza, along Calle 11, is a mall where former street vendors (cleared out of Plaza España in 2001) were relocated (see chapter three). Some other large stores selling construction materials dot the area to the east/northeast of the Plaza, particularly around Calle 12, however most of the businesses around here are in old two to three story buildings, many of which once belonged to rich local residents. For example, there is a small cluster of stores selling bulk grains, nuts and dried fruits. Following Calle 11 to the east, towards Plaza Mártires, you will find blocks of hardware stores and auto mechanics. On Calle 13, there is a large group of bicycle shops. Naturally, all these businesses are also interspersed with a variety of small, cheap traditional food and beverage businesses – *panaderías* (bakeries), *fruterías* and *cafeterías* (coffee and juice bars with other snacks), little restaurants serving hefty, cheap lunches and *cigarerías* hawking cold beer, sodas, snacks and cigarettes.

Despite these positive characteristics (having a strong, active commercial economy), and a growing interest in the area, Andrés was not hesitant to point out that a ‘unified position’, and a ‘holistic plan’ remained out of reach. This, he felt, along with the area’s stigmatized reputation, posed the greatest challenge to fully realizing the area’s potential. As he wrote in his ‘diagnostic’ notes:

Currently, Plaza España carries a series of negative connotations in the public’s opinion, as a result of a history of insecurity, *permanencia* of homeless people, and dirtiness. Citizens and neighbors do not have a sense of *pertenencia* for the Plaza España. A collective imagination has been created and a public discourse has been generated which strengthens and perpetuates negative attitudes about the area. Contraband, illegality, abuses by street vendors, difficult mobility, the sale of bad products, etc., are all part of this. Local business owners and civil society organizations in the area say this deterioration continues because a holistic strategy for articulating efforts between all actors doesn’t exist here. We don’t have a unanimous position. We don’t have a holistic plan (Andrés notes, seen on 8/20/16).

This lack of a ‘holistic’ and ‘unified’ position is directly correlated with the group’s large, mixed character. Basically, the Amigos had expanded to become (like the Vecinos) a larger, more diverse public sphere in their attempts to pursue their agenda. Yet in doing this, their core goal of defending and revitalizing a specific public space in order to transform broader neighborhood dynamics became more difficult to pursue in a ‘unanimous’, or ‘holistic’ way.

On the one hand, local actors want to enhance certain activities associated with Plaza España, particularly those related to local commerce. Yet as indicated above, the

government's clearance of El Bronx was part of a much larger renewal strategy whose changes wouldn't necessarily improve business for many local *comerciantes*. Like Petro before him, Peñalosa also wanted to see more housing developed in the center. But would thousands of new lower-middle- and middle-class residents improve business for the cluster of hardware stores and construction material stores, or would the owners of these buildings be better off renting to different types of businesses? And what about the Plaza España? How should it be transformed in these processes? These types of issues had the effect of dividing (more than consolidating) local interests, and meant the group needed to develop new strategies for establishing a unified front, and using this to negotiate with the city government (which in this case was the predominant institutional force in charge of impending planning and development efforts).

In my time working with the Amigos, I observed these new strategies coalescing around two key principles: making the area somehow more 'cultural'; and 'institutionalizing' the area. These principles would have a profound effect on how the group developed as a public sphere (i.e. how they collectivized, and collectively engaged the state), and how they used and understood 'public space'.

The idea behind making the area 'more cultural' was based on attempts to create highly visible, but ambiguously defined 'cultural offerings' whose purpose was to alter public perception of the area, and attract a larger (and different) clientele. Although vague, 'cultural offerings' is typically used to describe either a variety of 'expositional' offerings (such as art, music, or culinary experiences celebrating Colombian food), physical monuments (i.e. statues) or educational offerings (libraries, community centers for cultural learning, etc.). The goal behind this strategy was that Andrés and the Amigos wanted to make the Plaza España neighborhood the 'largest open-air shopping center in Latin America'. With Plaza España acting as a 'Plaza of Great Cultural Offerings', they wanted to develop a vibrant shopping neighborhood to establish a more ordered topographical public space by attracting a different kind of clientele than that associated with previous land uses (like El Bronx). This effectively represented a combined topographical and procedural approach to public space that would shift the area's *pertinencia* (its relevance).

The other key strategy was to make the area more 'institutionalized'. This meant developing closer ties to the municipal and local governments, and trying to get larger private institutions (like banks, or the Chamber of Commerce) to be more actively involved in the area. It also meant establishing a more institutionalized culture amongst

local *comerciantes*, with the goal of legalizing and formalizing business practices. Andrés emphasized that he wanted this to be pursued through ‘educational’ rather than punitive measures – teaching businesses that have informal practices how to be more formal (interview, August 20, 2016). This would generate a more bottom-up commitment to change, supported by empowering tools (such as access to loans, or programs offered by the Chamber of Commerce), rather than, for example, controlling illegality and informality by having regular police raids. In public space, developing this kind of culture involved *jornadas de aseo* (volunteer public space restoration events) that were meant to give local actors a greater sense of *pertenencia* by recovering public space as a community (much like in Las Cruces or Girardot). The subsequent feeling of ‘ownership’ would further drive these participants to participate in changing the area’s culture through the types of activities described above.

These efforts essentially combined to produce a cycle of *institutionalizing enculturation* that resembles, but in a way inverts, a politics of *perti/enencia* in that rather than developing a self-reproducing cycle of change promoting ‘endogenous’ plans and interests, this became a mechanism for reproducing plans/projects of the municipal government. Here, the cyclical politics of *perti/enencia* were pursued through an agenda promoting ambiguous forms of ‘cultural offerings’ as a means for promoting a reputation for progress and change, itself a discursive means for enacting a new more formal, or ‘institutional’, urban order in an area historically defined by a reputation for decline, informality and disorder. As elsewhere, this was an emergent process of public making that coalesced around topographical public space forms/approaches. However, unlike cases such as Las Cruces and Barrio Girardot, or even with the Vecinos, this is a case of a group without a strongly unified agenda, which forced the group to develop a consensus based approach to decision making that ended up in something like Habermas’ ‘bracketing’. This diminished the power of the Amigos as a public sphere and made it easier for their agenda to be coopted by government interests. In the first part of the chapter, I explore how what I call a cycle of ‘institutionalizing enculturation’ developed around a politics of consensus, and how this affected the group.

In the second part of the chapter, I explore how the principles and strategies associated with ‘cultural offerings’ and ‘institutionalization’ were developed and renegotiated through the various types of activities and events that the Amigos were involved in as part of their efforts to make a better, safer Plaza España. I break this down into two sections.

‘Topographical’ approaches are looked at through debates over what kinds of ‘cultural offerings’ the plaza could or should have; and through different events the group hosted or participated in that involved public space recovery and maintenance (*jornadas de aseo*). Following this, I explore the ‘procedural’ approaches by looking at different government-led participatory forums that the group was involved in, and at meetings hosted between a local JAC and a grassroots participatory planning group called TUPBogotá (Talleres Urbanaisticos Participativos de Bogotá, or Participatory Urban Planning Workshops of Bogotá), whose founder was an active member/leader of the Amigos.

In exploring these various attempts to progress a hybrid cultural/institutional agenda, I show how negotiating diverse interests and a strong commitment by the state to redevelopment in the area turned a grassroots politics of *perti/enencia* into a politics of consensus and collaboration that reduced the ability of an emergent public sphere to assert their interests. Their approach to political and sociospatial relations was based on a belief in the transformative potential of collaborative dialogue and everyday public space interactions, which, I argue, is a type of politics that essentially promotes the bracketing of difference, and in so doing becomes more easily coopted by powerful interests and actors – effectively homogenizing and ordering ‘the public’ rather than activating a diverse field of publics empowered by a politics of *perti/enencia*. However, there is a paradox here in that a kind of institutionalization (i.e. a more formal type of order) was necessary for the group’s goals if they wanted to assert themselves in the legal planning sphere. I discuss this paradox in greater detail below.

7.4 Topographical Approaches

As a group dedicated to recovering a specific public space, and using said space as a mechanism for improving social dynamics, it is natural that developing projects in public space would be a prime strategy. Here, I look at how this was pursued through both a series of ‘small cultural revolutions’ (seen as both a means and ends for the Plaza España), and in attempts to create a greater sense of ownership and responsibility through public space recovery events (*jornadas de aseo*).

7.4.1 The Small Cultural Revolution Approach: Incremental Changes to Public Perceptions as a Means for Urban Revitalization

As discussed, the Bronx fallout caused a large public outcry amongst small business owners in the Plaza España area. This ultimately triggered a series of confrontations and collaborative efforts between citizens and government actors both in, and over, public space. Public space became a forum for addressing problems associated with El Bronx, and a symbol for all the negative and/or positive things associated with its fallout. However, not everyone could agree on how this forum/symbol should be used in order to enact change. To try and create a ‘unified’ position that would be stronger and more capable of negotiating a ‘coherent’ strategic plan, the group tried to promote a consensual politics of collaboration based on a vague principle of ‘culture’. How different group members responded to a local protest on August 24, 2016, is a good example of this.

At 8:00 am, Andrés reported in the group chat that the Carrera 30 was being blocked by angry *comerciantes* who were aggrieved by ‘the lack of a solution for relocating the homeless’. Others reported the police were arriving, and this invited messages expressing concern that things would turn ugly, or get violent. After all, police had recently clashed violently with the homeless in Plaza España when their encampment was broke up. One member expressed hope for ‘a dialogue between the mayor and the *comerciantes*, and that the events don’t end in repressive measures’, which I understood to mean clashes between protestors and police (Ruth, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16). This did not seem to be the case, however, and others expressed frustration, with one individual interjecting: ‘the riot police have arrived, and are using all their force against the protestors. But we can’t lay a finger on the homeless. This is the law in our country’ (Speaker 2, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16)

Appearing to want to steer the conversation in another direction, the speaker who had expressed hope for a ‘dialogue’ proposed that the group host an event for El Día del Amor y Amistad (Day of Love and Friendship) in September, to ‘increase sales, and get all the different commercial sectors involved in participation’. She suggested the group could ‘decorate the malls and the Plaza, and have music performances, things like this to bring our clients back to the area’ (Ruth,⁴⁹ WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16). Andrés praises this idea immediately by proclaiming: ‘It is this type of activity that stimulates commerce, and diminishes crime! Protests depress the sector, and inconvenience society. How many people were late for medical appointments, or for work today, because of the blockage of

⁴⁹ Ruth is mentioned by name because she is someone with whom I spoke outside the group chat, and who had willingly agreed to be part of my research. She was a member of the Consejo de Planeación Local (CPL) for Los Mártires.

Carrera 30? The revolution is in small cultural actions!' (Andrés, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16).

This, ultimately, became the political approach the group adopted: not a politics of aggression, but an incremental, collaborative politics of 'small cultural actions'. It did not appear to me, either in this conversation or in any other, the group was against protest *per se*. One group member, in fact, did defend the protestors' actions. Speaker 5 reminded the group that 'peaceful protest is a constitutionally established right', and wrote a long paragraph justifying the actions the demonstrators were taken (WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16). However, the group's leadership did not think that it fit with their particular goals (i.e. generating a positive image of the area), and thus was not the appropriate strategy for pursuing these. Public 'demonstrations', it was thought, should be about cultural – exhibitions where art, food and music were on display rather than outrage and combative forms of politics. The latter would simply reproduce an image of Plaza España/Los Mártires as violent and disordered. It would just produce more negative press. So later that very day, Andrés presented the group with an example of the type of 'cultural offering' they could host in the plaza to generate a more positive image.

Early on in my time following the Amigos, a famous Colombian Vallenato⁵⁰ singer named Carlos Vives had his bike stolen while in Bogotá. While this did not happen in Los Mártires (Andrés was quick to point out it actually happened 'in the north'), and had nothing to do with El Bronx, the theft occurred at the height of interest in the Bronx/Plaza España area, and it gave Andrés an idea. In a conversation with the Local Mayor and some other local *comerciantes*, he came up with the idea to invite Carlos Vives to give a 'mini concert' (two to three songs) in Plaza España, where the singer would ceremoniously receive a bike (provided by local *comerciantes*) as a symbolic gesture to show that 'the *comerciantes* in this sector do not condone these kinds of criminal activities' (Andrés, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16). Andrés insisted that with the thousands of fans that Carlos Vives would attract, and the support of the government and police to ensure security, they could 'change public opinion' by 'showing the public the good side of Los Mártires'. He claimed that 'the idea is to humanize our sector, and show the public that not only negative things happen here. Not everything here is bad'. About a half dozen group members jumped into the conversation, mostly supporting what one called 'the type of initiative that can dignify our sector' (Speaker 9, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16). One member even said they

⁵⁰ Vallenato is a popular Colombian music style from the city/region of Valledupar near the Caribbean coast and the border with Venezuela.

knew of two bands of former homeless individuals (a rock band and a salsa band) that could open for Carlos Vives, and send ‘a beautiful message of hope to the homeless that things can get better, things can change’ (Ruth, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16).

While this ‘mini concert’ never happened (it actually never even reappeared in the group chat), this conversation perfectly demonstrates how the group wanted to use a vague definition of ‘cultural offerings’ to unite local *comerciantes* and other actors (even the homeless, who were seen less as another actor and more as a problematic element) in order to change public opinion about the Plaza España area, and in this way, initiate incremental, citizen-led transformations. A big music event with an extremely famous headliner, coupled with positive social messages, was exactly the kind of thing they wanted to have Plaza España associated with (rather than homelessness, drugs and crime), and bringing elements of the homeless population into the event would help build bridges between groups that were otherwise at odds with one another.

This shows how the Amigos were trying to use an ambiguous idea of ‘culture’ to develop a type of cooperative revitalization platform that was somewhat reminiscent of the Vecinos trying to establish ‘co-responsibility’ between local residents/business owners and *flotantes* around the Jimenez corridor. It was essentially a public sphere using a polite politics of working together to try and get more powerful outside actors to value local interests. However, the ambiguous use of ‘culture’ as a broad goal opened the group’s interests up to outside forces of cooptation. There was simply too much variance in opinion over what ‘culture’ should look like, and who should be involved in its production and consumption. Unlike in cases like Las Cruces or Girardot, then, where a relatively uniform population might be more successfully organized around a kind of ‘local culture’, cases like Los Amigos show how culture can be a form of anti-politics. A conversation that took place in the group chat on September 9 is a case in point.

The thread began with a suggestion made by Andrés: that a trolley car (the type that used to pass through the area in the early twentieth century as part of the city’s Tranvia system⁵¹) be placed in the middle of the plaza in order to add to the space’s heritage value (Andrés, WhatsApp Chat, 9/9/16). It was almost immediately suggested by Speaker 34 that the trolley/train could be converted into a café (WhatsApp Chat, 9/9/16). Shortly thereafter, Andrés shared a photo of an old red double decker bus from London (replete

⁵¹ The Tranvia was Bogotá’s tram system, which operated from the mid-1880s until the late 1940s.

with the original destination sign) that had been converted into a café in Parque El Chico – one of the city’s most expensive residential neighborhoods in the north – run by a high-end German bakery/restaurant with various locations in Bogotá. Andrés argued that: ‘if they can have a bus café in a park in the north, why can’t we have a café in a trolley – an ‘icon of Bogotá’ – here in Plaza España?’ (WhatsApp Chat, 9/9/2016). This triggered a debate that revolved around the kind of ‘culture’ and ‘heritage’ the group wanted to promote, wherein a clear tension emerged between promoting culture as a certain kind of *image*, and promoting projects aimed at *formación*, or cultural education.

A few options were suggested: a library and a CLAN art center⁵² were suggested as cultural sites of *formación* that could provide alternative spaces for kids to develop creative skills. The idea here is that ‘cultural offerings’ should be educational opportunities. A CLAN art center or a library would be ‘cultural offerings’ for helping local residents (particularly children) develop as human beings, and as citizens – something like what hip hoppers in Las Cruces were arguing for. Someone else, however, suggested a Botero⁵³ statue be placed in the plaza. Like the trolley, this would be effective because it would attract visitors to the area, bringing more business and resources with them to support local efforts. It would also, some pointed out, be a more ‘authentic’ representation of local heritage than a London bus café. Regardless of whether it was a statue or café, ‘culture’ was not so much an active, living form that extended from (and gave back to) local actors, but something to be advertised and consumed, or a resource that could be capitalized on.

Despite disagreements over what permanent ‘cultural offerings’ should look like in the area, Andrés praised the group for its ability to ‘think outside the box’ (Andrés, WhatsApp Chat, 8/24/16). These were, he felt, exactly the kinds of discussions they should be having, and exactly the kinds of projects they should be pushing for. They all, after all, had the same goal: They all wanted to see the area improve, and generally believed that making Plaza España somehow more ‘cultural’ was the way forward. Yet the ambiguity of ‘culture’ was becoming problematic, contributing to a rift in just what kind of neighborhood improvements local actors felt were *relevant* for the current and future populations of the neighborhood. The group was struggling to develop a strong, unified

⁵² CLAN art centers are joint ventures between a privately run non-profit, and the city government’s Secretariat of Culture. They are spaces – usually converted, pre-existing buildings – that function as community art centers, primarily for children.

⁵³ Fernando Botero (commonly called just Botero) is a famous modern Colombian artist known for his paintings and statues in which figures appear disproportionately large, or voluminous. His works are displayed in public museums and in public spaces across Colombia, but particularly in Medellín, Botero’s hometown.

sense of *pertinencia*. This had been much easier in previous cases, or at least more straightforward, especially where the majority of actors working together were residents working to protect their place in the neighborhood. In Los Mártires, however, a history of deterioration and ‘popularization’ combined with the area’s primarily commercial nature to create a more fragmented social landscape where a unified ‘us vs. them’ attitude was more difficult to develop around a collective sense of *memoria*. The area’s commercial character made this more difficult, as actors with a vested interest in the area also had a vested interest in maintaining a competitive advantage over other actors.

This, I argue, ultimately led to the group putting their collective weight behind events of public space cleanup and recovery (*jornadas de aseo*), which (a) were ways for people to ‘act’ on their desire to make things better, rather than talk about doing so, and (b) were easily agreed upon courses of action that needed little to no deliberation. Everyone agreed that a nicer looking, cleaner public space was a better public space. This lack of desire to have greater debate and deliberation over ‘cultural’ transformations (or transformations that went beyond a new coat of paint or new light bulbs) had certain consequences, however, which I explore in the next section.

7.4.1.1 *Jornadas de Aseo: Public Space Restoration as a Means for Building Pertenencia*

If developing ‘cultural offerings’ in public space was a strategy for developing or altering *pertinencia*, then public space *jornadas* were the primary tool for establishing a sense of *pertenencia* – a way for local *comerciantes* to ‘take ownership’ of their neighborhood. It was a way for getting local citizens to take greater responsibility for their neighborhood in order to expand the goals they had for making it a place of ‘great cultural offerings’. *Jornadas* were events where citizens and government workers would come together as a unified team of experts and volunteers to make public space improvements. These usually consisted of simple things like painting (particularly to cover up graffiti) and cleaning up trash, but sometimes activities went beyond this (as with the Amigos fixing and replacing the brick patios of the Plaza).

The first instance of this in Plaza España unfolded as a Christmas event that Andrés and the nascent Amigos organized in the Plaza at the end of 2015. This event, Andrés said, was the one that ‘really started to get the community interested’ in his growing movement (interview, 8/20/16). While the main draws were the ‘cultural’ festivities themselves –

food, drink, a fireworks display, and especially a nativity scene – the event was also the source of the group’s first *jornada*. During this, the group made various public space ‘improvements’, such as picking up trash, painting, scrubbing graffiti, etc. As Andrés describes it, the combination of community efforts to ‘beautify’ the Plaza, and the community turnout at the event itself to celebrate the holiday, precipitated a sense of collectivity and *pertenencia* that had been lacking, and ultimately encouraged more *comerciantes* to want to join the group’s efforts. It gave more people a sense of purpose and belonging.

The group had made various attempts to ‘clean up’, or ‘recover’ the Plaza since their founding, but the most visible event came three months after the intervention in El Bronx. As I mentioned, the first of these *jornadas* took place in December of 2015, when Andrés enlisted the help of local business owners to cleanup the Plaza for a Christmas event. This event, however, received little to no publicity. It was only of importance to the public(s) that already habituated the area because the area in general was, at the time, only important to these *habitados*.⁵⁴ El Bronx’s demise changed all this, however, and an event at the end of July 2016, received a great deal of attention.

After the Bronx operation, the Plaza had become like a refugee camp for dozens of the approximately 1,000 *habitante de calle* that had been removed from El Bronx. In the days that followed, there were clashes between this population and the police. Dozens of *habitantes de calle* were reported to have attacked police with projectiles, including bricks that they tore up from the Plaza. The group was eventually removed from the Plaza on May 30th, but they remained in the area. As Andrés explained to me, this triggered a spike in interest amongst local *comerciantes*, and in the months that followed, a much larger ‘recovery’ effort was initiated.

With the help of donations from a local paint company, and the assistance of some government entities, the Amigos pulled together volunteers, as well as materials on July 30th to ‘reclaim’ the Plaza (an estimated 100 rollers, 100 brooms, 40 rakes and two 10-ton trucks to remove the debris and garbage from the Plaza). This was the kind of community action that both the Peñalosa administration and the Amigos leadership had been talking about needing/wanting. In addition to cleaning up trash, they repainted the Plaza with a new type of paint that would make it easy to clean future graffiti with only soap and water,

⁵⁴ People who have a habitual relationship with the neighborhood, and therefore supposedly have a greater relationship to it as a meaningful place – a deeper understanding of it, and love for it.

and replaced some 1,800 cobblestones – at least some of which had been taken or damaged during the clashes between police and *habitantes de calle* in the Plaza following the Bronx intervention.

For a few weeks, these efforts received a great deal of media attention. *El Tiempo* alone ran four stories in late July/early August on the Amigos' work, with supportive headlines like: 'The Community is Dedicated to Recovering Plaza España' (*El Tiempo*, 2016a); and 'The Plaza España Shows Off its New Face' (*El Tiempo*, 2016b). Photos were released across media and social media outlets of volunteers and government officials working side by side in the Plaza with rakes, paintbrushes, and garbage bags



Image 34: Jornada in Plaza España, Source: El Tiempo

While this was just one of more than 50 similar efforts that took place across the city on the same day (July 30th) as part of a strategy by the Peñalosa administration to get citizens to take responsibility for their public space,⁵⁵ the Plaza España effort received the most media attention. In other words, the Plaza España event was not unique, but rather representative of a larger public space project. Its representativeness was due in part to the plaza's large, iconic character, but more to the fact that the Bronx fallout had made Los Mártires a key focus for the media, particularly pertaining to public space issues like homelessness.

⁵⁵ A large social media and advertising campaign (#MiEspacioEsBogotá) was created to encourage citizens to take action in public spaces. Citizens were asked to identify the closest public space intervention to where they lived or worked, and join other government and citizen volunteers in recuperation efforts.

Nevertheless, the largest, most visible, and most highly publicized public space recovery effort in the area was not the Plaza España recovery efforts. Rather, it was an event that took place one month later (on September 3rd) in Plaza de los Mártires, the flagship project of the administration's 'Mártires Florecen' program.

The IDPC described this as a strategy for 're-signifying' the *localidad* of Los Mártires (a strategy which discursively matched that of the Amigos). This title was a play on words that revolved around the multiple meanings of 'flower', and how the project sought to use both its literal and metaphorical meanings. Actual flowers would be planted in renewed/recovered public spaces as part of a symbolic effort to revitalise the area, and make it 'flourish' socially and economically.

The official launch of this strategy consisted of a number of events in and around the Plaza de Los Mártires on September 3rd, including: the restoration of the façade of the Basilica Voto Nacional; the restoration of the Obelisk to the Martyrs; the declaration the former Faculty of Medicine of the National University (now the Army Recruitment Battalion) as a District and National Site of Cultural Interest; new landscaping with support from the Botanical Garden, community organizations and the IDPAC; and the design of a district impact strategy for the valuation and appropriation of Los Mártires as a district and national cultural heritage site. The event was meant to be an extension of the kind of 'social work' involved in creating a greater sense of *pertenencia* amongst citizens by incorporating youth groups, community organizations and a group of former homeless individuals from El Bronx that had gone through government recovery programs.

On the day, I arrived 30 minutes after the scheduled start time, having learned that being 'on time' meant I was almost guaranteed to be standing around by myself waiting for anyone else to show up, sometimes for over an hour. I had been expecting to find action as soon as I stepped off the TransMilenio, since the Avenida Jimenez station (the one directly across from Plaza de los Mártires) was meant to be part of the day's 'recovery' efforts. I only saw a couple of green-clad Aguas workers sweeping up and collecting trash, a completely normal site at any TransMilenio station on any given day.

More was happening in the plaza itself, but here, too, the only 'recovery' action taking place was being done by teams of men in green jumpsuits – a mixture of workers from Aguas and the Botanical Gardens. These were set to work planting large patches of beautiful flowers, swathes of purples, reds, yellows and oranges, set against green foliage,

in what had previously been patches of dirt and grass. Near the monument to the martyrs, in the middle of the plaza, a throng of uniforms gathered around: soldiers in camouflage, police in their bright neon yellow jackets, and large numbers of blue Bogotá Mejor Para Todos windbreakers. The army band played the national anthem, and the Local Mayor gave a speech. But the Amigos I knew were nowhere to be found. Rather, the ‘participatory’ recovery effort to make Los Mártires ‘flower’ was, in actuality, a swarm of uniform-clad government representatives giving speeches and taking photos, with a few local ‘community leaders’ joining in, but almost no broad citizen interest or participation.

The only people ‘participating’ in any kind of work were employees of the municipal government, or public works companies they contracted. The only way the ‘public’ was engaged in these efforts was as a passive audience celebrating the great work that the government was doing. This was reflected in the group chat on another *jornada* day. Andrés began thanking the Local Mayor and his team for their ‘efforts for our *localidad*’, to which another member responded: ‘This is how it should be...*sentido de pertenencia*...look after our space, and don’t litter. We’re looking after our home’ (Representative of the JAC from Barrio Voto Nacional, WhatsApp chat, 9/3/16). This same member went on to add that ‘this kind of *pertenencia* is fundamental’ to the group being able to achieve their goals of a more cultural, and ‘institutionalized’ public space. Andrés agreed whole-heartedly.



Image 35: Too many chiefs, not enough Indians, Source: Author



Image 36: Government employees 'participating' in Plaza Martires, Source: Author

The Mártires Florecen project was a perfect example of what I had come to know of participatory public space reclamation events. A small group of citizen activists/volunteers would come together with a large force of government employees/representatives to clean, paint and plant, and also to be regaled with speeches from politicians, police commanders, and other authority figures. Lots of pictures would be taken, and circulated through various types of media outlets. Yet the broader ‘public’ would be more an audience to this than an active participant. Thus, these events were largely publicity stunts more than public-making efforts. The ‘social work’ and ‘community participation’ they supposedly entailed were greatly over exaggerated, and this, I believe, was easily perceived by most citizens – a fact that explains low levels of participation. It was, as one group member commented in the chat the following day, a common case of ‘too many chiefs, not enough Indians’, or of what others had described as a problem with *liderismo*.

This is essentially the argument that ‘participation’ (as a practice where citizens are included in processes of government) is not so much a broadly inclusive platform for citizen involvement in more direct democracy, but rather that it involves a select population of ‘leaders’ who may (or may not) be acting on behalf of whatever community they represent, or simply seeking personal gain. It means that ‘participatory’ events are almost exclusively various ‘leaders’ and government officials – what Hernandez (2010)

had called an ‘insulating layer’ of professional participants that kept citizens and ‘the state’ (i.e. the actual site of decision-making power) isolated from one another. I myself, having been to the Mártires Florecen event, had come to more or less the same conclusion, especially as this was something I had witnessed time and again in different public space recovery events throughout the Historic Center.

The Mártires Florecen program acts as a good representation of the paradox at the heart of the pedagogical public space model, and the use of *pertenencia* as a means for unifying publics around a shared sense of place, or of belonging, without a strong sense of *pertinencia* (relevance, or a collective place attachment based on personal historical relationships). As I discussed when describing the evolution of Colombia’s Ordenamiento Teritorial planning system, ownership has increasingly come to be defined in terms of *rights* and *responsibilities* in Bogotá’s urban planning paradigm. *Jornadas* like the one in Voto Nacional are used to symbolically represent how citizens are the one’s who ‘own’ the city, although the *right* to this ownership is being granted only as a tradeoff for citizens taking greater *responsibility* for public space maintenance and control. So if space is socially produced, and therefore defined by the social processes that take place in, and in relation to that space, then the *pertenencia* being demonstrated in the events, ideas and activities discussed thus far point to an institutionalized public culture being produced and reproduced by a top-down discourse of public space. The ‘owners’ are the authorities, and one’s ‘belonging’ is defined by one’s position vis-à-vis this authority. ‘Relevance’ is established by ones position vis-à-vis this authoritative structure. The cause *and* the effect is an imbalance between whose interests can be represented in the public space. The ordering, planning, design, occupation, even the imagining of ‘public space’ remains highly controlled by a select few experts and elites, meaning those without power lack any institutional force for leveraging their own type of *pertinencia* (their own interests) in the processes that are meant to make them take more responsibility for ‘their’ city.

This problem is being reproduced in how citizens are allowed to ‘participate’ in planning processes. Despite a discursive commitment to the importance of ‘endogenous’ forms of knowledge, and the importance of participation, the participatory spaces provided by the government were often vehicles for this kind of cooptation. Yet paradoxically, these institutionalizing sites of participation were necessary for developing a strong grassroots public space planning movement, or a strong public sphere. Citizens needed to be informed about plans, laws and processes, and they also were able to use patronizing forms of ‘participation’ (i.e. being blatantly ignored) as motivation for organizing a stronger

oppositional citizen movement. In the next section, I look at the paradox of the need for pedagogy (a naturally top-down phenomenon) in participatory spaces of procedural publicness in Bogotá.

7.5 Procedural Public Spaces of Citizen Participation

In this section, I compare an example of a top-down pedagogical space of participation (the Public Forum on the Problem of the Homeless) with an example of a pedagogical space that offered citizens the chance to invert coopting processes (TUPBogotá). This comparison shows that even if the politics of *perti/enencia* can potentially promote the reproduction of hegemonic urban order, this risk can also function as a cause for citizens to double down on participatory efforts.

7.5.1 Public Forum on the Problem of the Homeless

This was an event organized by a City Council Member Olga Lucia Velásquez. This came shortly after I had met with Andrés, and been invited to join the Amigos chat. On August 29th, leaders from the Amigos group joined a spattering of other concerned citizens in the Salon Boyaca – the ornate, stately hall in the National Capital where plenary sessions of the Colombian Congress take place. The ostentatious character of the space was matched by the list of the events speakers. Besides Dra. Velásquez, ‘guests’ (*invitados*) included mayor Peñalosa, Alejandro Ordoñez (the Procurador General of Colombia, a powerful conservative with strong political and church ties), Alejandro Gaviria (the National Minister of Health), Luis Carlos Villegas (National Minister of Security), María Victoria Calle (President of the Constitutional Court), and a list of other ‘leaders’ from various groups or organizations. There was a strong physical and symbolic barrier here between the politicians and bureaucrats that were hosting the forum, and ‘the public’, with the cluster of speakers gathered at the front on stage, and ‘the public’ being seated as an audience to be addressed (rather than a participant body politic). This event, then, is a good representation of how ‘participation’ can often be a one-sided, top-down process in Bogotá.

Councilor Velasquez began by giving a detailed presentation on the issue of homelessness in Bogotá, summarizing the different programs and budgets of each mayor dating back to the first Antanas Mockus administration. She outlined a clear and substantial increase in financial attention being paid to the issue of homelessness, but concluded nonetheless that

‘it is not *how much* is invested, but *how* it is invested’. She argued that: ‘We must work on the *causes*, must understand what drives people to become homeless’. It was recommended that the issue be approached in more nuanced ways, and it was suggested that the government adopt a three-tiered model of homelessness that tries to categorize these individuals based on the intensity and length of their relationship to ‘the street’, emphasizing that different types of homeless individuals require different types of responses. Her basic proposition was that money needs to be invested in different programs for different kinds of what has been called elsewhere ‘street-relatedness’ (Olga Lucia Velasquez, Forum on the Problem of Homelessness, 8/29/16). She stressed the need for a coordinated response – a response that would be ‘articulated’ between different government organizations at different levels.

This is not unlike how most participatory planning sessions would begin in Bogotá. A leader from the agency/group in charge of organizing the participatory efforts would outline the general problem, and an argument for a collective solution to this problem. Following this, a discussion would take place on the propositions included in that presentation (and the plans/projects/policies it was based on, usually alongside wider issues) wherein the public and the state representatives alike would offer insights. We saw this, more or less, in the Germania Para Todos meeting. This, however, was clearly not meant to be much of an opportunity for the public to ‘participate’, as from here, a number of other politicians stood up to give their own opinions/expertise on the matter. This included the Procurador General, who briefly pontificated about how it was not a new, more comprehensive model that was needed to address homelessness, but rather a greater commitment to existing laws and programs. His short speech, however, was far less significant than the response his exit invoked.

As the Minister of Health began his turn speaking, Mr. Ordoñez (the Procurador) moved to leave the auditorium – a move which resulted in uproar. A man at the back of the hall stood up and made his way to the aisle. He began shouting at the Procurador, complaining about the dire situation he and his compatriots were in. He insisted that the government was not doing enough for the ‘*pueblo bueno*’ (‘the good people’) – the ‘good, hard-working, tax paying citizens’ (such as himself) from the area around El Bronx. These were the people, he insisted, who were truly suffering from the ‘problem of the homeless’, and the government simply did not care. They weren’t listening (Anonymous Citizen, Forum on the Problem of the Homeless, 8/29/16).

As the man's interjection became louder and more intense, murmurs in the crowd turned to shouting, and Mr. Gaviria (the Minister of Health) entreated the audience to 'respect his turn to talk'. This only made things worse, however, as the audience began to point out that *they* have not been given a voice at all. They began to make demands that the government officials 'listen rather than be heard' (a message which was reflected in the conversations popping up in the Amigo's WhatsApp chat). Things eventually calmed down, and the proceedings continued – their form unaltered. It started to become clear that the government had a plan, and they weren't here to *engage* with the public over this plan as much as to *tell* the public about it. Exactly how 'the public' fit into this plan was made abundantly clear when Peñalosa finally took the stage.

Peñalosa began his speech by reminding everyone that homelessness is not a unique or new problem in Bogotá. All cities (including in 'richer, more advanced countries like Switzerland'), he explained, have homeless residents and drug problems. The point of this statement was to set up his main argument: That 'it's easy to criticize, but hard to take action'. What was different about Bogotá was that they had *allowed* an 'independent republic of criminals' to exist unchecked – complaining about it, but doing nothing to end it. He resolved then and there that this would no longer be so. 'El Bronx will never return to the criminals', he avowed. To the critics, he simply responded by saying that 'the easiest thing to do with El Bronx was nothing, but now this is no longer an option anymore. Now, the homeless problem must be addressed' (Forum on the Problem of the Homeless, 8/29/16).

He stressed that this was all part of a well-laid plan, and one that built on his experiences from a similar situation in his first administration: the clearance of El Cartucho, and removal of illegal vendors from the San Victorino Plaza. He pointed out how his efforts had helped build a large new mall for *comercio popular* in the area. 'Before this', he said, 'there was a shell of concrete building that sat empty in San Victorino. Now, this place is the Gran San Mall, which is more valuable per square meter than Unicentro.⁵⁶ Why? Because we installed *order* in the area. We refused to allow the continuation of the horror of El Cartucho'.

Ultimately, then, Peñalosa's conclusion was that the problems associated with the fallout of the Bronx clearance (insecurity and insalubrity associated with a homeless population,

⁵⁶ Unicentro is a large shopping mall in the north of the city, full of expensive international brands. It is used here to juxtapose the wealthy, developed north with what Peñalosa calls the 'chaos' of the center.

but also a general state of physical deterioration and informality) were attributable to the cycle of ‘broken windows’ – which he referenced directly in his speech. He claimed that these problems (which people claimed had been getting worse ever since El Bronx had been cleared) were directly related to, and could therefore only be solved by, creating more *order*, saying:

What we see in many sectors of the center is pure chaos in public space, and it is disgraceful. The sidewalks are taken up by cars and by local shops. This is chaos, a lack of order in our public space, and this is what attracts and invites all types of problems, including the homeless and criminality. (Enrique Peñalosa, Forum on the Problem of Homelessness, 8/29/16)

To correct this, Peñalosa concluded, a dual response would be needed. The government’s role would be to provide resources for physical changes to the area of Los Mártires, fixing up public spaces to bring ‘activity’ and ‘life’ to these, so that there wouldn’t be space for *deterioro humano*’ (human deterioration). He promised beautification efforts, like those entailed in the Mártires Florecen project, and that they would provide more ‘active places, like sports facilities’, admitting he had made a mistake with the design of the Third Millennium Park. He concluded this would have been a ‘well-designed park for a different kind of city, like maybe Paris’, but that here, in Los Mártires, they needed things that invited organized action rather than passive hanging out. As part of this, he promised a ‘complete recuperation of Plaza España’, which would include constructing a *cancha sintética de futbol* (a synthetic grass football pitch) there. In addition to investments in more active spaces, the government would invest in more street lighting and security cameras to make these spaces active at night as well as during the day. They would even invest in more trash collection services.

Yet this, Peñalosa argued, would not be enough to transform Los Mártires. This was where the second part of the dual strategy came in, as Peñalosa insisted that the government would do what they could, but that they would ‘need the help of the community’. Peñalosa concluded by saying: ‘We cannot continue having cars parked on the sidewalks and in yards, shops on the sidewalks. We can’t keep having this kind of disorder that attracts delinquency’. Ultimately, the government’s role would be to provide good spaces. The public’s role would be to enforce new patterns of order to provide/make good citizens and appropriate activities to occupy these.

Not only does this episode reiterate the way topographical public space is seen as a mechanism for creating a more ordered city center through both new design features (that encourage new uses) and through a stronger sense of *pertenencia* amongst citizens (taking responsibility for eliminating ‘the chaos’ of public space misuse), but the procedure of the forum itself also shows the strongly top-down way in which these goals are established and pursued.

The fact that ‘the public’ was a passive audience being ignored, and even blamed for the problems of insecurity and decline, meant the group’s response to Peñalosa’s speech was strong, and negative. One member wrote the following during the event:

A *cancha sintetica* in Plaza España!?! The administration can’t invest a huge amount of money in another *elefante Rosado* (pink elephant)⁵⁷ in our neighborhood, money that can be used on works that will *actually* improve the *localidad*. (Maria, WhatsApp Chat, 8/29/16)

Andrés agreed, arguing this was not an appropriate development for the Plaza, intimating that there was not a group of local actors that would use this. Who would be playing football there? The local business owners? Shoppers?

This, of course, is just the point: Andrés is approaching the issue from the perspective of a local actor – a perspective based on a combination of knowledge derived from a long personal relationship with the neighborhood, and from the goals he has for its future. Peñalosa, alternatively, is approaching this from his outside/expert perspective as the mayor and urban planner. He is not looking at the *cancha* as a space for the current Mártires, but for the future Mártires, which will be populated by a different collection of people and places.

This, then, is where we see why *perti/enencia* often struggles to become a strong basis for developing an *oeuvre*-based right to the city planning and development platform. The ideas of ‘culture’ and ‘heritage’ are used to develop a pacifying sort of public engagement, while public space recovery efforts (*jornadas*) are used to make citizens feel a greater sense of responsibility for establishing and reproducing order. These are all pursued under the aegis of ‘democratization’, and ‘participation’, even with specific references to ‘right to the city’,⁵⁸ but citizen-led efforts are usually used by politicians to support government and

⁵⁷ A burdensome gift, or a gift that is ridiculous.

⁵⁸ Both Peñalosa and Petro have used the phrase ‘right to the city’ in their Municipal Development Plans.

private developers' plans rather than support a bottom-up socio-spatial production of a more democratic city. What we begin to see here is how procedural public spaces of participation were sometimes used (intentionally or not) to invert the right to the city politics of *perti/enencia*. In a pedagogical urbanism paradigm, then, topographical public space is used to make citizens feel more attached to a place, so that they take better care of it, and 'participation' is used to instruct citizens about how this care should look, or what ideals it should reflect.

This, however, did not escape the notice of the Amigos. Group members saw another option: an institutional participatory planning space created autonomously from the government. In a way, then, using a discourse of 'right to the city' to reproduce top-down power dynamics often had an opposite effect, or the effect that 'right to the city' is meant originally to have: encouraging citizens to develop their own plans and places outside those of the experts. As Maria put it the day of the Forum:

Peñalosa has always been the same. A *cancha sintetica* is another fiasco we cannot afford. We can't keep letting the administration do this. The only way to stop it is to work together, to make a plan as local *habituarios*. Los Mártires needs a serious, coherent plan for their territory. (Maria, WhatsApp Chat, 8/29/16).

This was where Maria's organization (TUPBogotá) came in: a group specifically dedicated to organizing local actors to come up with their own land use plans through 'participatory workshops'.

In many ways, these were also pedagogical forums. However, rather than being sites for instructing citizens how they should behave to assist in establishing the new urban order, these were sites where experts taught citizens how they could use the institutional planning system to assert *their own* order on the city. In the next section, I will briefly explore this group as a counter example to the type of top-down participatory public space represented by the Forum for the Homeless.

7.5.2 TUPBogotá

TUPBogotá was formed by Maria Valencia – an architect, current PhD candidate⁵⁹, and former Secretary of Habitat in the Petro administration. Her goal for forming the group,

⁵⁹ TUPBogotá was part of an effort to establish autonomous participatory planning groups in Bogotá, but was also part of a participatory research project for a PhD.

she told me in an interview, was to answer a (seemingly) simple question: Why are people not participating? Where is the failure?

To Maria, the answer seemed to lie in a lack of understand of what ‘participation’ means – an ignorance that citizens and the government alike suffer from. The government, she argues, uncritically adapts a litany of different ‘Western’ participatory discourses/schemes, but doesn’t understand how to make these ideals work for the people of Bogotá. Furthermore, the government simply changes too much to be able to perpetuate a sustainable participatory politics. The people, alternatively, don’t have the knowledge of the legal planning system to make the participatory models that *do* exist work for them. These are the issues she wanted to address by founding TUPBogotá.

As an ‘independent’ participatory project (i.e. not connected to any specific organization, state or private), the group would follow three simple principles: to listen (to local actors); to observe (local dynamics); and to mobilize (active citizens and projects). Another broad goal here is to ‘de-institutionalize territorial planning’ – a direct contradiction of Andrés’ stated goals for the Amigos. ‘People in Colombia’, she argues, ‘have a tendency to wait for the State to do something. They are very good at being critical, but not very good at providing solutions’. Part of the problem, she says, is that people ‘have no interest in getting informed’, and that information is absolutely essential to being able to participate in a proactive way. So, to solve the problems associated with the government, they would organize participation from an autonomous position. And to confront the problems associated with citizens, they would use participatory workshops to educate and motivate. Eventually, they would be able to get citizens more interested and involved in participatory processes. The primary actor here is the *habitudo*, Maria emphasized, which means the very first thing that TUPBogotá must do in any situation is conduct ‘a thorough characterization of these’. Importantly, these are not seen just as a group of residents (like in Las Cruces or Girardot), but as *comerciantes, vendedores, recicladores*, bus drivers, etc., ‘anyone who has a first-hand knowledge of, or relationship to, the territory’, Maria explained to me in an interview (10/14/16). Maria explained how the group recognizes that this variety of actors comes with a variety of distinct interests, so getting to know the interests and experience/knowledge of the various actors is important to understanding the dynamics of the territory. She told me that ‘*habitudos* are the primary guardians of knowledge of the territory, they hold information that others (like us, like *funcionarios*) don’t’. However, it was not all about research/characterizations. There was, as I said, a pedagogical element, as well, where the goal was to ‘make people understand their place,

their territory, the importance and value that these have'. So TUPBogotá was organized as a combination of networks': networks of local actors (*habituarios*), and of outside 'experts' like Maria. Together, they would develop their own plans for their own territories in participatory 'workshops'. However, in this mixed space, Maria made clear to me, 'it must always be the *habituario* that ultimately determines the future of the neighborhood. No *flotante* can transform *el territorio*'.

Here, I want to briefly explore two such meetings to contrast what grassroots public forums look like in comparison to the Forum on Homelessness discussed above. The first was a meeting co-hosted by Maria and the JAC for Voto Nacional – the neighborhood next to Plaza España, and where the Mártires Florecen projects had taken place. The JAC president was an active member of the Amigos, as were others here today, and the two neighborhoods frequently worked together as one when it came to organizing as a public against or for certain developments or ideas.

The meeting was held on October 21st, 2016 in the back room of the historic Voto Nacional church. A small table was set up in front of a stage, and some old metal chairs with worn blue vinyl upholstery were arranged in a semi-circle in front of this. The crowd was notably non-governmental, with a couple of *gestores* that I recognized, but mostly citizens and community leaders. The purpose of the meeting, the JAC president announced as he opened the proceedings, was to 'teach everyone about the POT' before the upcoming government-led participatory POT event that would be held the next week. He declared that an insidious strategy of market-based urban renewal had been taking hold of the Historic/Traditional Center in recent years, and the drafting of a new POT was the perfect opportunity to combat this type of activity (which would inevitably result in massive displacements). He suggested that in years prior, a strategy akin to psychological warfare had been used, where developers (no differentiation made between public or private) would wear people down over time, waiting for people to 'get tired' and sell their property's for unfair prices. These kinds of meetings, he said, were integral to stopping this kind of activity. Another JAC member (also a member of the Amigos) agreed, calling this the 'perfect and necessary moment to ask: what is the POT, what does it do, what applications does it have?' He emphasized that the area has a strong history and tradition of commerce that must be respected. Yet while he stood and argued that this must be maintained, he also begged the question: under what conditions? He challenged the room to think about what kind of housing and commerce *they* needed and wanted. He also emphasized how the group must expand to not only answer these questions, but turn these

answers into real proposals and projects, to avoid being displaced by developments planned by outsiders. He emphasized how important community leaders were in this, but how limited they were in terms of resources and reach, especially in comparison to the ‘powerful’ actors like the government and private developers). The gist was that it was extremely important that leaders band together, and get their community together, because the next meeting ‘is with the government, with the *tecnicos* (experts)’, meaning practice time was over and game time had come (Anonymous Participant, TUPBogotá Workshop, 10/21/16). On this note, he introduced Maria, and talked about her ‘expertise’, and how her knowledge would be essential to helping them.

Maria began by explaining what the POT was, and explaining the difference between ‘planning’ and ‘*ordenamiento*’, using the analogy of a house party: ‘planning is organizing everything, making sure everything is ready, while *ordenamiento* is making sure everything is in its place. The problem with Bogotá, she explained, was that there was a dysfunctional relationship between the two, and that *ordenamiento* has always had precedence over planning. She then described how Colombians/*Bogotanos* (using the pronoun ‘we’) ‘don’t know how to participate’, arguing that the Encuentro hosted by the government the following week will be ‘the same thing I’ve lived through so many times before’, where government representatives will be very friendly, but there will be no real outcome, no follow up and no oversight. These two problems (a lack of planning, or imbalance between planning and *ordenamiento*, plus a lack of understanding what participation is) have led to Los Mártyres being controlled by a bunch of *flotantes*, or outsiders. Now, she declared, is the time to make a new POT that is better for Los Mártyres, ‘where Mártyres is more a part of the city’ (Maria, TUPBogotá Workshop, 10/21/16).

Almost immediately, the reason for Maria’s previous assertions about the need for teaching people became evident. One woman asks: ‘do we have a POT right now?’ (Anonymous Participant, TUPBogotá Workshop, 10/21/16). Others, when prompted, say they have no idea what a UPZ is. So, Maria begins to ‘teach’ these community leaders about planning law and practice in Colombia.

Over the next hour or so, a number of planning issues were raised (traffic, parking, water, electricity), but Maria had to keep explaining the basics. She kept taking the conversation a step back, and emphasizing how ‘hard it is to work on these things without an understanding of the law, of the UPZs and of the law at the level of individual properties’.

She declared at one point that ‘the most important thing is to get educated *before* attending meetings’, adding that ‘we, as the community, need to get informed, and make informed plans, or else the District will just run roughshod over us’ (Maria, TUPBogotá Workshop, 10/21/16). So Maria ‘educated’ the audience about Planes Parciales, about how *patrimonio* is defined, and about what the Plan Centro is/how it works. But not all present were ignorant of these things. One well-dressed man interrupted Maria at one point (politely), listing off laws and explaining to everyone how these function as ‘tools for expropriation’, and cautioning everyone to be careful ‘because the Bronx intervention was just step one, just opening the door for a slew of other expropriation efforts’. He pointed out how each block is specified in the POT, and how people need to know this, so they can fight against outside efforts to reorganize *their* neighborhood. They as leaders, he explained, need to learn the law, take this knowledge ‘door to door’, and tell their neighbors how the government is lying to them. He explained this further by adding that the plans being given to them make it *sound* like the government is going to do something helpful, but that they don’t actually have the money for the huge kinds of redevelopments they were talking about. Private actors, on the other hand, most certainly did, and would ‘sweep in and take over once they saw the law was on their side’. He concluded with a challenge:

The logic they follow is the logic of the market, and if we don’t organize, and educate ourselves, so we can come up with our own proposals and projects, we will get the projects of these outsiders (Anonymous Participant, TUPBogotá Workshop, 10/21/16).

The argument here is that ‘participatory’ meetings like the Forum on Homelessness are attempts to pull the proverbial wool over local citizens’ eyes – conduct what a participant called ‘psychological warfare’ against *habituarios* in places like Los Mártires for the benefit of private developers. And the only way for them to combat this is to develop a better understanding of the law, and a better ability to unite a strong community to use this knowledge for their own benefit. As the JAC president said later in the meeting, they needed ‘good organization’, and ‘truly pedagogical sessions, so they could ‘understand the terms being used’ (TUPBogotá Workshop, 10/21/16).

These were what the ‘Talleres Participativos’ led by TUPBogotá were meant to provide, and I had the chance to see how this played out at the very first of these just over a week later, on November 1st. At this time, there was an open public competition for proposals on what to do with the Voto Nacional area, co-led by the ERU and the Sociedad Colombiana

de Arquitectos.⁶⁰ The prize was upwards of 70 million pesos, which would go towards funding projects/programs that they felt were most pertinent for the area. TUPBogotá and the local JAC were organizing themselves to put together a proposal on behalf of the *habitantes* from the area, and they began (as Maria had told me they should) by conducting a characterization of the territory and its *habitantes*. Yet again, this was to be matched by an effort to teach the *comerciantes*, residents and other *habitantes* present about planning law and procedure, so they could use this knowledge in *other* participatory processes (like in the rewriting of the POT).

The characterization consisted mostly of a mapping exercise. Participants were broken down into small groups, each at their own table with their own map of the area. Maria talked over everyone at first, helping explain to them what they were doing, but trying not to inject too much of her ‘expert’ knowledge into the process. The idea was for each group to identify key institutions, key traffic issues, important public spaces, highly insecure areas, basically to somehow map ‘the neighborhood’ as they knew/lived it. It was an activity that I could tell made people reflect on the neighborhood in ways they never had. However, in addition to the mapping exercise, the day was also used as an opportunity to begin to develop a permanent planning team of sorts, and explain to the local citizens what kinds of actors/actions would be needed moving forward. It was, in other words, about teaching the people there how to be a group, what kind of group they needed to be (i.e. what types of actors they needed), and what kinds of knowledge they needed to develop in order to have a chance at involving themselves in actual planning/development processes.



Image 37: TUPBogotá workshop, Source: Author

⁶⁰ The Sociedad Colombiana de Arquitectos (Colombian Society of Architects) is a non-profit civil organization that focuses on urban planning and architectural issues.

This brief window onto the TUPBogotá experience paints a clearly different picture of citizen ‘participation’ (as a pedagogical practice) than the Forum on Homelessness. To some extent, the two types of participation were diametrically opposed. Yet in many ways the two types of participatory meetings were complementary. More active, assertive publics (like those being assembled through TUPBogotá) can be seen as direct responses to instances like the Forum on Homelessness – where the public was passively addressed by the government instead of consulted. A stronger, more motivated, even more well-informed public sphere can, as the TUPBogotá group shows, arise from paternalistic practices, and reverse the power dynamics involved in the exchange of information to promote their own agenda, rather than accept that of outside interests. The problem, I would argue, is that when everyone agrees on a politics of consensus to overcome the difficulties of sorting out the differences amongst local actors, participation becomes a self-reinforcing kind of coopting anti-politics – as we see with the Amigos more broadly. Here, the idea of getting along becomes a *practice* of going along, such that publics are made submissive to an ideal of ‘order’ through engagements in both topographical and procedural ‘public space’ forums.

7.6 Conclusions

The case of the Amigos de la Plaza España is a case of a group organized around the desire to transform a neighborhood in decline through various engagements with an iconic public space. The group formulated a strategy based on ‘cultural offerings’ and ‘institutionalization’ to take advantage of government initiatives and a government agenda that promoted ‘public space recovery’, cultural heritage and a politics of shared rights and responsibility. The group decided to use an ambiguously defined set of ‘cultural offerings’ to promote the area, create a more positive image of the area, and ultimately attract more people and resources to their cause. Part of this was wanting larger institutions (banks, the city government, the Chamber of Commerce) to take interest in their work. This was not entirely unlike the efforts of the Colectivo Waque in Barrio Girardot – a group trying to use ‘culture’ to organize a stronger sense of relevance amongst local actors and state actors alike. However, because the group (much like the Vecinos) expanded to become a wide variety of actors and interests from both the public and private sectors, it became increasingly difficult to formulate a cohesive, coherent plan for what ‘cultural offerings’ and ‘institutionalization’ should look like.

To overcome this challenge, they pursued two strategies: They decided to adopt a politics of consensus and collaboration when asserting their ideas with other groups/actors (like the mayor), and focused local organizing efforts on building a stronger sense of *pertenencia*, defined as a greater sense of responsibility for local public space issues (i.e. taking ownership of problems). This, because of the mayor's adherence to the theory of 'broken windows' and strong belief in topographical developments as the primary means for social change, made a public space politics of *perti/enencia* easy to take advantage of (i.e. coopt).

This cooptation was produced through an inversion of the right to the city politics of *perti/enencia*, both in topographical and procedural public spaces. 'Culture', which is meant to be the glue binding actors together as a meaningful collective, was based less on a shared local history (the kind of *memoria* that tied together groups like those in Las Cruces, Girardot or the Vecinos) because of a diversity of backgrounds and interests. As such, it was more difficult to use this as a means for establishing a strong sense of shared relevance, or of place attachment, amongst local *habitados*. Yet as a group of active community leaders were eager to take advantage of increased attention being paid to the area, they readily organized around the idea of reclaiming public space and generating a greater sense of responsibility for this. This, in turn, made the group easier for the city government to use as a means for advancing their own agenda.

As we see with the Forum on the Homeless, and events like the *jornada* in Plaza de los Martires, participation and public space became venues for the administration to demonstrate to citizens what order and responsibility should look like, while also pointing out that it was their actions that generated the 'chaos' they were trying to avoid. This is an inversion of what *perti/enencia* is meant to look like as a politics that uses participation and public space as means for producing a more public, more democratic, more inclusive kind of city.

This case therefore reveals a key problem with the politics of *perti/enencia*: *pertenencia* can often times be used as a rhetorical tool used to *make demands of citizens* (i.e. to take better care of public space, a demand usually based on a 'broken windows' argument) in order to alter the sociospatial order in such a way that a new kind of *pertinencia* is created. By subjugating small group interests to a rhetoric of *greater cooperation* and *shared responsibility*, the ability of the less powerful to assert their interests in the development/planning sphere is reduced.

There is a paradox here. On the one hand, this shows how discourse and practices associated with ‘public space’ can become a kind of anti-politics when they are approached uncritically. Publicness, as a multi-dimensional politics that includes both topographical and procedural elements, becomes a vehicle for reproducing a hegemonic ‘spectacle’ through pedagogical engagements, rather than subverting this through agonistic deliberations. On the other hand, the TUPBogotá experience shows us how pedagogy is necessary, and indeed how the paternalistic version of top-down *perti/enencia* can actually create a greater push for its opposite (i.e. a bottom-up version akin to Lefebvre’s right to the city). The paradox is not a negative, nor a positive, but rather an expression of the struggles inherent in attempts to establish a more democratic city by combining the interests and ideas of different actors with different types/amounts of power and knowledge.

In the final chapter, I will look at this paradox in greater detail – outlining its development across the three empirical chapters, and relating it to the literature discussed in the first half of the thesis.

Chapter 8: Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

Theorists like Wolfe (1997), Weintraub (1997) and Benn and Gaus (1983) have argued that due to contemporary changes to the political, economic and social order, a more nuanced approach to the public/private dichotomy is needed. Here, I have developed a more nuanced approach through the theory of *perti/enencia* – an emic perspective on the nature, uses, and values of public space that shows how local citizens and planners in a context outside the Global North articulate internationally-celebrated planning ideals (steeped in Western social theory) with local needs and histories to develop emergent forms of procedural and topographical public spaces that both expand and restrict democratic possibilities. This builds on arguments made by authors like Iveson (2007), Mitchell (2003) and Low and Smith (2006), who call for a more critical approach to ‘public space’ and ‘public spheres’ – or how public space acts as both a physical site, and as concept/process, with key social, political and economic consequences; and also authors like Parnell and Robinson (2012), Robinson (2002), Roy (2005, 2009), Shatkin (2007), de Sousa Santos (2007, 2008), and Watson (2009), who recognize the need for adding a Global South perspective to urban social and planning theory. Failing to critically analyze the relationship between publicness as a space and publicness as a sphere limits the scope of possibility for our analytical and practical approaches to the city. Yet the geographic and social boundaries of cities have changed with globalization processes to the point that this critical analysis must be made in relational ways, or ways that explore the intersections between different ideas, and the way these are recombined to form unique urban institutions and forms.

As paternalistic practices and spatial fetishisms of high modernist planning have given way to post-modern theories of relational, socially-produced space and participatory planning, a wide range of concepts describing, or analyzing, processes and sites of publicness have emerged both within the Global North and the Global South. Topographical theories have explored how the design, ownership and management of public spaces have affected the social psychology and behaviors of urban citizens, emphasizing how new forms of direct

and indirect exclusions⁶¹ can be reversed through different approaches to arranging and managing urban space (cf. Carmona, 2010a, 2010b). Public sphere theorists, alternatively, have challenged the notion of a universal (i.e. national) public sphere based on a consensus-based rationality that discourages difference in a way that promotes the reproduction of the hegemony. These suggest a more agonistic, or ‘insurgent’ approach to state/civil society relations, which are more likely to empower the most marginalized (cf. Fraser, 1990; Holston, 2009; de Souza, 2000), and normatively argue for the construction of new institutional mechanisms for codifying public interests (cf. Avritzer, 2002; Fung and Wright, 2006; Young, 2000). These insurgent and alternative perspectives have been particularly cogent in the Global South, where countries and cities grapple with different historical and developmental trajectories than those that produced the economic, political and social theories in the North.

The purpose of this thesis has been to develop a dual relational analysis (i.e. one that relationally analyzes public spaces and public spheres in a single urban context, and one which analyzes the intermingling of theories and praxes between contexts in the Global North and Global South) through a critical ethnographic exploration of a city where a discourse of ‘public space’ has played a key role in a significant urban transformation. In Bogotá, both topographical and procedural arguments for an expanded public space have been used in developing a new planning and governance system that, under the discursive umbrella of ‘decentralization’, has combined technocratic, modernizing reforms with those seeking to deepen democracy by expanding opportunities for political participation. This led to what some hailed as an ‘urban miracle’ (cf. Gilbert, 2006), and was a transformation that relied heavily on the use of public space as a tool for establishing state legitimacy and a greater sense of civic pride and civic duty. Berney (2011, 2017) described this as a planning and development paradigm called ‘pedagogical urbanism’, or a ‘mode of urban development focused on citizen education and reform that produces figurative and material space in the city for educational encounters’ (2011: 17). Berney argued that public space was used by the state to enhance citizen culture, or to teach Bogotanos to become more culturally democratic citizens (Appe, 2010). Yet these arguments focus primarily on how topographical public space was designed and developed. They lack a nuanced examination of public space pedagogy as a *process*.

⁶¹ ‘Direct’ refers to physically segregating and exclusionary developments, like walls, road patterns or private security guards; ‘indirect’ refers to a ‘spectacularization’ or ‘Disneyfication’ of the city (a way of excluding alternative forms of imagining urban life).

This gap was the basis for the research objectives of my thesis. I wanted to understand how what Berney called ‘figurative’ public space (2011: 17) was being used in this pedagogical process, and to what extent this seemingly conventional top-down system of urban design was actually (if at all) democratizing the city. In attempting to address this gap, I uncovered a discourse of *perti/enencia* at the heart of participatory public space planning and recovery efforts – a rhetorical and practical politics of enhancing feelings of relevance, ownership and belonging to try and create a citizenry more willing and capable of democratically producing and managing their own city. Through three case studies, I explored how these ideals created both opportunities for expanding and restricting direct democratic inputs. At the same time as attempts were being made to both expand public space physically, and expand local public input into governmental and developmental processes, city center populations were being held responsible for the problems (and solutions) that they faced locally, and faced dislocation by new developments. This created a paradox, wherein local publics were being both constructed and deconstructed by purportedly more inclusive redevelopment efforts. *Perti/enencia* acts as a framework for understanding these complex progressions. Here, I want to recap the theory of *perti/enencia*, and how it connects public space (as a discourse and as an actual physical site) to a range of other cultural, social and political issues in Bogotá.

8.2 Developing a theory of *perti/enencia*

Perti/enencia is a politics of place relations that combines principles of participatory planning and theories pertaining of relational, socially produced space with local histories and culture to produce a dual topographical/procedural approach to making the city more ‘public’. It combines efforts to democratize planning through greater participation in planning processes with the idea that greater involvement in/with⁶² public space will engender a greater sense of relevance (*pertinencia*) and ownership (*pertenencia*) amongst citizens. The idea is to develop and use feelings of place attachment to promote greater responsibility (ownership) and instill a more inclusive sense of belonging (also *pertenencia*).

This kind of ownership and belonging is meant to arise from an endogenous kind of *pertinencia* (a sense of relevance or of meaning) that develops from two overlapping

⁶² The difference being engaging public space directly, as through improvement efforts, or indirectly through other forms of appropriation that involve contact with other citizens.

processes: First, publics of shared interests/relevance (*pertinencia*) come together as collectives based on concerns over problems encroaching on their territorial expression, and how these affect their everyday lives; and second, they develop an evolving sense of shared culture and history. However, in a space of diverse actors and interests like the Historic/Traditional Center of Bogotá, developing this kind of collective place identity is not often straightforward and simple, and its negotiated development can often lead to fragmentary rather than unifying processes.

This is a politics that reflects a Lefebvrian theory of ‘right to the city’ (and relational theories of space more broadly), insofar as it seeks to embrace an understanding of sociospatial relations as products of a collective *oeuvre*, or ‘work’. Here, ‘work’ is understood in both senses of the word – as process and product. On the one hand, the idea of communities defined by shared forms of living cultural heritage makes the city out to be an evolving collective repertoire – a common body of work. Extending this to include both tangible and intangible cultural forms helps emphasizes the relational, socially produced nature of this ‘work’, and also draws out the definition of ‘work’ as a verb. The principle of the *oeuvre* is represented here most directly by projects of public space recovery meant to instill a greater sense of *pertenencia* in citizens. Citizens are meant to literally make the city theirs in these efforts by physically remaking the public space, and socially remaking the collective boundaries of ‘us’ (i.e. the public sphere). However, as we saw in Chapter 5, establishing heritage meanings is also work – an effort of cultural ‘recovery’ that involves creating *memoria*, and making this significant. In other words, in a politics of *perti/enencia*, citizens are meant to be *active producers* of a public space that is an *emergent product* in both topographical and procedural dimensions, such that they (a/the public) themselves become the main force driving the (re)production of ‘the city’ in all its forms (i.e. a government, a society, a space, an economy, etc.).

In short, *pertinencia* acts as a heuristic framework for understanding actions that combine local (i.e. community-level) planning and development ideals with those derived from broader outside interests, or those typically associated with the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of globalization. It is, in other words, where an emic sense of place is actively being recreated by different actors living their daily lives as part of both local and extralocal networks, or, in a Lefebvrian framework, where different representations of public space (those associated with expert designs and plans), and representational public spaces (those associated with everyday lived needs) are negotiated in participatory forums to produce context-specific forms of collective identity. Establishing relevance entails

establishing a subject *for whom* something is meaningful, making *pertinencia* (as a placemaking concept) an ideal whose realization entails a process of renegotiating subject/place relationships in ways that alter identities from the most local of scales (the individual, the community) to much higher ones (the city, nation, and globe).

Pertenencia, alternatively, is a heuristic framework that simultaneously captures the processes entailed in turning this renegotiated sense of subject/place relational identity into an actionable political platform of *taking ownership* of the city, and a more tangible sense of *belonging* amongst citizens. This is where subject/place relational identities derived from the aforementioned lived experiences of being part of both local and extralocal realities become direct, explicit attempts to establish ordered publics, and appropriate sites for these – processes which entail changes to the distribution of control over, and responsibility for, urban public space.

I developed the concept of *perti/enencia* by exploring four case studies in three chapters, starting the case of Las Cruces. Here, the IDPC tried to promote ‘endogenous’ forms of planning to establish a shared sense of *pertinencia* (i.e. relevance, or a sense of vested interest) based on a ‘recovered’ collective *memoria*. This was designed to be an emic, living, active form of history and community making in that it used personal experiences (past and present) to develop a shared sense of cultural heritage, and thus a stronger more closely-knit sense of community. This sense of community was then leveraged in attempts at organizing a greater collective sense of *pertenencia* (ownership and belonging) amongst their neighbors – an attempt to develop a unified front against displacement. This, too, was a process, specifically a process of *formación*, or developing an active base of citizen leaders who could take charge of neighborhood improvements, and represent the community in participatory planning forums.

This is how a politics of *perti/enencia* is supposed to work in the current planning/development paradigm of ‘revitalization’. A unified public sphere of local actors (*habituarios*) is meant to emerge through developing, promoting and leveraging a strong sense of self-responsibility (which is what *pertenencia* becomes) around a collective place-based identity (what *pertinencia* is supposed to be), and this sphere is meant to be able to sustainably reproduce the ideals and practices behind this new public urban order. Yet as I demonstrated with the similar case of Barrio Girardot, the success of these efforts is highly contingent upon the level and type of government commitment/support.

In Barrio Girardot, this process played out differently than in Las Cruces (despite the neighborhoods' proximity and similarities), in part because the citizen groups involved in Barrio Girardot did not have the same kind of coherent government support that the groups in Las Cruces did. The Colectivo Waque channeled the growing push for endogenous forms of planning/*ordenamiento territorial* by adopting the principles and language of the Minga Popular – promoting a right to the city based on a bottom-up sense of shared interests and responsibilities. A group of local leaders (what the IDPC had called 'key actors') tried to organize fellow citizens in the community, and government support, to revitalize two key public arts/culture spaces as part of this.

Yet being outside the territorial boundaries of the Revitalization Plan, the groups did not have direct support from the IDPC – who was the leading organization promoting the type of programs associated with a politics of *perti/enencia* in the Historic/Traditional Center (because of their role in managing the Revitalizaiton Plan, and promoting its expanded understanding of *permanencia*). Instead, they needed to try and win support from a variety of different government organizations through the ad hoc process of the *mesa interinstitucional* (inter-institutional roundtable). Here, a collection of *gestores sociales* with lack of a central 'guide' made for a discombobulated government representation, which was further weakened by an inability to commit financial resources. Many studies that demonstrate the potential of strong public spheres have been cases where citizens had control over budget discretion for local projects (i.e. cases of participatory budgeting; cf. Souza, 2001; Wampler and Avritzer, 2004). This was not the case in Girardot, however, where government agents could only promise materials like paint – which community leaders argued were inadequate to generate the kind of changes they sought. Girardot also revealed another problem with an idealized politics of *perti/enencia*: the difficulty that local community leaders/activists (i.e. the progenitors and disciples of *formación* processes) faced when trying to consolidate a group of shared interests in the local community. The group of men playing football and watching the *jornada* with incredulity, and the complaints made by JAC members, Wacque leadership and government *funcionarios* about the lack of community participation, were indicators of this problem.

Chapter five therefore establishes both an ideal example of how *pertinencia* and *pertenencia* are meant to work together to establish a greater sense of community and place attachment with the case of Las Cruces, and highlights key flaws in how these work together with the case of Girardot. The lack of a strong, clear institutional channel for local publics to use as a means for asserting their ideas was clear in Girardot's participatory

processes, as was the lack of a clearly defined ‘local public’ that could benefit from greater participation and public space improvements. Establishing relevance, and subsequently means for generating a greater sense of ownership and belonging, was far from a straightforward endeavor. Here, then, the theory of *perti/enencia* offers key insights into the interdependent nature of local knowledge and identities and external actors and interests. Becoming a more unified public sphere of local interests depended not only on outside support, but also on outside interest in the area. Residents in Las Cruces could be more easily activated by both external redevelopment interests they saw as a threat, and by the opportunity to communicate their own history and culture to a broader audience. Girardot was not part of any redevelopment/revitalization plans, and therefore lacked the same kind of connections to the broader Historic/Traditional Center (and the rest of Bogotá) that Las Cruces had.

A different set of challenges are revealed in chapter six, where control over processes of using relevance to develop a greater sense of ownership and belonging rested not with a tight-knit group of local residents, but a massive ‘floating’ population of visitors. This is the case for much of the Historic/Traditional Center, where residential population numbers have been shrinking. Looking at the Vecinos del Parque de los Periodistas, we see a grassroots group that seems to exemplify the *perti/enencia* paradigm. They were organized around a strong place attachment based on a personal relationship with the area’s cultural heritage (i.e. a sense of *pertinencia*) that they associated with ‘living the center’ as opposed to ‘using’ it. They sought to use this affective form of knowledge to develop a greater sense of *pertenencia* amongst a wider range of local actors through a discourse of ‘co-responsibility’. Their attempts, however, reveal deep divisions as much as they show unifying progress.

The group confronted a bloc of powerful private universities, who not only dominated the day-to-day public space appropriations of the area (through sheer numbers, private security, etc.), but also the development/planning of the area (through real estate buy-ups and Master Plans like CityU and the Fenicia Progress Program). Both sides wanted to see a revitalized Jimenez corridor (cleaner, safer, more dynamic and active, with better heritage preservation), but when it came time to negotiate a small example of how public space should be designed and used, it became clear that the two groups had very different perspectives on what kinds of places and activities were relevant, and who belonged in the Historic/Traditional Center – even while both sides explicitly and adamantly pronounced that public space belonged to all. Rather than participation and public space promoting a

straightforward processes of identifying local needs and desires (*pertinencia*) and developing collaborative processes for expanding a more inclusive sense of ownership and belonging (*pertenencia*), a more complicated and divisive procedure was taking place here. Different groups had different ideas regarding the future of the neighborhood's public spaces, and the causes of current problems, which led to competing forms of *perti/enencia* that perhaps presage future difficulties in a redeveloped city center that will increasingly attract a new breed of *flotantes* and *habituarios* alike. Therefore this case study acts as a good example for studying the positives and negatives that come with practicing a politics of *perti/enencia* around public space in a place defined not by a fairly uniform population (i.e. mostly statistically similar local residents), but by groups with very different interests in, and place relations to, a specific neighborhood.

The results were mixed, as a shared belief in the universal *ownership* of public space provided a catalyst for democratic deliberations on issues of *relevance* and *belonging*. Efforts to revitalize the Germania pocket park are a good example of how public space and participatory forums function as 'an excuse' for groups to engage with one another on a deeper level, and tie together wider issues: 'to do some joint work, look at issues that transcend the park, and look for long-term solutions' as one community leader put it (Orlando, 4/19/16). Soy+Ciudad helped facilitate an open dialogue between actors with competing versions of *perti/enencia*. On the other hand, the breakdown of the participatory planning process revealed how one-sided these kinds of collaborative efforts can be in favor of the more powerful group. After Vecinos did not return to the Germania Para Todos project because they felt there was no benefit to be found in continuing to participate (i.e. they weren't being listened to), their fears were ultimately confirmed. The master's students completely reversed the narrative of relevance and belonging, adapting a highly technical approach to remaking the park in a way that not only did not include local residents' ideas, but actually sought to enhance the activities that local residents were against and blame residents for public space problems more generally. Despite Soy+Ciudad's concerted efforts to promote practices that embraced 'local knowledge', this case then seems to reaffirm Flyvbjerg's assertion that 'power defines what gets to count as knowledge' (2002: 361). In other words, it shows how an ideal of cooperative participatory planning based on a kind of communicative rationale akin to that of Habermas (1984) and Forester (1982), can produce an anti-political process of cooptation by hegemonic forces. Thus in chapter six, *perti/enencia* helps us begin to see how different groups and their particularistic interests are often only superficially joined together by participatory forums and open public spaces designed to make a more inclusive public city. They are, in fact,

often excluded even further by these processes (as members of the Vecinos felt). A principle of shared ownership can therefore be both the basis for more collective decision making, and used as a mechanism for more powerful groups to define what actions, actors, and spaces are considered relevant, or belong, to certain spaces, reversing the intended effects of bottom-up, more democratic forms of planning and governance.

This tension between *perti/enencia*'s democratizing and anti-political potential was even more apparent in the case of the Amigos de la Plaza España. Here, an ambiguously defined push for 'cultural offerings' and 'institutionalization' were combined as part of a strategy to revitalize a local public space, and subsequently improve social dynamics in a neighborhood plagued by a long history of/reputation for decline, poverty and crime. Following on the heels of the massive Bronx operation, and the expansion of the Historic/Traditional Center in the new Revitalization Plan to include the area of Los Mártires, Plaza España suddenly found itself in the development and planning spotlight. The Amigos, recognizing potential benefit in this increased attention, sought to bring a wide range of actors together to develop a public sphere based on a strong sense of public space ownership, relevance and belonging through cultural events and public space reclamation/improvement efforts in order to plan and redevelop their neighborhood based on their own interests and ideals. However, because of the group's diversity, and the power of outside interests, it was difficult for the group to develop a cohesive sense of *pertinencia*. Instead, in an attempt to quell disputes that resulted from this diversity of interests, the group adopted a cooperative politics of consensus and self-responsibility, which ultimately made it easier for their participatory efforts to retain the neighborhood's heritage and character to be coopted by more powerful forces of urban renewal. This effect was amplified by, or reproduced through, the swelling of the group's ranks to include not only government bureaucrats, but also politicians, making internal/external dynamics of negotiation between civil society and state difficult to pin down. As Young writes,

Whenever civic associations are more strongly tied to authoritative state procedures, their independence from state imperatives, and therefore their ability to hold state institutions accountable to citizens, is threatened. Whenever procedures are created to link state and civil society for purposes of policy-making, implementation, or evaluation, these procedures risk becoming another layer of bureaucracy disciplining citizens or insulating them from influencing the process...Citizens in a deep democracy must be aware of these ever present tensions and liabilities, be vigilant in monitoring the actions and effects of both state, economy, and civil society, and actively promote the limitation and balance of each by the others. (2000: 194-195)

This risk of citizens losing control, or oversight, over decision making processes and institutions by becoming too close to these in participatory interactions is highlighted in the case of the Amigos by the phenomenon of ‘too many chiefs, not enough Indians’, or of *liderismo* – that which essentially equates to what Young calls a ‘layer of bureaucracy disciplining citizens or insulating them from influencing’ processes (*ibid*).

Similar to what was demonstrated in chapter six, the effect is an inversion of *perti/enencia*, where citizens are encouraged to take greater ownership (i.e. develop a greater sense of *pertenencia*) of developments and processes that are not derived from their own relevant interests (*pertinencia*), but rather those of some outside, or more powerful force. It was not a democratizing kind of ‘pedagogy’ imagined in a bottom-up theories of citizen-led participatory planning models (where citizens teach experts using day-to-day, experience-based knowledge), but rather a top-down, paternalistic kind of democratic elitism similar to that criticized by Avritzer (2002). Here, however, the risks of cooptation and exclusion were amplified by the greater diversity of actors and scale of redevelopment that were present in the Los Mártires/Plaza España area.

In Chapter 7, I showed how this took shape in both topographical and procedural public space forums. The Forum on the Problem of the Homeless is an example of how politicians used spaces of ‘participation’ to promote an agenda of ‘order’, and through the theory of ‘broken windows’, placed the blame for disorder squarely on citizens suffering problems of social and physical decline in the Historic/Traditional Center. This forum was used as a call to arms for ‘the public’ – for them to take greater responsibility for public space, and get rid of the ‘chaos’ that had taken hold because of their lack of *pertenencia*. In public space beautification events, this would be reinforced, as the administration could memorialize their commitment revitalizing the neighborhood, and with the presence of a few community leaders, celebrate their human and physical capital investments as ‘participatory’. With groups like the Amigos having committed themselves to public space recovery and government cooperation as a means for enculturating and institutionalizing the neighborhood, this opened the door for developments that might be completely irrelevant to local actors – like a football pitch in Plaza España.

This is why looking at *procedural* public spaces in relation to the *topographical* public spaces associated with pedagogical urbanism paradigm is so essential. This allows us to understand how citizens are able to inform planners about what is relevant to them based on their experiential knowledge rather than be passively shaped by new plans and

developments. Berney argued that the socio-spatial model of urban development based on public space (what she calls ‘pedagogical urbanism’) had a paradox at its core: that topographical public space expansion and reclamation were being used as means for generating a more open and democratic citizen culture, but that this was being pursued by tactics of ‘policing’ (particularly in the case of police removing unwanted people from public space, such as with street vendors). Yet Berney also claims that pedagogical urbanism was a system for ‘rationalizing’ the city spatially – or creating a new urban fabric based on the rationality of experts and power brokers. Recognizing this, the idea that the spaces created from this would be ‘policed’ somehow by these actors seems far less paradoxical. This is reinforced when we look at how ‘public space’ was negotiated in spaces of citizen participation, or how it was used as ‘an excuse’ (Orlando, member of the Vecinos, 4/9/2016) for citizen groups to engage powerful institutions over broader issues and perceived problems with their city. In these spaces, ‘policing’ happens through planners (i.e. ‘experts’) determining what counts as valid knowledge, or as an appropriate vision for topographical public space, based on imperatives dictated to them by their political bosses (i.e. the ‘power brokers’). Nevertheless, because of the simple fact that participatory spaces *exist*, and because ‘public space’ and ‘participation’ have become so strongly ensconced in the political discourse in Bogotá, this fact has generated a greater number of opportunities for citizens to reverse this coopting pedagogy, or (as we see with TUPBogotá, but also with the Vecinos and the groups in Las Cruces and Barrio Girardot) develop public spheres that actively fight for their right to the city using the very ideals, discourses and mechanisms that have been used against them. Similarly, the fact that a shared sense of public space ownership brings actors with different interests to the table to deliberate over the future of the city is an indication of the potential that discourses of public space and participation have to create actual new forms of more democratic relevance, ownership, and belonging in the city.

Perti/enencia, then, is a *conceptual framework* that captures the *actually existing* struggles of actors in the contemporary city trying to become more spatially and politically democratic through expanding public space procedurally and topographically – or promoting it as an ideal, developing it as a physical place, and allowing citizens to organize for or against both of these. It is a heuristic means for comprehending the simultaneously emancipating/empowering and restrictive/disenfranchising potentials entailed in adopting practices and discourses associated with right to the city, and the role of an empowered public in producing this. By showing how heritage, public space, and participatory democracy are being agonistically reconstructed in Bogotá around debates

regarding ownership, relevance, and belonging, *perti/enencia* bridges international academic and planning debates with local processes in a way that opens us up to deeper understandings of the relationship between space and society, and emphasizes the role of the social over that of the spatial. It also reveals, complicates, and reverses, power dynamics. By adopting a dually-relational perspective, it allows us to see how space and society interact in both heterotopic and hegemonic ways across local and larger scales.

In practice, emphasizing and analyzing ‘public space’ as both a topographical and procedural phenomenon, and as something which combines multiple scales of emic/etic perspectives and interests, a theory of *perti/enencia* functions to simultaneously focus and expand discussions on ‘right to the city’ by providing a more grounded example of a spatial/procedural *oeuvre* – a public space in which, and through which, symbolic and lived forms of a socially produced ‘city’ can be negotiated between different actors in democratic ways.

Perti/enencia, as a theoretical and methodological contribution, in other words, has opened up theories for exploring democratizing efforts literally and metaphorically from the ground up in alternative (i.e. Global South) contexts. It shows how the discourses of ‘right to the city’ and ‘public space’ are being negotiated by different actors in a specific, concrete Global South context, providing us with an even more focused way of analyzing the complex dynamics of ‘right to the city’ in a world of internationally dependent (and competing) Global Cities. As Bogotá’s status as a ‘global best practice’ city indicates, a good deal of the way cities are currently judged (normatively or otherwise) depends on that city’s position in some type of global network. This fact is, to some extent, a natural extension of thinking the world relationally (i.e. in terms of relational space and power relations). However, if we recall Fraser’s (1990) argument that publics are relationally defined by both internal (intra-public) and external (inter-public) processes, we begin to see that in order to fully appreciate the world relationally, we must try to understand the specific processes and articulations by which democratically empowered publics come into being.

The theory of *perti/enencia* does just this. It captures the dynamic ways in which national policy platforms designed to make Colombia more in line with the international capitalist and democratic community are actively being interpreted, and negotiated, at more local scales through discourses of ‘participation’ and ‘public space’. Bogotá may or may not be deserving of its ‘miracle’ title – earned for its supposedly ‘innovative’ approach to public

space and urbanism. That is not for me to decide. What I have shown, however – through the clear conscious and subconscious push for a greater, more equitable and democratic sense of *perti/enencia* – is that shifts are taking place that entail the renegotiation of spatial, social, economic and political power relations. By exploring the dynamic ways in which ‘public space’ is actually produced and imagined in Bogotá, through debates and negotiations over relevance, ownership and belonging, *perti/enencia* demonstrates the complexities (i.e. potentials and pitfalls) of using ‘right to the city’ (or relational theory more broadly) as the basis of an urban politics.

Glossary of Spanish Terms

- Alameda – a wide, tree-lined avenue
- Barrio obrero – working class neighborhood
- Beca – scholarship, or grant.
- Cafetería – a small traditional coffee shop
- Calle – street (roads running east/west)
- Cancha sintética – synthetic turf football pitch
- Campesino – a rural resident, usually a farmer.
- Carrera – avenue (roads running north/south)
- Cartografía social – ‘social mapping’, a kind of participatory exercise where citizens are allowed to map their own neighborhoods in different ways.
- Casa comunal – community centers run by local JACs.
- Centro comercial – a mall
- Chicha – a traditional alcoholic beverage made from corn
- Chichero – the producer of chicha.
- Cigarería – a bodega, or small shop that sells food, drinks, and cigarettes, and where people often hang out.
- Comerciante – a small business owners, especially one in retail.
- Comercio popular – the businesses associated with the *economía popular* (see below).
- Comunidad – community
- Convenio de cooperación – an informal agreement signed between parties.
- Coresponsabilidad – co-responsibility
- Decadencia – decay, or decline
- Diagnóstico – a diagnostic report, specifically used in reference to planning studies measuring neighborhood dynamics
- Economía popular – ‘popular economy’, or economic activities that are associated with informality or the ‘third sector’ of the economy.
- El entorno – this term refers to one’s surroundings, one’s environment.
- El territorio – literally, ‘the territory’, used frequently to represent a sense of ownership for a place (i.e. what they consider to be *their* territory).
- Embellecer – to beautify, or to aesthetically improve, used typically in reference to public space improvements.

- Encuentro – ‘meeting’, a term used to describe specific types of participatory planning spaces, usually for Municipal Development Plans.
- Entre todos – ‘together as one’
- Estratificación Socioeconómica – Socioeconomic stratification, or the system of dividing citizens into socioeconomic categories based on relative property values.
- Estrato – ‘strata’, one’s socioeconomic class (from 1-6), which determines how much you pay in utilities and property taxes.
- Festival de vida – ‘festival of life’, or a small-scale festival celebrating local life in the neighborhood.
- Flotante – someone who has a passing relationship with a place; the opposite of a *habitudo*
- Formación – ‘formation’, or the process of developing into a leader
- Foro – ‘forum’, a kind of participatory space where citizens are usually spoken to, rather than heard.
- Frutería – a business selling fruit juices and snacks
- Funcionario – literally ‘functionary’, this roughly means ‘civil servant’, or non-political government employee.
- Gana-gana – ‘win-win’
- Gerencia – ‘management’, a term used to refer to a type of regulatory, public-private planning and development practice (as opposed to direct public sector developments)
- Gestores sociales – something like a ‘social worker’, these are government workers that interact with citizens in participatory spaces.
- Grafiteros – graffiti artists
- Habituidos – residents, business owners, workers, anyone who comes to a specific area on a regular basis for a prolonged period of time; someone with a more emic place attachment to an area; the opposite of a *flotante*.
- Historia – history
- IDARTES – Instituto Distrital de las Artes, or District Institute for the Arts
- IDRD – Instituto Distrital de Recreación y Deporte, District Institute for Sports and Recreation
- IDU – Instituto de Desarrollo Urbano, Institute of Urban Development
- Inquilinatos – tenement housing
- Inquilinización – the process of buildings being turned into tenement housing units at a large scale.

- Jornadas de aseo—volunteer public space recovery events that involve cleaning, painting, etc.
- Liderismo – ‘leadership’, but not as a virtue of a leader, but a kind of top-down system or process
- Lo público – ‘the public’, something akin to ‘the general public’.
- Localidades – ‘localities’, or the 20 subdivisions of Bogotá with their own local governments.
- Memoria – ‘memory’
- Mesa – literally ‘table’, used to describe a kind of deliberative citizen participation, similar to something like a ‘roundtable’.
- Mesa interinstitucional – an inter-institutional roundtable, or meeting with representatives of different government agencies and citizen leaders.
- Minga – an indigenous word that refers to a type of collective action taken to solve a problem. It is now used to describe social movements.
- Olla – a term for a neighborhood, block or street corner associated with the sale of drugs.
- Ordenamiento territorial – ‘land use planning’, or a system of regulating land uses and developments.
- Panadería – bakery
- Permanencia – literally ‘permanence’, this is used to describe efforts to prevent the displacement of residents and businesses by urban renewal efforts.
- Parque de bolsillo – ‘pocket park’, or small parks that are considered ‘neighborhood scale’
- Planes de vida – ‘plans of life’, or ‘life-based plans’, a term for experimental types of planning meant to reflect different understanding of territory or place (i.e. one based on everyday life).
- Pueblo – can refer either to a village, or to ‘the people’
- Recicladores – informal garbage collectors and recyclers
- Recorridos – ‘tours’, a term usually used to talk about government agents visiting neighborhoods and being shown around by local citizens to see and discuss problems.
- Retroalimentar – to give feedback, a term used to describe a consultative type of participatory planning.
- Talleres – ‘workshops’, a term used to describe citizen participation spaces where citizens learn a specific skill, such as painting facades.

- Tecnicos – a term used to refer to technical experts in a field, here used to talk about professional planners, developers and policy experts.
- Tugurización – the process of neighborhoods being turned into slums.
- Wacque – an indigenous word that means something like ‘warrior for, or defendor of the trees’; a word adopted by a collective organized to defend the Cerros Orientales.

Abbreviations

- ANT – Actor Network Theory
- BIC – Bienes de Interés Cultural, Properties of Cultural Interest
- BRT – Bus rapid transit
- CACAY – Collectivo Artístico y Cultural Abya-Yala, Abya-Yala Cultural and Artistic Collective
- CAI – Comando de Acción Inmediata, Rapid Action Command Post
- CIAM – Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne
- CLAN – Centro Local de Artes para la Niñez y la Juventud, Community Arts Center for Children and Young People
- CLOPS – Consejo Local de Organizaciones de Políticas Sociales, Local Council of Social Policy Organizations
- CPL – Consejo de Planeación Local, Local Planning Council
- DADEP – Departamento Administrativo del Defensoría del Espacio Público, Administrative Department for the Defense of Public Space
- ELN – National Liberation Army, leftist *guerilla* group
- ERU – Empresa de Renovación Urbana, Urban Renovation Corporation
- FARC – Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, leftist *guerrilla* group
- ICTs – information and communication technologies
- IDPs – Internally displaced persons
- IDPAC – Instituto Distrital de Participación y Acción Comunal, or District Institute of Participation and Community Action
- IDPC – Instituto Distrital de Patrimonio Cultural, District Institute of Cultural Heritage
- IDIGER – Instituto Distrital de Gestión de Riesgos y Cambio Climático, District Institute for Managing Risk and Climate Change
- JAC – Junta de Acción Comunal, or Community Action Council
- LDT – Ley de Desarrollo Territorial, the Territorial Development Law, Colombia's national planning policy framework
- NRT – Non-Representational Theory
- POPS – privately owned public space

- POT – Plan de Ordenamiento Teritorial, Territorial Development Plan, the primary long-term strategic land use plan for municipalities in the Colombian planning system.
- UPZ – Unidad de Planeación Zonal, Zonal Planning Unit
- VIP – Vivienda de Interés Prioritario, Priority Interest Housing
- VIS – Vivienda de Interés Social, Social Interest Housing
- TUPBogotá – Talleres Urbanaisticos Participativos de Bogotá, or Participatory Urban Planning Workshops of Bogotá

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