Lessons in Social Equity from Bogotá's "Public Space" Mayors

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Abstract: Latin America is the most urbanized region on the planet, and it is experiencing rapid development as well as generating new strategies for more equitable built environments. While it is emerging in the Global South, this southern thinking about equity is not confined to that particular geography. Rather, it can be used to help stimulate strategic and visionary planning in cities globally. In particular, Bogotá, a capital city of eight million people, is known for its "pedagogical urbanism" movement of the 1990s and early 2000s, when the city transformed into a model of urban development based on the work of two mayors, Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa, who shifted the existing spatial logic of the city toward a more inclusive and supportive built environment by reshaping social relationships and civic identity, as well as altering the design of public space and public transportation with the intent of bringing the city's residents together in public space to form a positive communal identity. This paper summarizes the city's transformation and the challenges that arose during it and explores lessons in operating multiscalar metropolitan spaces that create more imageable, integrated, and socially equitable territories.

Keywords: big city mayors, Bogotá, pedagogical urbanism, public space, public transit, urban design

Introduction

Bogotá's "public space" mayors, Antanas Mockus (1995–1997, 2001–2003) and Enrique Peñalosa (1998–2000), are largely responsible for the transformation of Bogotá in the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s,[1] and they effected the large-scale change by focusing on public space. Between them, Mockus and Peñalosa took on significant negative structural issues in the city's development and then ongoing life and established meaningful and lasting avenues for all residents to cultivate a sense of belonging. They did this by strengthening individual and collective identity and by making significant contributions to improving equity. Providing the conditions needed to create beneficial and reciprocal social relationships proved to be their key strategy for city transformation. In creating these conditions, they moved the existing sociocultural characteristics of the city from dystopian to pedagogical. And, in taking care of the city and encouraging the citizens to take care of themselves, their improvements became a model of urban development, a model that many other cities have emulated. Though motivated through its own singularities, i.e., dystopian conditions, a strategic and visionary response scaled and envisioned to confront that reality, and, more recently, a need to seek ways to look beyond its era of best practices, the city continues to engage the global conversation on urban development.

Not only did the public space mayors lead a move from a "private" to a "public" urbanism, literally reversing locally what is a pervasive global trend toward privatization and also recouping land owned by the city and bringing it back into the public realm, they also successfully encouraged the rebirth of public life, creating opportunities to break down "otherness" by inviting people to socialize in the city's public landscapes, thereby increasing their sense of communal identity and belonging. Their projects help us to understand crucial differences between quality of life and quality of place, as well as designing for content versus image. Bogotá's experience has much to say about urban development possibilities and cities in general in the twenty-first century—from cities as teaching examples and their public spaces as sites of educational encounter, to planners' need to strike a balance in the legibility and comprehensibility of urban environments, to the role of identity and belonging in inspiring change.

Reversing Dystopia: Creating the Pedagogical City

During the second half of the twentieth century, Bogotá grew to be a dystopian city. Contributing factors included long-term circumstances such as a national history of recurrent civil war and a strong and separate upper class with a firm grip on most of the social, economic, and political power, and, during the latter decades of the century, an increasing absence of planning practice and government structure at a time when the city endured staggering population growth and the rapid expansion of its borders. These structuring elements profoundly affected the possibilities for growth and development throughout Colombia; many remain as challenges for city governance today, especially in Bogotá, the capital.

In Bogotá during these years, dystopian conditions developed on many different levels. These conditions emerged out of the country's continuously high levels of politically and socially motivated violence. The city's chaotic urban planning added to the negative conditions, and residents suffered from them in their daily experience of the city's public spaces. This included the effects of the explosion of car ownership by a small minority of the population beginning in the 1960s, which resulted in affluent drivers' commandeering open space and sidewalks for parking, eating up public space, leaving no room for pedestrians, and destroying sidewalks. In addition, the viability of public space in Bogotá was challenged by privatizations and the illegal closure of public space as some citizens took over publicly owned land for their own purposes (DAPD 2006) and the city served its own purposes as well. As a result, public space became more and more fragmented. Ardila-Gómez (2003) describes this time, "Bogotá had become totally chaotic. The quality of life deteriorated, with few city services. One could say that the city mistreated its inhabitants, and the citizens reacted in kind. People often tossed their garbage onto the streets. Drivers careened their cars at pedestrians, actually speeding up as people attempted to cross the street. No one stopped for red lights" (34). A pervasive focus on individual well-being to the exclusion of concern about community welfare, stronger identity ties to other parts of the country among new residents, and a lack of a sense of belonging created among citizens a tremendous alienation from the city and from each other. It was under these conditions, coupled with the decentralization of power from the national government, that the public space mayors began grappling with the underlying narrative of the city, attempting to rewrite it as "home" and "a safe place."

Urban designers and planners are taught that utopias cannot succeed and that every planned utopia contains the seeds of its own destruction. It is perhaps easier to grasp the reality of dystopias—places defined by devastating conditions that persist and that degrade quality of life to a significant degree. When a city becomes a dystopia, a lack of urban planning is often blamed. Yet, dystopian conditions can motivate people to bring about change, as was the case in Bogotá. Miles, Hall, and Borden (2000) point out, “Although seemingly negative, the image of dystopia can be equally helpful as that of utopia for those interested in social change and progress, offering a way of representing conditions to be avoided in the present and in the future” (287). So dystopias, too, contain the seeds of their own destruction. In a similar manner, utopian thinking allows one to critique the present for the purpose of changing it (Miles, Hall, and Borden 2000, 287). Seen in this way, Mockus and Peñalosa engaged both dystopian and utopian thinking to power their success.

The changes enacted by the two mayors over the span of their three administrations transformed the city socially, culturally, physically, and politically. The social life of the city was reimagined through Mockus’s focus on enhancing *cultura ciudadana* (citizen culture), or feelings of belonging, respect, and responsibility among citizens, and through Peñalosa’s drive to increase the equitable distribution of public transportation, space, and recreational resources. The physical fabric of the city transformed as new uses of public space and new systems of public transportation were put into place and boundaries were reestablished between public and private space. The political arena of the city was reshaped by what I call visible competency, the visual demonstration of the capacity to plan, design, and implement development projects to increase or maintain quality of life and place. Demonstrating visible competency quickly established the mayors as capable leaders and legitimized their administrations. The social life of the city changed as a collective effort of civic spirit called “bogotantud” arose in the city, and “pedagogical urbanism” emerged as the city’s collective urbanistic response to the desire to teach civic responsibility and support residents’ efforts to be good citizens.

A New Approach to Public Space

During the period of its transformation in the 1990s and the early 2000s, Bogotá presented important exceptions to significant global public space trends. In many cities, public space has become structured rather than serving as a structuring element of the built environment. Scholars writing on public space have tracked a profound decrease in its importance and democratic use (Amin 2006; Cuthbert 2006; Low 2006; Low and Smith 2006; Sennett 1992; Smith 1996). Low and Smith (2006) note that, globally, "public spaces are no longer, if they ever were, democratic places where a diversity of peoples and activities are embraced and tolerated. . . . A creeping encroachment in previous years has in the last two decades become an epoch-making shift culminating in multiple closures, erasures, inundations, and transfigurations of public space at the behest of state and corporate strategies" (vii, 1). Scholars also note the gradually increasing restriction of rights to and allowed uses of public space, leading to a decline in the importance of public space in civic life and its safety (Low and Smith 2006); an increase in confrontations and rights violations (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006; Berney 2012), especially among homeless individuals attempting to live in public space (Mitchell and Staeheli 2006); and an increase in the monitoring and management of public spaces. Yet, in contrast to experiences of loss of and privatization of public space in North America and Europe (Berrizbeitia 1999; Low and Smith 2006) and challenges in Latin American cities including Bogotá such as socio-spatial fragmentation, poverty, and lack of security (Salazar Ferro 2003), public space in Bogotá increased in these decades in quantity and in importance as a normative element of the city's form as well as in the daily lives of its citizens.

The public space mayors' emphasis on the city's public landscapes reflects historic patterns in that each era has produced public spaces reflective of contemporary social needs that also shaped the physical fabric of the city. The mayors' responses to a dystopian Bogotá served as major disruptions to the city's existing spatial logic, all the while contending with the formidable preexisting social, economic, and political forces that drive urban form and function. Three new types of public space emerged from the mayors' work: equalizing networks, hybrid hubs, and civic spaces, and they represent the bulk of the work the mayors did to rewrite the city's public landscapes.

Equalizing networks are the linear, circulation-based projects that enhance people's mobility throughout Bogotá and into the surrounding area; they connect neighborhoods of differing socioeconomic status. The best-known examples include the innovative TransMilenio bus rapid transit system and the Ciclovía, the weekly bicycling event that draws thousands of people into the streets to ride together (see fig. 1), as well as the *avenida* projects of El Porvenir and the Jiménez. Hybrid hubs are cultural and institutional facilities strategically placed within public spaces and designed to increase access to cultural resources and to build pride in being *bogotano*. These include the "libraries in the park," such as the El Tunal Library, located within the popular El Tunal regional park (see fig. 2). Finally, civic spaces are the public parks and plazas that function as primary territory for citizen interaction. Examples include Tercer Milenio Park and the Plaza San Victorino (see fig. 3). All three types were designed and function as pedagogical tools of transformation. Their synergistic effects serve to push back against/break down the existing logic of the city (see fig. 4): as people use *ciclorutas* to travel to libraries, they visit areas of the city they would not ordinarily see and benefit from cultural resources they previously had lacked access to; as they ride in the Ciclovía, they pass through districts with residents of higher or lower socioeconomic levels than theirs and thereby become more familiar with them, decreasing their otherness; as they meet each other in parks and plazas, they enjoy a feeling of community spirit that had evaded them before.

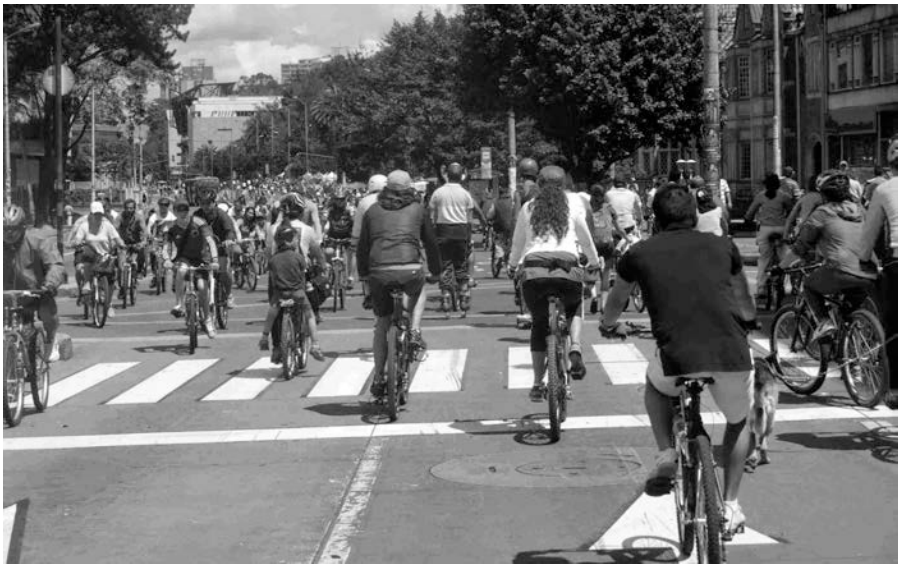


Figure 1. An equalizing network, two-way traffic during the Ciclovía. (Source: Mike Ceaser, Bogotá Bike Tours)

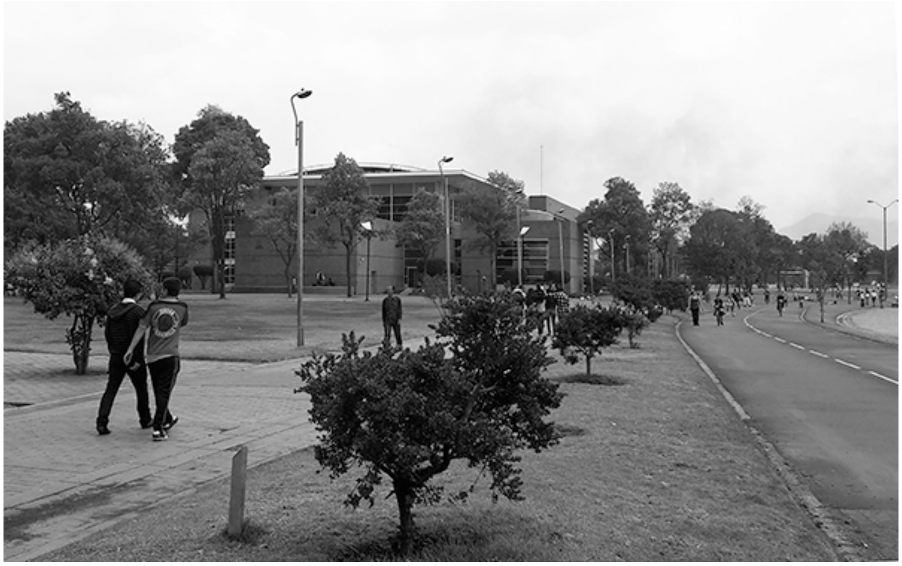


Figure 2. Walkway and *cicloruta* outside of El Tunal Library, a hybrid hub. (Source: Ana María Ewert)

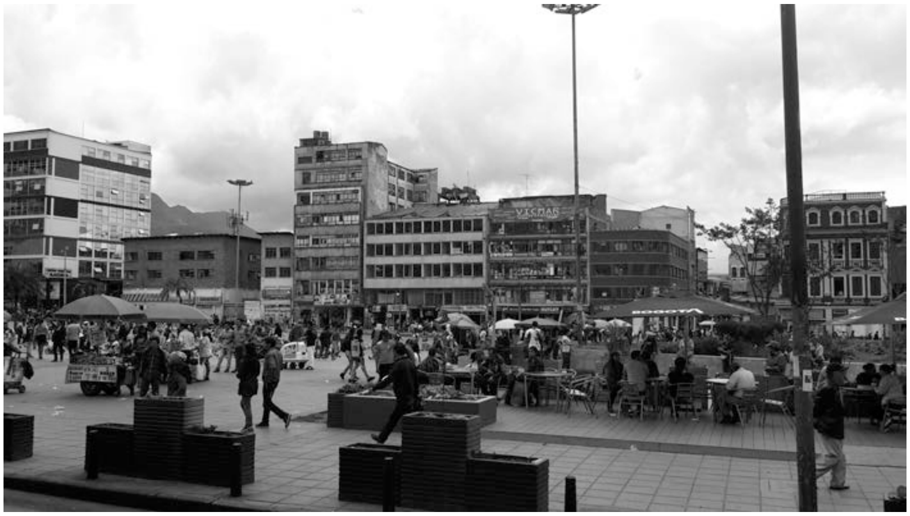
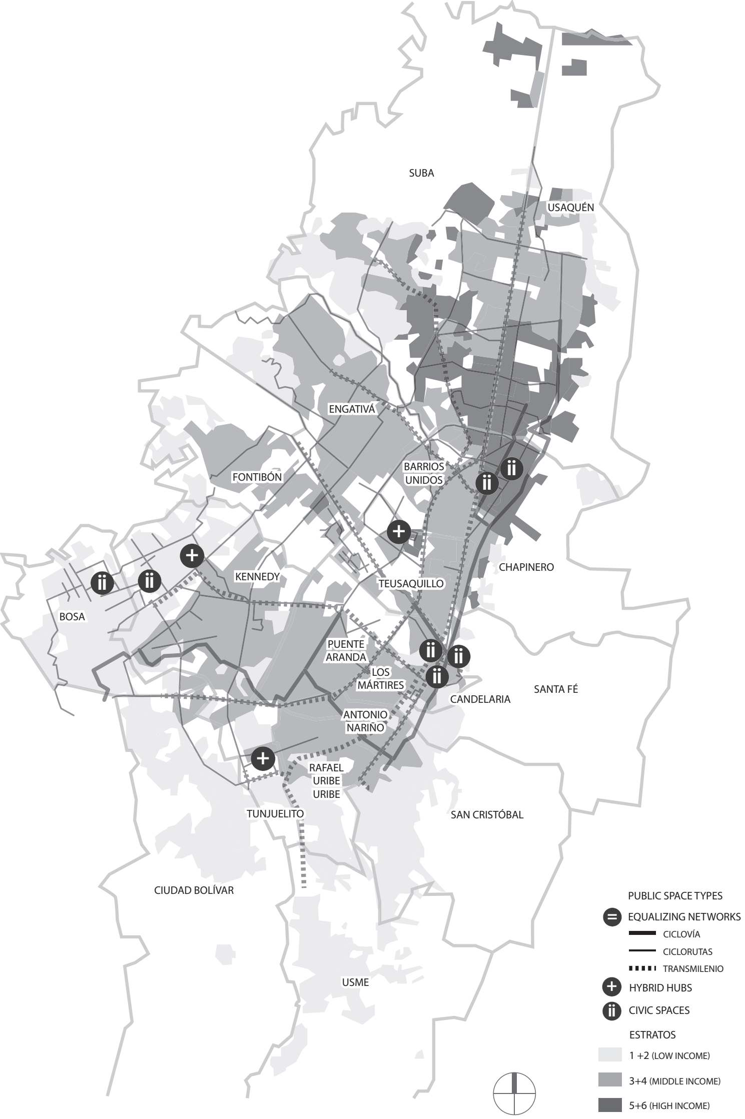


Figure 3. A civic space, planters and seating in Plaza San Victorino. (Source: Ana María Ewert)


SUBA
USAQUÉN
ENGATIVÁ
BARRIOS UNIDOS
FONTIBÓN
KENNEDY
TEUSAQUILLO
CHAPINERO
BOSA
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LOS MÁRTIRES
CANDELARIA
SANTA FÉ
ANTONIO NARIÑO
RAFAEL URIBE URIBE
TUNJUELITO
SAN CRISTÓBAL
CIUDAD BOLÍVAR
USME
PUBLIC SPACE TYPES
EQUALIZING NETWORKS
CICLOVÍA
CICLORUTAS
TRANSMILENIO
HYBRID HUBS
CIVIC SPACES
ESTRATOS
1 +2 (LOW INCOME)
3+4 (MIDDLE INCOME)
5+6 (HIGH INCOME)

Figure 4. The locations of key projects and types reflect a new spatial logic for Bogotá, one with increased circulation and attractions that draw people into public spaces, across differing socioeconomic strata (*estratos*).

The City as a Project

The transformation of Bogotá's public space can be understood as an initiative that, as enacted, was essentially a state-building project for the public space mayors, one in which "place consciousness" developed in the process of the city's moving from being "in itself" to being "for itself": "If it is to become the latter, that is, if it is to begin to think of itself politically, it must, for a significant part of its population, become a project" (Friedmann 2002, 63). This project occupies the sometimes fraught territory between the simultaneous trends of decline in public space quality and rise of the use of public space in remaking and branding projects. What emerged in Bogotá was an institutional and legal shift toward public space as a collective public good, as a resource whose use should be managed equitably. This change in Bogotá provided a positive counterpoint to the loss of quality public space globally: the Bogotá project was observed and emulated by cities all over the world. But global in addition to local audiences—especially those who wanted to see an orderly city—heavily conditioned how the project played out.

The desire to present an orderly city after decades of disarray is understandable. What is troublesome is that at the heart of the choice to use public space as a vehicle for remaking and branding, rather than just providing public space for citizen use, lies an implicit need to present an image of the free use of public space while maintaining the ability to control both place and people. In Bogotá, the parks, plazas, rapid transit system, *avenidas*, and libraries became *citizen spaces*—framed, messaged, and staffed as spaces of citizen encounter that, in turn, were intended to shape citizen relations (Berney 2011)—but they were also intended to improve international response to the city. Citizen space is not just about control; rather, it is about the complex interplay of the provision of and the use of public space by various kinds of people with differing needs, the interplay of the pedagogical intent of the city leaders and the types of management in place.

The negative aspects of citizen space include an active management of public space appearance, a process that cultivates tableaux—striking scenes of social order within public space that deprive people of their rights in order to maintain an image (Berney 2012). Mitchell (2000) describes the difference between public space and these types of "scenes" this way: "Landscape is where one recreates—it is literally a resort—and where one basks in the leisure of a well-ordered scene. Public space is a space of conflict, of political tussle, of social relations stripped to their barest essentials. A place cannot be both a public space and a landscape, at least not at the same time" (136).

Mockus and Peñalosa used public space and presented it on the world stage as a fundamental part of SBogotá's recovery and rebranding. This necessitated active management, both from the point of view of a belief that citizens needed to be taught and encouraged to behave in new ways—pedagogical urbanism—and from the one that methods must be used to control behavior perceived as undesirable. How the behavior requiring control was categorized and the forms its management took comprise the discussion of caveats in Bogotá's transformation, and in the management of public space in cities generally. These cautionary issues include challenges related to six things: (1) public-private partnerships, (2) the blurring of public and private behaviors, (3) the role of the public space user, (4) incorporating informal activities into a formalized built-fabric and management system, (5) legibility, and (6) the right to the city.

First, public-private partnerships have increased in scope and importance in Bogotá. These include relationships between the city and friends groups and foundations as well as business owners. These partnerships increasingly turned to tactics such as monitoring behavior and allowing private interests to manage and orchestrate public spaces for the “public good.” However, the *publicness* of public space is lost when government and special-interest groups move to create and protect specific images or scenes within public spaces to promote an orderly city and/or to demonstrate a group’s success. As a result, these projects often blur boundaries between public and private interests, resulting in a system of “cues for caring” (such as signs listing appropriate behavior) deployed within public spaces and other systems designed to create and maintain order, for example, closed-circuit television monitoring of spaces; ambassador programs; insertion of programming and concessions into public spaces; and other efforts to fix norms for public behavior within narrow limits, thus excluding potentially disruptive political activities and people who do not fit the new city image. Activities such as doing business and sleeping in public—which had long been practiced in Bogotá—came to be seen as problematic, especially in public spaces in the wealthier northern part of the city.

Second, under Mockus’s and Peñalosa’s direction, the city reversed previous land privatizations in line with the move from private to public urbanism. This directive returned illegally appropriated public land to public oversight. However, as public space became a major agenda item for city transformation, as well as for international exposure, boundaries between public and private in Bogotá began to blur in new ways, and activities and behaviors came into conflict in the city’s public spaces. This occurred partially because the range of stakeholders had increased, creating a more diverse set of publics than had existed before and amplifying different views of what constituted appropriate use and behavior. Conflict also occurred in public spaces themselves, as notions of what public space was meant to accomplish in the “new” Bogotá clashed with formerly typical uses.

As Bogotá remade itself, the appeal of the city and the ability of the city to care for people improved dramatically, which led many Colombians to choose to come to Bogotá seeking shelter and work, and some of them began living in the city's public spaces. Poor immigrants newly arrived to the city, especially *desplazados* (displaced persons), were vulnerable. These changes set up a conflict between "public" and "private" activities, the latter of which Watson (2006) describes as those "framed with reference to bodies and corporeality" (161), such as sleeping, working, and setting up a shelter; such activities in public spaces were increasingly seen as interfering with other people's use of the spaces, people such as friends of the parks groups. With more public spaces to share in Bogotá, the need to accept a significant amount of difference among people increased. At the same time, pressure for public space to appear orderly also increased. Hence, normative ways of "doing business" in public space, such as vending, were discouraged or prohibited.

Third, we see in Bogotá an example of where public space users, whether vendors or visitors, were meant to be a willing and receptive audience for local everyday spectacle and also to become actors populating tableaux for the global gaze rather than merely citizens using public space. For Bogotá to be successful, its public spaces needed to be filled with happy and interactive citizens. Images and experiences of real users in real spaces were packaged and sold to instill belief in an orderly, safe city, as well as to attract investment and support, but, ironically, they required ongoing management and control to maintain the desired effects. This problem with public space is more likely to occur where projects have a global, rather than a local, focus (meaning that they are not grounded in local priorities, social needs, and desires); where "cues for caring" overrule the free use of public space; and where representatives of the orderly city, including civic guides, police, and even vendors protecting their territory, reduce people’s free access to public space or even keep them from it entirely. Global audiences, existing or desired, for local public spaces are complicit in this. With globalization has come an extended audience for local places. Massey (2004) posits that place identity is constantly renegotiated within a constellation of local and global narratives. The Plaza San Victorino redesign process in Bogotá, for example, concentrated on showcasing adjacent historic architecture at the expense of responding to contemporary user needs and behaviors. The redone plaza was envisioned by the city for global consumption as an idealized space “of citizen encounter,” but the local population has retaken the space, subverting many of its intended uses to suit their own needs (see figs. 5 and 6).

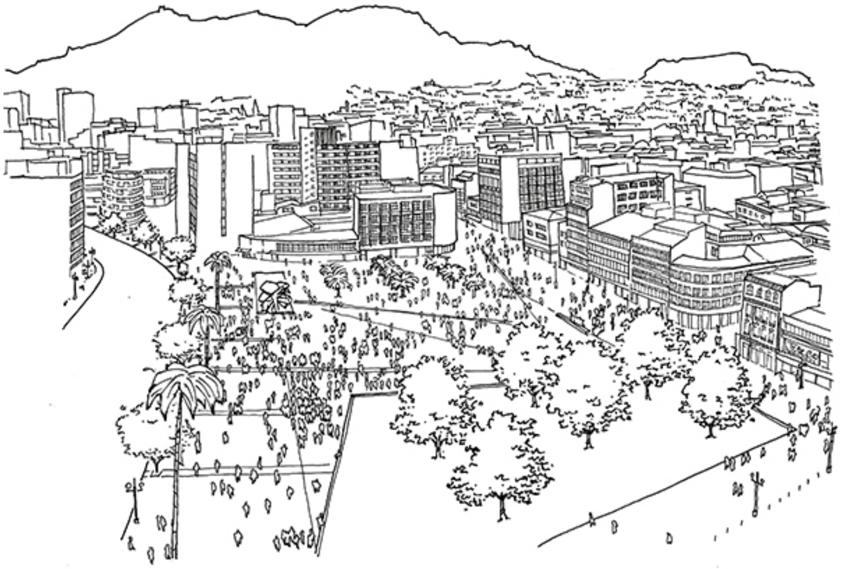

Figure 5. Bogotá as “a city that constructs spaces of citizen encounter.” (Source: DAPD 2001, 5, redrawn)

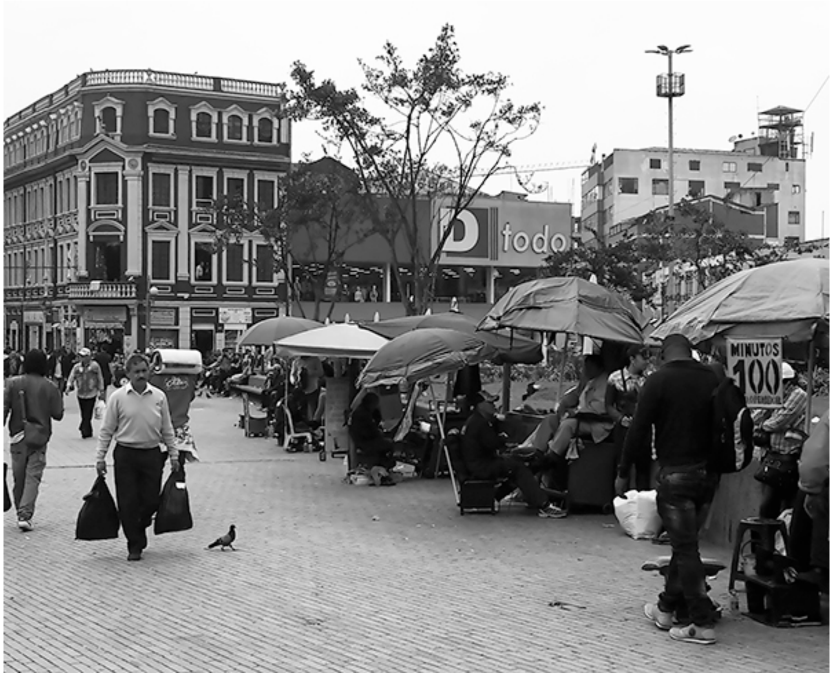

Figure 6. Shoe shiners in Plaza San Victorino using the benches intended for plaza visitors. **(**Source: Ana María Ewert)

Fourth, in Bogotá, the public space mayors chose to manage informal uses of public space by restricting what vendors could do in order to create public spaces they believed would be more inviting to a range of people and also more attractive to a global audience. This helped to support the goal to create an orderly city. It also supported the mayors' visible competency. The rejection of undesirable behavior and, at the extreme, undesirable people from Bogotá's public spaces pushed the experience of those spaces past a tipping point at which public space fails as an ideal and becomes instead a commodified scene—the landscape scene that managed public space devolves into—and citizens freely using public space become instead commodified themselves—citizens functioning as actors in those scenes. Fifth, this process was augmented by changes in city legibility. As the presence of an agent of control increases in an area, whether state power (Scott 1998) or the pressure of capital (Harvey 1981), that area's spatial logic changes. In most cases, that part of the city is expected to become easier to read and navigate, which gives authorities greater control over the space and renders the space more open to outsiders (Scott 1998), lessening the level of local control.

Finally, no examination of the Bogotá project can overlook questions about the right to the city. At its heart, the project pushed to deliver collective goods, such as public space, as a right, as well as to invoke, as a responsibility, good civic behavior. Lefebvre (1996) describes the right to the city as "a cry and a demand . . . [for] a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (158). Harvey (2012) calls the right to the city a "means" rather than an "end," contending that the process of defining the right to the city, as well as determining who gets a say, is an ongoing struggle and that negotiating meaning is as important as creating the material conditions that support it (xv). From Bogotá's perspective, the right to the city was broadly conceived of as the right of each person to have equal access to the city and its resources, to exercise full citizenship, and to be provided the capacity to construct his or her life as desired and to participate in the equitable development of the city (Velásquez Carrillo 2004). In reality, efforts to define and to claim the right to the city were limited by the desire to modernize Bogotá and to present it on the world stage.

From Caveats to Lessons

Mixing public and private interests in the development and management of space in the built environment can lead to disagreement and confrontation between different publics that want to use public space or manage it according to their own agendas, including the haves and the have-nots, the housed and the homeless, and the unruly and the well behaved. While inadequate to encapsulate the complexities of urban life and experience, dichotomies can be useful constructs to study. Learning from Bogotá means unpacking these dichotomies and understanding what they have to teach us, which we can do especially by looking at the overlaps, the frictions, and the disjunctures that may lie between them. Interrogating these constructs can help move city governments toward being more user focused when they make decisions about design and development priorities. The Bogotá experience provides several such dichotomies that warrant close consideration, the most important one being "content," the substance of what projects were meant to accomplish, especially in terms of positive social outcomes, and "image," pleasing pictures or representations of projects. Content and image are directly tied to arguments pertaining to quality of life. In cities, especially those confronted with massive socioeconomic inequalities, acknowledging that improving quality of life is a better measure of success than improving quality of place is crucial, especially since quality of place is often mistakenly used as the only measure. When concerns about physical qualities of the built environment are at the forefront, and allowable uses of public space are determined by the desire to present an appealing image, "place" comes into conflict with "life." In Bogotá, the new public space projects that got "content" right and were most successful at increasing quality of life along with quality of place focused on things that contribute directly to livelihood and health and well-being, including access to recreation, such as the Ciclovía, and availability of affordable and convenient means to commute to and from work, such as the TransMilenio bus rapid transit network.

Despite, or possibly even because of, the caveats, Bogotá shows us important ways forward in terms of city management and design. Cautionary tales are part and parcel of all development schemes, no matter how socially oriented. Like the public space mayors, we can focus on both utopian concepts and dystopian concerns to find an informed middle ground. There are five takeaways from Bogotá's transformation that are worthy of consideration. First, leadership was crucial to Bogotá’s transformation. The public space mayors possessed a moral authority born out of desperate circumstances. They had vision, a sense of responsibility, and the necessary skills to lead. Moving a city out of dystopian conditions requires strong vision along with the will to implement it. The daunting circumstances that the public space mayors began with, especially Mockus, cannot be overstated. It was incredibly difficult and dangerous to assume leadership of the city; they faced tremendous obstacles. The city had become synonymous with the international drug cartels—a tough image to crack and an extremely difficult one to remake. Mockus and Peñalosa engaged the everyday environment for people throughout the city in a vision that was deliberately inclusive. They interwove projects at many different scales into a synergistic whole, creating a grand, strategic vision, yet they worked without a singular master plan. Undertaking projects with broad appeal aided their success. In contrast, later mayors laid out visions that were partial in scope and scale, and they have not been as successful.

Second, cities have become the driving force for human and economic development. The public space mayors demonstrated this power through their work. Because of this, big city mayors now rank as some of the most important figures creating change on a global scale. The United Nations reports on its website that 54 percent of the world's population lives in cities; by 2050, that number is expected to rise to 66 percent. In areas of the Global South, that percentage is much higher. In Latin America, the most urbanized region in the world, the urban population has been close to 80 percent for many years. UN-Habitat (2012) predicts that Latin American cities will hold 90 percent of the region’s population by 2050. Cities are also increasingly the source of individual and group identity—a new tribal identity for some—as they supersede nation-states and regions in holding the loyalty of their citizens. Similarly, *bogotantud* was born and thrived during the public space mayors' years. City leaders now make many of the decisions that shape people's daily lives and their quality of life. This is especially impactful because cities have become vast in structure, scale, and function. Because of this, city-visioning processes have the potential to address the needs of all citizens.

Third, the spatial logic of cities is in constant revision, and improvements in spatial logic can increase opportunities for more equitable uses of a city, including sharing collective resources. In Bogotá, new legible landscapes contributed to learning, inclusion, and stewardship. Notwithstanding the challenges to certain types of users gaining access to public space and some projects' becoming too open to global interests and not sufficiently grounded in local control, public space in Bogotá became easier to navigate, which led to activities that helped provide a sense of collective identity, and many people found a place within it. With greater legibility come opportunities for developing sustainable places, practices, and policies in cities. In Bogotá, safe and well-designed civic spaces helped citizens develop feelings of stewardship and a sense of collective ownership. Participation and stewardship can contribute to increasing the sustainability and resilience of cities. Bogotá's focus on delivering access to collective resources in public space can be emulated in similar types of projects in cities throughout the world.

Fourth, access and mobility can be great equalizers. Bogotá's equalizing networks dramatically reshaped the city as well as expanding people's mobility by means of public transit. In the process, the TransMilenio became a model of a best practice for cities globally. Bogotá's system of feeder buses, the *alimentadores*, was a positive example of how to get people to and from the main bus lines through both formal and informal city fabric, meeting the challenge many commuters face using metropolitan-scale transportation systems: having difficulty traveling the first and last miles of their journeys, which is one of the most important factors determining system use and success. However, providing more bicycle facilities and strategically engaging redevelopment opportunities along the main lines, especially at pedestrian- and bicycle-access points, were difficult. Bogotá's experience reminds us that for cities making investments in transportation infrastructure, vision must be comprehensive. Whether following a public or public-private operating model, excellent circulation and mobility within a city are crucial to extending the definition of, and helping to secure, the right to the city for all.

Fifth, elements of the built environment that perform political functions, such as, in Bogotá' case, establishing identity or a sense of pride, can be analyzed as landscapes of power (Zukin 1991). While many analyses of landscapes of power focus on special events and iconic spaces as the most consequential, Bogotá revealed that daily activities and the spaces of the city in which they take place are equally significant in conveying visible success in governance and policy, if not more significant. The success of Bogotá's transformation stemmed, in large measure, from the public space mayors' ability to create a spectacle of the everyday in the city's public landscapes. This resulted in an everyday city organized in form and function around responsiveness to daily living needs and patterns, one in which the city's public landscapes encouraged "a taste for events" (Bryant 2011) by presenting activities in which to engage.

Together these five takeaways offer a picture of change within Bogotá. However, further consideration is useful to reflect upon their impact in global debates on urban development. In writing about urban planning in the Global South, Watson (2009) and others (Mabin 2014; Parnell and Oldfield 2014; Pieterse 2014; Simone 2004, to name just a few) break down, in a nuanced manner, the longstanding and prevailing notions that theory and practice flow in one direction from the Global North to the Global South as well as the idea that Southern cities have little to offer in theory and practice related to the life of cities globally. Watson, in particular, speaks to the "conflict of rationalities" between top-down formalized systems and practices of planning and the often rapidly growing urban populations in cities that, by necessity, are problem solving through informal or hybrid means. It is not the intention of this paper to fully take on and synthesize the Bogotá experience vis-à-vis the lens of southern urbanism. That paper remains to be written. Yet, what I suggest here is, in line with Watson's premise, that a view from the Global South "provides a useful and necessary unsettling of taken-for-granted assumptions in planning, essential for a conceptual shift in the discipline" (2261) and, by her definition, that the key to action is to "explore the analytical, evaluative and interventive concepts which could help planners faced with such conflicting rationalities, paying attention to what may be termed the 'interface' between the rationality of governing and the rationality of survival" (2268). Along with others, including myself, she raises a number of questions about what emerges from the cities of the Global South in response to the constant negotiation, response, and transformation at the heart of the interface. Bogotá lies directly in that crucible of change.

Conclusion

While Bogotá's transformation was inevitably incomplete—it is impossible, after all, to completely remake a city socially, physically, or otherwise—other cities can learn much from its effort. Bogotá offers the lesson that a citywide strategic approach that is not master planned can be very effective. This contrasts with the thinking on the traditional master-plan process, with the prevalent role of private development in shaping cities, and also with postmodern piecemeal, project-by-project development. The scale of growing cities, in the Global South and elsewhere, calls for a metropolitan perspective and response; Bogotá's transformation happened by planning at this scale. The role of the public sector was immensely important in this process, again in contrast with many cities. In Bogotá's case, the elected local leadership functioned as city builder and employed proactive and visionary municipal support. Despite arguments that "urban design is dead" (Sorkin 2006) and that there has been a significant decline in public-sector involvement in city visioning (Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee 1998), in Bogotá city-sponsored urban-design vision led the city's transformation. In large-scale change proposed by cities such as Bogotá, significant social and economic objectives shape the interplay between governance and design decision-making. Visible innovations in governance and policy and new types of public space became the mayors' hallmark. The mayors' actions demonstrate a response to Loukaitou-Sideris's (2012) call for urban design as a practice and profession to take on issues of greater scope and meaning, including addressing the larger metropolitan scale as well as social and cultural landscapes.

The public space mayors placed deliberate focus upon ordinary spaces and places—the everyday city—and upon the creation of livable, humane, and comfortable spaces that offered access to resources. Both Mockus and Peñalosa focused on ways to connect people and to support collective empowerment. Their work demonstrates an understanding of, or at least a belief in, how the redesign of public space can positively impact political, economic, and social issues on a societal scale. Looking at that in reverse, the design process used social issues as motivation and inspiration, something Loukaitou-Sideris (2012) notes is lacking in current practice in urban design. Mockus and Peñalosa were able to bridge, socially and physically, populations in the city that had been separated. They sponsored design projects that created links between the formal and informal city, connecting areas of the city of very different socioeconomic status and lessening the divides that exacerbate inequality. Those who are more affluent tend to be able to exercise more control over the built environment. This is true in

Bogotá, but changes to the public realm there privileged the underprivileged. And, by countering the trend of privatization and loss of public life, the city began supporting all of its citizens, in a fundamental way. Bogotá models many qualities of the built environment that can make everyday life—especially public life—more comfortable, including recreational space close to home, transportation networks that enhance mobility, public spaces that are pleasant, safe, and easy to navigate, and ample opportunities for inhabitants to participate in the life of their city. Finally, Bogotá demonstrates that urban design is capable of and should engage and address issues of social justice. Designing is a political act.

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[1] Mayor Jaime Castro, who served from 1992 to 1994, accomplished significant work on the city's governing code and tax-collection system. Castro's work established a firm foundation upon which the public space mayors relied. Enrique Peñalosa is once again Bogotá's mayor. Elected in 2015, he is serving a four-year term from 2016 to 2019.