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NEGOTIATING THE BORDERS OF EVERYDAY LIFE
THROUGH PLACEMAKING IN COMUNA 13, MEDELLÍN

BORDER



LANDS

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DIPLOMARBEIT

INVISIBLE BORDERLANDS

Negotiating the borders of everyday life through
place-making in Comuna 13, Medellín.



ausgeführt zum Zwecke der Erlangung des akademischen Grades
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eingereicht an der Technischen Universität Wien
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von

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Wien, am 30 Mai, 2019

Abstract / Zusammenfassung / Resumen

In the last 20 years Medellín - the Colombian “City of eternal spring” has been a successful radical project of transformation and social inclusion. In spite of all the efforts that has been put into regenerating the city and its informal settlements, here are a lot of challenges that endure and still can be addressed nowadays. Informal settlements are ecosystems of a great complexity where diverse social structures and relationships coexist with chronic lack of services and heavy social control imposed by violence and crime. Being captured in the middle of this clash of interests, the communities in such settlements represent a target for the state, and in the same time are over-exposed to the routes of interactions established by the institutional and business-like character of narco-traffic. This situation creates disconnection and barriers between the communities inside the city’s neighbourhoods. Those barriers are carved up because of an interest of particular individuals (or groups), and in a way push people to follow a particular model of everyday life without any regard to its quality. Having these statements in mind, this publication investigates the establishment of the invisible borders in the barrios itself, their prime movers and initiators on the one side, and the people being affected by them on the other side, through the case study of Comuna13 in Medellín, Colombia. The final goal of this publication is a place-making design strategy that would be able to transform these spaces from sites of segregation and warfare into spaces of integration where communities would come together.

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In den letzten 20 Jahren war Medellín - die kolumbianische "Stadt des ewigen Frühlings" - ein erfolgreiches radikales Projekt für Transformation und soziale Eingliederung. Trotz aller Bemühungen, die wurden in die Erneuerung der Stadt und ihrer informellen Siedlungen gesteckt, es gibt viele Herausforderungen die bestehen bleiben und auch heute noch angegangen werden können. Informelle Siedlungen sind Ökosysteme von großer Komplexität, in denen unterschiedliche

soziale Strukturen und Beziehungen mit chronischem Mangel an Dienstleistungen und schwerer sozialer Kontrolle durch Gewalt und Kriminalität koexistieren. Inmitten dieses Interessenkonflikts sind die Gemeinschaften in solchen Siedlungen ein Ziel für den Staat und gleichzeitig sind zu den Wegen der Interaktionen, die durch den institutionellen und geschäftlichen Charakter des Drogenhandel überbelichtet. Diese Situation schafft Trennungen und Barrieren zwischen den Gemeinden in den Stadtvierteln. Diese Barrieren werden aufgrund des Interesses bestimmter Personen (oder Gruppen) abgebaut und zwingen die Menschen einem bestimmten Modell des Alltagslebens zu folgen, ohne dabei die Lebensqualität zu beeinträchtigen. Unter Berücksichtigung dieser Aussagen, ihre treibenden Kräfte und Initiatoren auf der einen Seite, und die betroffene Leute auf der anderen Seite, durch die Fallstudie von Comuna 13 in Medellín, Kolumbien. Das Endziel dieser Publikation ist eine ortsgebundene Entwurfsstrategie, die es ermöglicht, diese Räume von Orten der Trennung und Kriegsführung in Räume der Integration zu verwandeln, in denen Gemeinschaften zusammenkommen würden.

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En los últimos 20 años, Medellín - “la ciudad colombiana de la eterna primavera” ha sido un exitoso proyecto radical de transformación e inclusión social. A pesar de todos los esfuerzos que se han puesto en la regeneración de la ciudad y sus asentamientos informales, hay muchos desafíos que perduran y aún se pueden abordar en la actualidad. Los asentamientos informales son ecosistemas de una gran complejidad donde diversas estructuras y relaciones sociales coexisten con una falta crónica de servicios y un fuerte control social impuesto por la violencia y el crimen. Capturadas en medio de este choque de intereses, las comunidades en dichos asentamientos representan un objetivo para el estado y, al mismo tiempo, están sobre expuestas a las rutas de interacción establecidas por el carácter institucional y empresarial del narcotráfico. Esta situación crea desconexión y barreras entre las comunidades dentro de los vecindarios de la ciudad. Esas barreras se dividen debido al interés de individuos (o grupos) particulares, y de alguna manera empujan a las personas a seguir un modelo particular de la vida cotidiana sin importar su calidad. Teniendo en cuenta estas afirmaciones, esta publicación investiga el establecimiento de las fronteras invisibles en los barrios, sus promotores e iniciadores principales, por un lado, y las personas afectadas por ellos en el otro lado, a través del estudio de caso de Comuna13 en Medellín Colombia. El objetivo final de esta publicación es una estrategia de diseño de lugares que podría transformar estos espacios de sitios de segregación y guerra en espacios de integración donde las comunidades se unirían.

Thank you

In this prologue, which focused on the habit of showing gratitude, I recognised and acknowledged all the people without this publication would not happen. Writing this publication was at times harder than I thought, and more rewarding than I could ever imagined.

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I would first like to thank my thesis advisor, Andreas Hofer. He consistently allowed this publication to be my own work, but steered me in the right the direction whenever he thought I needed it. He only encouraged me through his remarks and pushed me in every step of this journey to fulfil my biggest potentials.

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Nobody has been more important to me in the pursuit of this project than the members of my family. My parents my little brother. You stood by me during every struggle and all my successes. For providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. And I am thankful to you endlessly for everything.

Iva Shokoska, May 2018

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Iva Shokoska', with a small dot at the end.

Table of contents

Introduction: Glimpse at miracles	14
------------------------------------------	-----------

CHAPTER 1

URBAN BORDERS IN PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL TERMS	1.1 Where does the borders start?	21
	1.2 Lines of division: Theorising borders in physical terms	28
	1.3 Division beyond the visible: The Paradigm of Urban Borders	30
Definition of the ground rules: from obvious to the invisible	CASE STUDIES	34
	5 spatial practices for negotiating the invisible borders of everyday life	

CHAPTER 2

BORDERLANDS IN THE CITY OF MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA	2.1. The story of Medellín: From Murder Capital to Modern Miracle	48
	2.2 Understanding the broader context: Colombia	50
Clarification and justification of the local specific borderlands	INFOSHEET #1 - #2	56
	TIMELINE #1 - #3	60
	2.3 Medellín:	
	A Model of Urban Transformation and Social Resilience	66
	2.3.1 The expansive process	66
	2.3.2 A tale of two cities	67
	2.3.3. Marginality as urban frontier	70
	2.3.4. The decades of violence	72
	2.3.5. Reinventing the City	76
	2.3.5.1 PRIMED	76
	2.3.5.2 Social Urbanism	77
	2.3.5.3 Integral Urban Projects Methodology	78
	CATALOGUE The production of urban borders in Medellín	83
	2.4 Medellín today.	
	A future still fragile: Emerging Issues	100
	PHOTOESSAY Urban Borders and Everyday Life in Medellín	103

CHAPTER 3

INVISIBLE BORDERLANDS IN COMUNA 13: (B)ORDERING SPACES	3.1 The shadows of an unseen hand	114
	INFOSHEET #3	116
	TIMELINE #4	118
	3.2 Comuna 13: the ex-fortress of Colombian violence	120
	3.2.1 History of urban development in Comuna 13	122
	3.2.2 Violence in Comuna 13	123
	3.2.3 Social Urbanism in Comuna 13: Evolution of bold ideas	126
Unfolding the problem by understanding the invisible borders	CATALOGUE The production of urban borders in Comuna 13	135
	3.3 Actors and Stakeholders in (B)ordering Spaces	152
	3.4 Comuna 13 today	158
	PHOTOESSAY: Comuna 13: (B)ordering Space	163

CHAPTER 4

INVISIBLE BORDERLANDS IN COMUNA 13: (B)ORDERING SPACES	4.1 A manifesto for Place-Making Design Strategy	176
	4.1.1 Placemaking: What if we built our communities around places?	178
	CATALOGUE When space becomes a place: 6 place-making design projects	183
	4.2 Site location of negotiation: Barrio Nuevos Conquistadores	191
Problem-solving through urban design	CATALOGUE Urban analysis: barrio Nuevos Conquistadores	197
	PHOTOESSEY Barrio Nuevos Conquistadores	207
	4.3 Place-making design strategy	
	Negotiating invisible borders in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores	215
	4.3.1 Place-Making Design Strategy Framework	
	4.3.2 Operating Scales of Intervention	216
	4.3.3. Correlation of actors and networks	218
	4.3.4 Urban Goals	219
	4.3.5 Place-Making Design Strategy: A Manual for Negotiating the Invisible Borders	220
		222
	4.4 Urban toolbox: 13 Ideas for Comuna 13	234
	4.5 Process of Place-Making Design Strategy	253
	CATALOGUE Place-making design strategy scenarios	261
	4.6 Conclusion	271
	APPENDIX	273

The cities everyone wants to live in would be clean and safe, possess efficient public services, support a dynamic economy, provide cultural stimulation, and help heal society's divisions of race, class, and ethnicity. These are not the cities we live in. This is so in part because the city is not its own master; cities can fail on all these counts due to national government policy or to social ills and economic forces beyond local control. Still, something has gone wrong, radically wrong, in our conception of what a city itself should be.

- Richard Sennett, "The Public Realm"

Introduction: Glimpse at miracles

The world we live in today is nothing more than just a plain representation of spatial fragmentation and urban segregation. Constant fortification, unbuilding and re-building of borders, isolation and division of communities. And these are just some of the current political trends in a society that has failed to create a “borderless world”. Many international representatives of the enterprise known as “border studies” draw attention to the meaning and representation of borders. Borders are considered today ubiquitous, performative and relational. We witness today a dispersion, diffusion and diversification of borders. **On one side, the proliferation and hardening of spatial apparatus; on the other hand, the softening of physical borders and their replacement by widespread and paranoid system of control.** In both cases, meaning and function of borders has changed - they no longer serve the political and economic security of a particular state, but rather they are undertaking another turn down the road of theory - in socio-spatial magnitude.

Ortiz, 2018,
Comparative urban design:
Border making practices in
Medellín & Beirut, pp. 21

Medellín - the Colombian City of eternal spring has been a successful radical project of transformation and social inclusion. The dramatic fall in violence and insecurity in the city over the last two decades, known as “the Medellín Miracle” has been attributed to extensive **social investment and creation of public spaces which “changed the skin” of the city-policies which are known collectively as “social urbanism”**. As many contemporary cities in the global north, Medellín itself can represent a laboratory of urban division where different kinds of separation lines operate within. These lines, or more specifically to say, borders, have their spatial and social elements, techniques and attributes that keep communities and social groups divided through stratification of rights of the city, and as such they control the availability and access to space within the city and conduct the flows of everyday life. In Medellín, separation lines have been drawn by conflict, economy, social stratification and topography. Even decades after experiencing one of the most notorious history of urban violence worldwide, the legacy of control over the urban space among

Echeverri, Orsini, 2010
Alcaldía de Medellín / Universia,
2008

criminal organisations, and any sorts of gangs that operate in the city are still evident. Marginalisation has been the product by the limits of the hillside of the Aburrá Valley where most underprivileged citizens live. Limited by the complex topography, lack of mobility and access to services these communities are struggling between informality and control over their territory. At the same time, Medellín is going towards the future with its powerful plan for smart development. And although this turn has brought a real miracle in the city - it has its downturns: the ones that are forgotten, are forced to leave their homes by having no power to struggle with the challenges that efficient global politics has brought them.

The urban border baseline in Medellín operates between the institutionalised administrative lines of city borders, forced displacement as settlement patterns, non-state and state armed territorial control and the construction of mobility and infrastructure as an upgrading process in the city. All these typologies of borders are in fact, the ones that have shaped the contemporary form of the city today. As a consequence of the long lasting armed conflict in Colombia, many armed actors in search of land to locate and operate in the weapon and drug business, are taking control over the informal parts of the city. This kind of illegal profit-making territorial occupation is creating the phenomenon known as invisible borders. At present, several sectors of the informal parts of the city are in constant struggle between state and non-state armed groups. **These borders are constantly shifting according to internal and external strategies of military actors on the one side, illegal armed groups on the other side, state interventions and pacification tactics, catalytic intervention of architecture, activity of local movements, daily border crossing and trading of citizens and residents.**

Ortiz, 2018,
Comparative urban design:
Border making practices in
Medellín & Beirut, pp. 68

This being the case, it is crucial to ask and then report what are the ways and to which extend the invisible borders affect the image of the city and the interconnectivity between its citizens? What are the formal and spatial configurations? How are these borders architecturally conceived and perceived? What is the spatial impact these borders cause on the urban development of the neighbourhood and how they might be negotiated by using urban design as a regeneration tool?

The main focus of this publication would be to present the spatial representation of the invisible borders that are drawn inside the living core of the city, based on principles and individual interests that almost never interfere with scientific results. The borders that do not promote development and cohesion, but rather they block interactions, local identity and the cultural cycle of everyday life in one city.

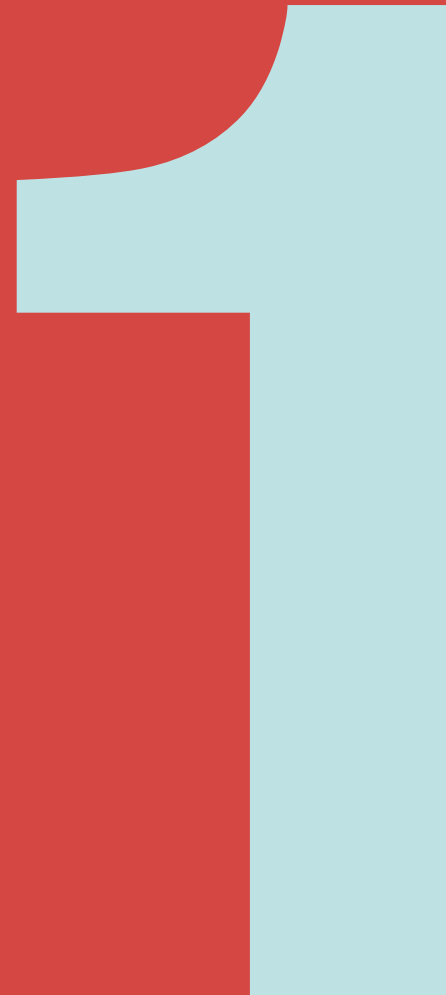
The main idea is to put an accent on the division inside a particular neighbourhood of Medellín, seeing this challenge as a potential in order to create more vibrant communities and incorporate the divided into one single unity. For poor communities who are relatively disconnected from the modern formal economy, collective life continues to revolve around a local personalised space.

As for the showcase of this publication, I chose one of the most notorious districts of Medellín - the Comuna 13. Comuna 13 is an over-populated and low socio-economic zone that crawls up along the West hills of the city with thousands of brick and cement homes stacked close to one another. Once, it was a pivotal center for paramilitary, guerrilla, and gang activity. Its location is ideal for crime, as it leads directly to the main highway (San Juan Highway, providing easy transportation of guns, drugs, and money). The local government has put a lot of effort in the last 15 years to reinvent and rebrand this neighbourhood through systematic implementation of various projects, as a set of public transportation and urban upgrading interventions. Today, Comuna 13 is the home of the most famous escalators and cable car that connects the formal with the informal city, park-library and public squares that provide stronger sense of community and belonging to the city. After many years of struggle this neighbourhood finally celebrates the status of radical transformation from being one of the most violent, invisible, low income no-go area into one of the most vibrant and creative Comuna that has been slowly integrated into the city's fabric. Even though, Comuna 13 promises slow departure from the state of being one of the most dangerous areas in Medellín, and rather becoming a showcase worldwide, a lot of experts believe that there are still a lot of emerging issues to be solved in the West hills of the city.

This publication is based on the four principles of negotiation as process - and this is why, it operates within four scales. It starts with the first chapter-*"Urban Borders in physical and non-physical terms"* where I present a global, theoretical understanding of the topic of borders in various contexts and in diverse representations. Furthermore, I focus on describing the various types of invisible borders within the city, with particular focus on the phenomenon known as invisible borders. Finally, I present 5 different cases from around the world that depict ways of negotiation of invisible borders through urban design and architecture. In the second chapter - *"Borderlands in the City of Medellín, Colombia"*, I focus on the city of Medellín, and I draw a timeline of events and urban history of the city. Then, I portray the many borders of the city that are creating its character. In the third Chapter which is dedicated to Comuna 13 - *"Invisible Borders in Comuna 13: (B)ordering Spaces"*, I use the same methodology as in the second chapter while

presenting the Comuna 13. Its urban creation and evolution, the social projects dedicated to this part of the city, and the many borders of the urban space that the local residents face everyday. In this part, the publication investigates the connection between invisible borders and urban space, through analysis of the spatial qualities of the different urban areas in Comuna 13. In the last chapter - *"Place-making design strategy for barrio Nuevos Conquistadores"*, I zoom into particular barrio neighbourhood) known as Nuevos Conquistadores within the Comuna 13 where I present a place-making design strategy that aims to negotiate the invisible borders of the chosen barrio. In this sense, my goal is to provide a conceptual framework for invisible borders within the context of an informal settlement in Medellín, Colombia. By examining the phenomenon of invisible border-making from architectural and urban perspectives, this design strategy will try to find solution how to negotiate the invisible borders and clarify the relationships between conflict (violence), architecture (construction) and the everyday life of groups and individuals in today's contemporary society.

This book is a result of my personal experience in Medellín, Colombia. It is the product of my curiosity as a young researcher and planner, of the lessons I have learned from the wonderful people I have met and the people I have worked with. It is the humble representation of my understanding and encounter with the city of eternal spring, and finally, the reflection of my perception on architecture as profession.



URBAN BORDERS IN PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL TERMS

Definition of the ground rules:
from obvious to the invisible

The first boundary was traced on the ground by the first being that understood his position in face of his neighbour's. From individual property it passed to the collective sovereignty, i.e. to the household, from the household to the city, from the city to the province, and from the province to the country. Everything has limits, lanes, fences, walls or some other designation that defines the characteristics of the material possessions, of some being, be that a man or a social entity.

- Castillos Goycochea

1.1 Where does the borders start?

At the time when the first people settled between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in ancient Mesopotamia a new political format emerged - the so-called, "territorial state". This newly formed territory was marked by power that extended outward from the city and into the surrounding countryside. Being enabled by the common linguistic and a shared identity, this new social as well as the economic structure helped to create more effective resource allocation for citizens that lived within the newly established territories. Initially, the boundaries were either inhospitable regions or obstacles which were difficult to cross. Or otherwise defined, it was the farthest regions of influence of the people. Generally, it would be a river, a mountain or a desert which served as a wall, or a separator. The intention was really to separate two nations. History shows that people have always defined their territorial claims by the help of lines and boundaries with the idea of inaugurating identity, ownership and order within spatial constructions. Moreover, borders also have a significant role into defining the territorial autonomy in order to establish and maintain needed political, cultural and legal barriers that define countries, states, provinces, cities, towns and districts. Borders are the countable representation of the human desire to own and protect property and physical space, which is impossible to do unless it is seen or felt — and can be so understood — as distinct and separate. **Clearly delineated borders and their enforcement, either by walls and fences or by security patrols, won't go away because they go to the heart of the human condition — what jurists from Rome to the Scottish Enlightenment called *meum et tuum*, mine and yours. Between friends, unfenced borders enhance friendship; among the unfriendly, when fortified, they help keep the peace.**

The fall of the Berlin wall was supposed to signal the advent of the single world of freedom and democracy. Twenty years later, it is clear that the world's wall has simply shifted: instead of separating East and West it now divides the rich capitalist North from the poor and devastated South. New walls are being constructed all over the world: between Palestinians and Israelis, between Mexico and the United States, between Africa and the Spanish enclaves, between the pleasures of wealth and the desires of the poor, whether they be peasants in villages or urban dwellers in favelas, banlieues, estates, hostels, squats and shanty towns. The price of the supposedly "unified world" is the brutal division of human existence into regions separated by police dogs, bureaucratic controls, naval patrols, barbed wire and expulsions.

The term territorial state is used to refer to a state, typical of the High Middle Ages, since around 1000 AD, and "other large-scale complex organizations that attained size, stability, capacity, efficiency, and territorial reach not seen since antiquity.", Richards, J. F., 1997

The term territorial state is also understood as "coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories.", Tilly, 1990

Organizations such as city-states, empires, and theocracies along with many a number of other governmental organizations are considered territorial states, yet does not include tribes, lineages, firms, or churches alike. Tilly, 1990

Hanson, 2016
"Why borders matter and a borderless world is a fantasy"
/ Los Angeles Times

Badiou, 2008, pp. 38



Fig 1. A timeline of the erection of the world borders - some of the walls that have been built or are planned. Since the end of World War II, 51 countries have erected border fortifications - 25 of which are started in the past 15 years.

- constructed borders
- planned borders
- ⋯ closed straits
- front lines



Fig 2. The US-Mexico Border; since the military took part in the region, the US-Mexico border is known as the location of Drug War. The Mexico-US border runs from California to Texas for a total of 1,989 miles, and has the highest number of legal, annual border crossings in the world. The zone is particularly dangerous in the El Paso-Juarez region which is known for narcotics traffickers who smuggle drugs, weapons, and people over the border.

Fig 3. The Border between Israel and Syria; The border dispute between Israel and Syria dates back many years. The two countries have been at war several times taking control of various pieces of land. Today, the border is a live battle zone with bullets flying from both sides. The violence has markedly increased since the Syrian Civil War began.



Fig 4. The Border between Ecuador and Colombia; The state at the border between Colombia and Ecuador is not dangerous because of the military interventions, but due to a Colombian rebel groups, especially those referred to as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (the People's Army or FARC). FARC members have invaded land along the border and are extremely violent groups using mortars and landmines which have forced thousands of indigenous members off of their tribal land.



Fig 5. The Border between India and Pakistan; The India-Pakistan border is 1,800 miles of heavily guarded and extremely dangerous land. It is so heavily guarded that it is the only border seen from space due to the high voltage flood lights on the Indian side. Since the 1947 partition which saw hundreds of thousands die, the countries have fought in 3 other wars and spent at least 25 years disputing claims to the Kashmir province as well as a mountain glacier. The number of casualties has passed the 50,000 lives mark.



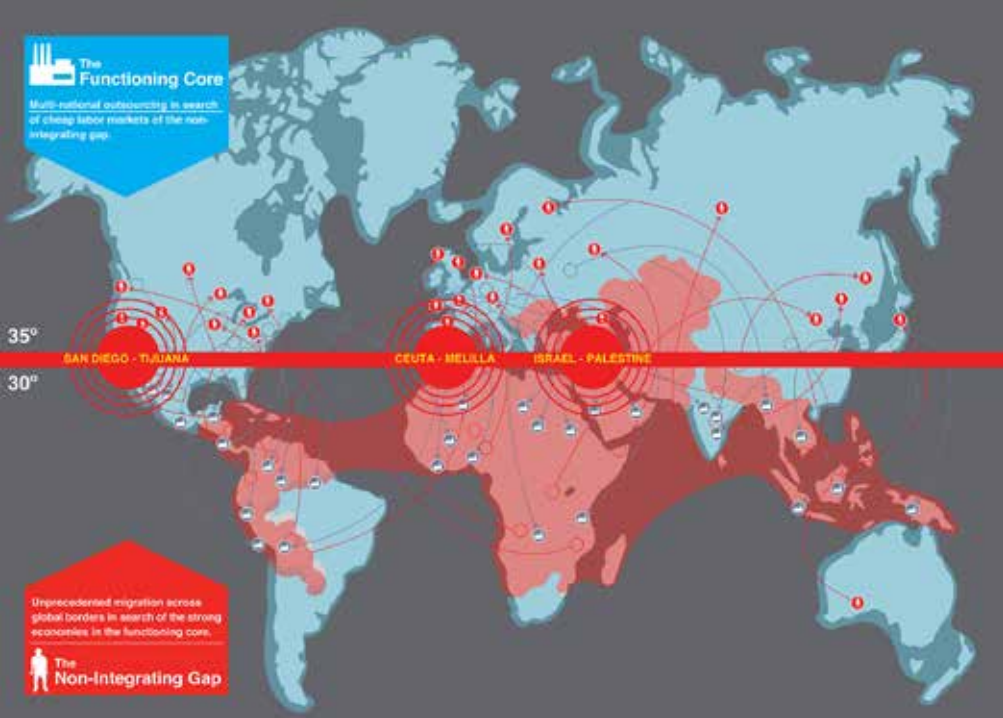


Fig 6. The Political Equator traces an imaginary line along the United States–Mexico continental border that extends directly across a world map, forming a corridor of global conflict between the 30 and 35 degrees north parallel that includes some of the world’s most contested border regions.
[Estudio Teddy Cruz + Forman]



Fig 7. The Great divides: homes for the well-off from the wealthy neighbour, Morumbi and the poor from Paraisópolis are clearly demarcated in São Paulo, Brazil. This photo is clearly an illustration of social inequality, maybe the biggest problem for Brazil and Latin America. The unjust and brutal difference between rich and poor, inherited from slavery, is in the origin of many other problems – violence, below-par schooling, prejudice and many other issues.
[Tuca Vieira, 2004]

Fig 8. People gather near a part of the Berlin Wall that has been broken down after the communist German Democratic Republic’s (GDR) decision to open borders between East and West Berlin, circa November 1989. *[Carol Guzy / The Washington Post]*

At the end of World War II, Germany’s capital city, Berlin, located in East Germany, was divided into east and west sectors. Sixteen years later, in 1961, migration from East to West Berlin had become so voluminous that East Germany constructed a militarized and fortified barrier zone (composed of multiple walls and fences) across the city to prevent unregulated movement between the two sectors. The wall was intended to stem the flow of migrants. But it did nothing to solve the deeper problems that were causing the exodus from East Berlin in the first place: a repressive, authoritarian regime that brooked no dissent; and drastically declining standards of living for ordinary citizens who were able to observe the spectacularly successful West German economic recovery simply by looking out their windows.

[Michael Dear, Politico Magazine, 2016]



1.2 Lines of division: Theorising borders in physical terms

National Geographic,
Encyclopedic entry

The first thing that comes to mind when trying to define the notion of borders is that **“the border is a line that separates two or even more areas, or territories from each other”**, and by that, creating a differentiation. If we try to analyse this statement even further, it means that borders, as lines of division, do not represent a natural or a given fact. What they literally represent is an imposition on the world. In the first place, as impositions, they frequently transgress rather than celebrate any kind of cultural and political difference. What is obviously certain is that many borders around the world do not share the same visual or valuable aspects in their representation. This is not to say that the borders are just metaphorical or textural, and that they do not filter their meaning into materiality; they are established, and re-established, over and over again and represent a set of objects and practices in space, than just simple lines on a map. Nevertheless, there is certainly one common feature that applies to all of them - regardless whether dividing two different states, two cities or the neighbourhoods within; administrative or informal, cultural or architectural - the border is always marked in a particular fashion, negotiating its presence - materially or symbolically.

Theorising the borders is not singular field, where only one definition applies. Border theory is a broad, interdisciplinary discipline and there is not only one point of view on what do they really represent and how they are really constructed. Bearing in mind that it is not possible to define a single theory on borders, the contemporary school of borders has become a major growth industry in the last decade. Many architects have traditionally understood borders and boundaries as the tool for establishment of material and highly visible lines of separation between physical spaces, what is inside and what is outside. Only more recently there is the tendency to understand that borders and **borderlines affect our lives on daily basis, from the global to the national level and most significantly, at the local and micro scales of socio-spatial activity.**

Newman and Paasi,
1998, pp. 13–25.

Kaufmann, Brckling, Horn,
2002, pp.12

Up until the 8th century, the tendency of understanding borders was evolving around the definition that the border is **“as a margin, a broad strip that acted as a contact space and zone of transition, frequently leading to conflicts and shifts of these regions”**. During this era, and even much later, such statement would be non-negotiable, having in mind that the establishment of a border (as a line), first of all occurs as a gesture of domination. Following the renewed interest in the spaces of conflict at the start of the 21st Century, and

the discussions and further investigations dedicated to borders in the spatial disciplines, in the following part I offer three different viewpoints on why do borders exist and what they represent.

The first notion is rather the definition of borders that I have highlighted in the beginning of this chapter underlines the very simple meaning of borders, seen as *“artefacts on the ground”* (or more radically put, lines on the map). They exist because of a variety of practical reasons and can be classified according to different purposes and needs. Even though, they have a purpose of dividing two entities, they also create a wide field of possibilities for different political, social and economic activities. From a very different perspective, borders are seen as artefacts of dominant discursive processes that have led to the fencing off of chunks of territory and people from one another. It is inevitable to say that such processes have the potential to change and as they do, borders live on as a leftover remembered phenomena that may still capture the imagination of people, and become state of the mind even though they no longer serve any essential purpose. Therefore, borders are not simply practical phenomena that can be taken as given. Instead, they represent very complex human creations that are in a way a constant topic of discussion and negotiation. This leads me to underlining a second, probably a more extreme point of view that defines the **borders as a result of different processes in the past which are no longer influenced by any global demands. In other words, borders are increasingly redundant, and therefore, discussions constrained by them restricts thinking about alternative political, social, and economic possibilities.**

Agnew, 2008,
Borders on the mind: Re-framing
border thinking; pp. 17

Finally, I would like to highlight the last concept on borders that I propose in this part, and which is given by Heidegger. This understanding of the topic of borders refers to the notion of **“gathering”**. Heidegger simply defines borders as spaces of encounter. The border is seen as an old space where spatial practices simultaneously happen and resist social networks, juridical practices and political ideologies. **The border turns into a gathering spot for different individuals and groups, as spatial practices are outlining them. It is here to state clearly that these vast majority of people have more often than not conflicting interests, habits and desires. Within this liminal space of frictions, the spatial practices of everyday life will hardly ever completely exclude each other, but rather intermingle, strengthen, underline but also undermine other practices.** This last concept that I offer would be of a great importance further on for the place-making design strategy that I would develop in this thesis. The main reason behind is that this particular understanding of border conditions and what a borderland could represent fits perfectly in the spatial conditions of the 21st Century Colombian City, its fragmentation and spatial conditions.

Heidegger, 1967,
“Bauen Wohnen Denken”,
Vorträge und Aufsätze, pp.
19–36.

Schoonderbeek, Marc Havik,
Klaske
“Reading and reacting: from the
research of border conditions
to experimental methods in
architectural and urban design”

1.3 Division beyond the visible: The Paradigm of the urban divide

Cities are constantly changing. They are destroyed, build, rebuild, occupied and abandoned, used by different groups and intended for different use. In search for better spatial organisation, political power and economical development, cities generate various differentiation - definition of spaces for particular use, dispersion of services and social stratification. Looking at cities through such lens it is easy to calculate the risk: cities can be places of inclusion and lot of opportunities, or places of marginalisation and threats. As Breitung puts it: **urban space, not only in these special cases, is always made up of various boundaries created by administrative decisions, by processes of social or cultural segregation, by urban design, or by the mental representation of space as evident in imaginations, identities and human activity spaces.**

Breitung, 2011

So far, I have been analysing the concept of borders in physical terms. In this part, I would like to highlight a new point of view towards the issue of borders: the one of invisibility.

ULGC, 2012

Urban borders create forms of inequality in the city, urban disconnections, lack of interaction and communication between communities, isolation, urban tension, physical degradation of areas and its components.

Wilson, 2012

First, borders are ubiquitous. Balibar would explain that borders are no longer at the border - they are rather **situated everywhere and nowhere and are fragmented in everyday practice.** Instead of simple lines located at the edge of territory, multiple and dispersed, **borders have become territory themselves, a thick space where one can reside and live. Borders as “borderlands” are three-dimensional socio-spatial category, “claimed, appropriated, inhabited, shared, continuously negotiated, maintained and often even nurtured of co-presence and coexistence”.** Second, borders are heterogeneous and performative. Like **firewalls that differentiates between the good and the bad, they can produce variegated forms of access, rights and subjectivity.**

Rumford 2008, Giellies & van Houtum 2012, Haselsberger 2014

lossifova 2014, pp.2

Asolfo & Boano, 2018, pp.25

Walters 2006, pp.197

DeGenova et al 2015

Under the above listed circumstances, the ideals of urban identity and inclusive society are already threatened by the definition borders of what is here and there, what is ours and what is yours, and the line of territory and control. Societies have the tendency to imagine where people should cross and where they should obey the rule of social division because of the power of the stronger one. Lastly,

borders, beyond their functions and physical impacts, also carry meanings for people's identities and daily lives. They may emotionally be related to feelings of safety and 'home' on the one hand, and to unwelcome sentiments of enclosure or exclusion on the other. The existence of such borders is crucially based on their representation in people's minds. This is where I will build my case focused on the establishment of the invisible borders. Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogota, Colombia, claimed that **bad cities usually provide inequalities.** Pushing people to live far from the city center, and in the same time reducing their access to mobility, interaction and access to jobs and leisure, inequalities generate clusters of disconnected spaces coinciding in reinforcement of invisible borders between cities and peripheries, rich and poor. I believe that in order to understand the existence of invisible borders, one needs to understand the disposition of the physical and most visible ones. The urban borders are constructed on the following four principles:

Peñalosa, 2012
LSE/Urban Age Conference
The Electric City

- Physical programming of the city - lack of amenities in various parts compared to other.
- Extension of control, or regulation through borders which include or exclude.
- Economic ability and spatial practices.
- Social norms of belonging to specific group, which can be defined also as social construction.

These norms have the ability to formulate our awareness or consciousness of our actions or actions of others, which in particular cases makes the borders of everyday life more visible than they usually are. The manifestation of these principles is fabricated through the establishment of different border typologies within the urban city skin. Therefore, I define five types of urban borders that are especially capturing the headway of this thesis.

1.3.1 Political Borders

Political borders outline the area that has been controlled by a particular governing body. The government of a region can only create and enforce laws within its borders. These borders are rolled by predefined governmental mechanisms that control and strictly define the territory of specific neighbourhood, or area in the city.

1.3.2 Ecological Borders

Ecological borders are not artificial, man-made kind of borders. These are natural borders that create subdivisions shaped by natural formations such as mountains, rivers, deserts. Historically speaking, they represent one of the oldest forms of borders known to mankind.

The ecological borders define the conditions of the land foremost. They have the power to determine the further heterogeneity of the city - from creating absence of presence of natural resources, to habitat and spatial fragmentation.

1.3.3 Economic Borders

Are based on economic as well as commercial principles. They outline the division between the more developed parts of the city with the once that distribution of welfare in the city. This is resulted into the level of wealth social stratum arrangement in the city, creating communities of low-income or high-income aspects.

1.3.4 Social Borders

The social borders occur where social differences lead towards inequitable access to resources and possibilities. Such borders can be determined by gender, race, religion and physical abilities. This leads to segregation into different neighbourhoods, that forces them not to interact with each other on regular basis. The social boundaries have the power to demoralise many people into searching for better quality of life.

1.3.5 Invisible Borders

These are the borders that in Latin America are known under the name “fronteras invisibles” (invisible borders). Usually they occur in informal settlements and depict the outcome of turf wars. To put it simply, the invisible borders are the final product of the urban violence in informal settlements.

These types of borders are dividing neighbourhoods into two parts and have the power to manipulate the course of everyday life inside the living area of the city and control movement of people and goods. Basically, they work on the They are defining who belongs where on the frontline of war between the gangs. As the term says, they are imagined and invisible and are only outspoken and situated into people’s minds. Anyhow, their manifestation is visible through contested urban spaces, urban violence, high rates of murder, extortion, and finally, lack of quality of public life.

This last example of borders that I outline here has a special focal point in my thesis. The borders that define territories of self-enclosed urban spaces constructed by power of the stronger one and by the hand of urban violence. This type of border and its power of controlling the urban spaces of everyday life is the main topic around which my thesis evolves. I would zoom in inside the informal city and search for such places created by turf wars. Places of control of the territory that

have the power to influence people’s behaviour in the urban space. Thinking beyond what is physical in our everyday physical environment, like walls and fences can help us understand how political, economic and social factor can contribute towards the creation of division between communities within the city create conflict and non-inclusive zones with lack of diversity and vibrancy. Finally, overcoming the great influence of control, movement and flexibility that non-physical borders have over the urban space can lead us to seeing the city not as a linear narrative, but rather as a dynamic flux of interchange between different activities, communities, cultures and ethnicities.



Fig 9. Black silhouettes representing missing civilians, victims of the invisible borders in Comuna 13, Medellín.

There is a psychological experiment dating back in 1969. It was conducted by a professor of Stanford University, named Philip Zimbardo. He placed an unlicensed car with a lifted hood in a neglected street in The Bronx, New York, and another similar car in a wealthy neighbourhood of Palo Alto, California. The car in The Bronx was attacked in less than ten minutes, its apparent state of abandonment enabling the looting. The car in Palo Alto, however, remained untouched for more than a week.

He took his experiment a step forward. Broke a window in the car that he positioned in the wealthy neighbourhood. What happened almost immediately after the residents and passers by noticed the broken window, is that they began to take things out and just after a few hours the car had been completely dismantled. In both cases, many of the people that took things out of the cars did not appear to be dangerous people. This flow of events of the experiment led two Harvard professors to develop the so-called Broken Windows Theory in 1982, which underlines the following statement:

“If a broken window is left without repair, people will come to the conclusion that no one cares about it and that there is no one watching it. Then more windows will be broken and the lack of control will spread from the buildings to the streets, sending a signal that anything goes and that there is no authority.”

CATALOGUE

Five spatial practices for negotiating the invisible borders of everyday life

1. Vertical Gym Chacao

Architects: Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumpner, Urban Think Tank

Location: Caracas, Venezuela

Year: 2001 - 2004

Typology: Sports Center

Limited land and high crime rates in the dense informal settlements and slums of Caracas made it unsafe for children to play and participate in sports. Local architects transformed a rundown sports field in Chacao's Barrio La Cruz into Chacao Vertical Gym (Gimnasio Vertical), a four-storey sports, recreation, and cultural event facility. Taking cues from residents who are unable to expand out, the architects built up on the 1,000-square-meter (10,700 sq. ft.) site without displacing any families. The popular new public space, with 15,000 users a month, has helped to reduce crime in this barrio by over 30% by offering a safe, open space that nurtures fair play, tolerance, and a civic community through sports competition.

Most of the buildable land in slums is claimed by housing, leaving minimal space for community facilities. To address this, U-TT focused on the latent potential of small, rundown sports pitches within the dense urban fabric of Caracas' barrios. The first Vertical Gym was built in 2004 for the municipality of Chacao, creating a low-cost, multilevel recreation complex. It was designed as a prefabricated kit of parts that can be assembled in three months and customized to fit different topological, climactic, and programmatic needs.

The gym's base is superimposed upon an existing sports field or vacant lot, transforming

the site into a safe recreational facility. More than a building, the Vertical Gym is a piece of social infrastructure that has reduced crime rates, promoted healthy lifestyles, and strengthened social capital. The flexible modular design can be adapted to the needs and means of diverse clients, whether by building specific parts, or in phases over time. Four gyms have been completed to date, with others in development around the world.

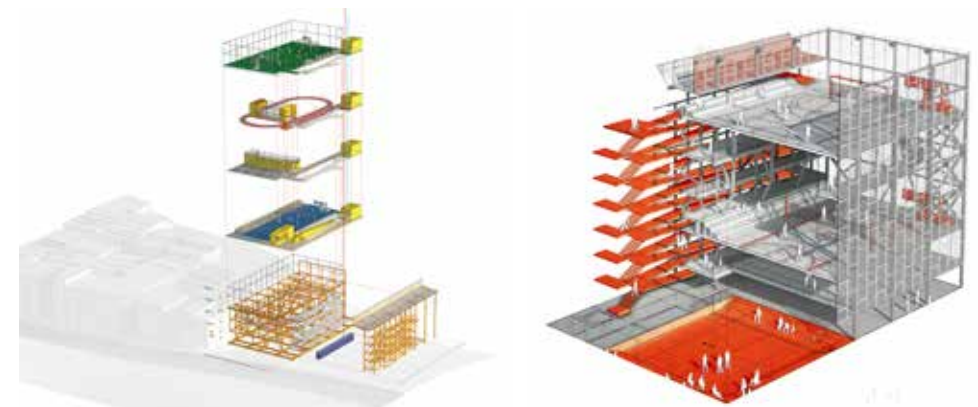


Fig 10-12. Spatial distribution of the programme within the Vertical Gym, and the atmosphere of the interior of the built structure.

[Iwan Baan (photography), Urban Think Tank (graphics)]

2. A New Town for Khayelitsha

Investors: City of Cape Town and the German Development Bank

Location: Khayelitsha, South Africa

Year: 2014

Typology: Public Space and public buildings

South Africa's apartheid regime deliberately designed cities to divide communities, creating a legacy of poverty, racial fragmentation, and criminal behaviour. Cape Town is no different from other South African cities, and the impacts of apartheid's legacy are apparent in Khayelitsha, a Cape Town settlement where only 52 percent of residents are "economically active." Studies have found a relationship between crime and unemployment. High levels of unemployment result in high levels of crime. It therefore follows that with almost half the community employed, crime will be high.

The Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading Program (VPUU), a partnership between the City of Cape Town and the German Development Bank, adopted criminologist C. Ray Jeffrey's Crime Prevention Through Urban Upgrade approach, which is based in the belief that "proper design and the effective use of the built environment will lead to a reduction in the incidence of crime and the fear of crime." Khayelitsha's design intervention seeks to respond to the community's needs — by creating children's play areas but also a social development fund that looks into women's empowerment projects. Both new landscape architecture and architecture were used to create safer, more positive environments. Defining the spaces, adding

hard landscapes, and then creating buildings with elevated viewpoints helped expose criminal activity and consequently reduce it. Small shops on the ground floor generate foot traffic round the clock, while homes on the upper floors provide eyes on the walkway below. Towers animate the otherwise flat roofscape, orientating and guiding inhabitants towards the safe walkway. The sports fields, one turf, the other gravel, have replaced a detention pond previously used for dumping bodies. Rundown areas create the impression that they are not owned by the community, a phenomenon known as the "broken window syndrome." Conversely, well-maintained areas are viewed as high risk to criminals and are therefore avoided. As such, the project team identified maintenance as key to establishing safe environments so, as part of their work, community management structures are being set up, funded by a budget generated through the rental of



Fig 13-15. Concept and Photos showing the different types of reactivation of the public spaces in the city. [Bruce Sutherland, CoCT]

3. Seoul City's Salt Road project

Architects: City of Seoul

Location: Sogum Gil (Salt Road), Seoul, South Korea

Year: 2012

Typology: Public Space

Theft and violence are two of the most common criminal offenses in Korea and most of these crimes are triggered by environmental factors brought on by poor physical surroundings. 62% of these two crime categories take place on streets and other public places. Which means that if the poor environmental conditions of public places improve, not only would the rates of the two major crime types fall, but also about an amount of £1.2 billion would be saved every year, an estimated social cost inflicted by crime on Korean society as a whole. In 2012 Seoul launched a program to prevent crimes through environmental design. The program is now deeply embedded with urban planning projects including crime prevention design of apartment complexes, schools, and old towns; installation of LED street lights and graphic arts on streets and so on.

How was it done?

Six residents volunteered to become a Yellow Door House and allowed Seoul City to paint their front gate yellow, and install a CCTV and an emergency bell. The emergency bell is directly connected the nearest police office. Anyone can ring on the bell if they feel threatened or unsafe, and help will be given. Residents and volunteers have painted the walls brightly and have drawn street game drawings on the ground for children. Seoul City has offered new community hub to

community organization by remodelling an old water supply facility, as it believes that a well organized community is an essential factor to make a safe and attractive town. Residents have reported that they have become less afraid of crime and more proud of their neighbourhoods then before the Salt Road Project, according to the survey from Korea Institute of Criminology. Among households with children, the fear for their children has dropped more (13%) than the fear for themselves (9%). The level of satisfaction was particularly high among women, which was attributed to the remodeling of Salt Road. The Korea Institute of Criminology surveyed residents in 2013 to figure out how they feel about Sogum Gil project, and the result shows that residents' fear of the possibility of street crime dropped by 9% and their attachment to the neighbourhood increased by 14% compared to the pre-program period. In addition, the 79% believed that the program is effective in crime prevention.

Fig 16-18. Photos representing some of the projects done towards the reactivation of the public spaces in Sogum Gil in order to solve the violence issues
[City of Seoul, 2012]



4. Bosque de la Esperanza

Architects: Giancarlo Mazzanti

Location: Bogota, Colombia

Year: 2010

Typology: Sport court and public space

'Bosque de la Esperanza', represents an open-air sporting court and public plaza in the shanty town of altos de cazuca, colombia. featuring a 700 m2 canopy structure comprised of prefabricated dodecahedrons, the design is read as a cluster of trees against the muted and monotonous background of the slum settlement.

Located on an inclined site, the multi-functional structure rests on a series of steel stilts that sprout up at multiple angled trajectories. at once delicate and industrial, the design exhibits a visually distinct identity within the neighbourhood and can be observed from a distance due to its vantage point. the expanded steel mesh that wrap around the dodecahedrons offer a light and porous mode of shading.

Serving as a public plaza and meeting point for the inhabitants of the area, the canopy structure hovers over a concrete playing field which can host a variety of sports and activities. the design maintains a well-ventilated space that openly communicates with the adjacent street life. at night, artificial lights incorporated into the structure allow the canopy and space below to glow, resulting in a design that acts as an inviting public forum to the neighbourhood. The modular construction is a collection of fabricated shapes, such as a polyhedron of

12 surfaces, that make up a larger lattice within the top canopy. According to reports, the center is situated within an area that lacks public infrastructure and has larger societal problems; many people have been displaced from their homes due to conflict and have sought shelter in the municipality.

Located within a country where shanty towns make up over 50% of the city's fabric, Mazzanti hopes that the center can become an actively dynamic part of a changing society. As part of this larger objective, construction of the Bosque project was supported by the Pies Descalzos foundation, and organization co-founded by the singer Shakira and the Spanish NGO Ayuda en Acción.

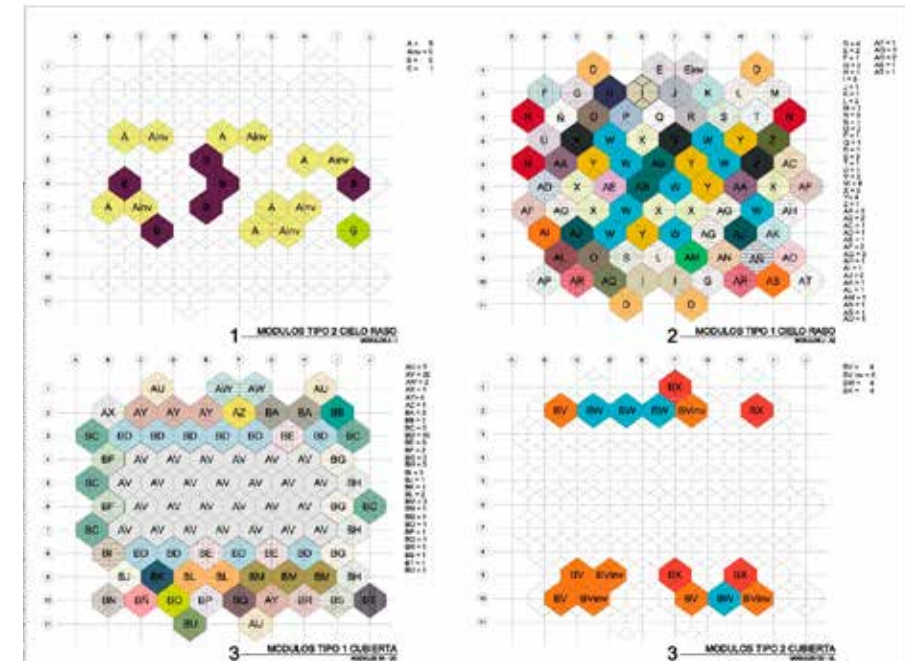


Fig 19-20. Exhibiting the modular construction of the project, which in the same time represents a plaza, a place for gathering, as well as space for sport activity. [Jorge Gamboa, 2019]

5. Tapis Rouge

Architects: Emergent Vernacular Architecture (EVA Studio)

Location: Carrefour-Feuilles, Haiti

Year: 2016

Typology: Public space

Carrefour-Feuilles is one of the many informal neighbourhoods which suffered extensive damage in the 2010 earthquake. The houses clinging to the slopes of the ravine lack basic services such as electricity, running water and sanitation. There is little formal infrastructure and the cheek by jowl homes are only accessible by a network of narrow corridors that wind up the slope. It is among the tight corners and between the walls of neighbouring houses that social life usually takes place.

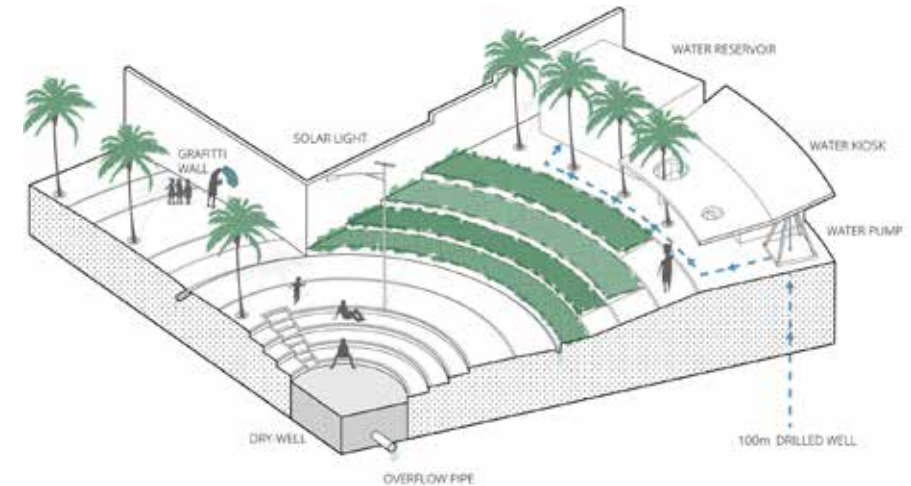
After the earthquake, the site of Tapis Rouge used to be a tent camp for displaced people. It sits at the top of a slope overlooking the ravines either side and it marks the entrance to the alleyways and homes below. This type of temporary housing became a generator for great violence and increasing rate of crime.

The design itself is inherently community-oriented and understands public space as an anthropological ground from which identity and social relations grow. Through a participatory approach and through placing community engagement at the core of the design process, this public space aims to give transformative power to a local community and to provide the residents with a sense of ownership, identity, and pride. The goal was to create a safer and cleaner environment, which would help reduce crime, violence,

and anti-social behaviour in the area. The program and the architectural design have been established directly with the community. An open-air amphitheatre, intended for community gathering, marks the centre of the space. Dotted around the edges of the seating-steps are several Flamboyant's that, when fully grown, will shelter the users from the sun. The concentric rings beyond define areas within the plaza. One, is occupied by outdoor exercise equipment and seating. In another one, near the wall, the locally-made blue pavers give way to terraces of greenery, each with different plants. Above it, by the top end, a row of palm trees conceals storage tanks for the adjacent water distribution station. The well that feeds the tanks and station brings water from 100m below ground. The revenue generated from the sales of water will be reinvested into maintaining the public space.

Fig 21-24. Exhibiting the project itself, as well as the designer details of its position within the landscape and division of different programme. [Etienne Pernot du Breuil (photography), EVA Studio (diagram / section), 2017]

Five spatial practices for negotiating the nvisible borders of everyday life



2

BORDERLANDS IN THE CITY OF MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA

Clarification and justification of
the local urban borderlands

2.1 The story of Medellín: From Murder Capital to Modern Miracle

In the heart of the coffee plantation zone, one of the most mountainous regions in South America, the City of Medellín, the capital of the Antioquia Department is placed. Located in the middle of the Aburrá Valley, once being dominated by the surrounding landscape of mountains and rivers, today Medellín is the second most populated city in Colombia. Over the last 50 years, the city has grown within an excessive incline that had originated in the political violence from the 50s and 60s that targeted in great manner the rural regions of the country, forcing millions of people to leave their homes and seek shelter in the cities. During this period, Medellín was an attractive “hotspot” because of its industrial development which offered a lot of labor opportunities. This was the period when the city experienced the spontaneous colonisation of its surrounding hills being known as the “subnormal districts”. Since these times, there have been various searches in order to achieve a rehabilitation of these parts of the city, through maintenance and creation of new public spaces, public services, infrastructure and housing opportunities in order to bring back the attributes of the dynamics of a commercial centre that Medellín lost throughout the decades.

Medellín was founded in 1616. The city erected as a capital of the Department, today has a population of 3.5 million inhabitants, creating the core of the metropolitan region of the Aburrá Valley. Cities around the world experience many kinds of cultural and political transformations. But Medellín - the Colombian city of eternal spring is a specific show case of a successful radical project of transformation and social inclusion. The dramatic fall in violence and insecurity in the city over the last two decades – **“the Medellín Miracle”** - has been attributed to extensive social investment and creation of public spaces that ‘changed the skin’ of the city-policies which are known collectively as **“social urbanism”**. The model itself is a conventional, but well-executed formula of good urban governance practice, comprising good governance (planning,

fiscal discipline, transparency, participation and communication) and stressing education, inclusion, culture, conviviality and entrepreneurship, all of them organized in space through the so-called Integrated Urban Projects (Proyectos Urbanos Integrales, or PUIs). The very fact that these policies were brought into effect is already remarkable, although their long-term impact is still to be determined.

Maclean



Fig 25. Cable cars and escalators now carry tens of thousands of people a day between Medellín's comunas and the city centre. [The Guardian; Alamy, 2015]

Echeverri, Orsini, 2010;
Alcaldía de Medellín/ Universia,
2008

Dávila, Rojas, 2010

2.2. Understanding the broader context: Colombia

In my thesis, I focus on bordering in the context of conflict within society. More precisely, I draw the condition of bordering as a socio-spatial process, being used as a neighbourhood place-making design strategy in the segregated communities of Medellín. Further on, the implication of spatial differentiation of "us and them", including the production and reproduction of an enemy picture through a bottom-up agency are significant.

The Republic of Colombia is situated in the northwestern part of the South American land, simultaneously being splashed by the waters of the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans. It shares its borders with Venezuela and Brazil in the east and with Peru and Ecuador in the south. To the northwest the country meets the borders of the Republic of Panama, the passage towards Central America. The country's complex physical and climatic attributes, as well as the composition of the soil and vegetation in different parts of it, define its division into five very particular geographical regions - the Caribbean Region, representing the coastal area and its vast inland savannahs which are positioned between the Caribbean and the northernmost spines of the Andes; the Pacific Region, stretching over territory of 1300km between the borders with Panama and Ecuador; The Andean Region occupies the most central part of the country, and represents the most densely populated part. Attains a great degree of economic and social development, while bearing the fact that the cities of Bogotá and Medellín are part of it; the fourth part is the Llanos Orientales Region is where oil-bearing fields have been discovered; and finally, the Amazon Region with its wild state in big portion designing the country's bio world. The country's population counts over 49 million inhabitants of which one half is based in the Andean Region. The national economy is essentially based in the mining field and its main exportations are focused on petroleum, coal, coffee, banana, sugar, flowers and some industrial products, especially fibres and manufacture.

Since 1960s, there was a major internal armed conflict in the country. *The National Liberation Army* (Ejército de Liberación Nacional - ELN) and, especially, the much stronger *Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army* (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias) throughout many years and through the governments of many presidents of the Colombian Republic. It took a lot of investments, creative implementations and solutions of the government in order to get to the historic point where peace process was declared - in 2016, **between the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia**

Hege S., 2018

FARC combatants surrendered over 8000 weapons and consolidated into 26 encampments, transitioning into civilian life. Implementing the accord — which means cementing the agreement into national legislation and ensuring its provisions reach all corners of the country equitably — remains difficult. Preventing further violence hinges on effective collective reintegration and reincorporating former combatants into society, compensating victims and returning their lands, and addressing the socioeconomic disparities and political exclusion at the root of the conflict. The peace process somehow seems to be a story without an ending. And at this point as I write, it is certainly not a happy one. Despite the fact that a lot has been invested into a successful peace process, the violence in the country **since 2018 has gone up to 50%** in some parts. Cases of killings, disappearances, forced displacement, and rape keep to show up around the country. Even though the armed groups are not longer in active conflict with the state, they are setting up new ways of actively proceeding with the urban violence - moving from the jungle to the urban areas of the country and therefore, controlling and creating the dynamics of the everyday life in cities. Such story is the one to follow - the story of invisible borderlands in the city of Medellín and its Comuna 13.

OSAC, 2018



Fig 26. FARC guerrillas just days before their demobilization to the final concentration zones, in Veguez municipality, Antioquia department, Colombia. Women have made up about a third of FARC's fighters. [Raul Arboleda / AFP / Getty; December 30, 2016]

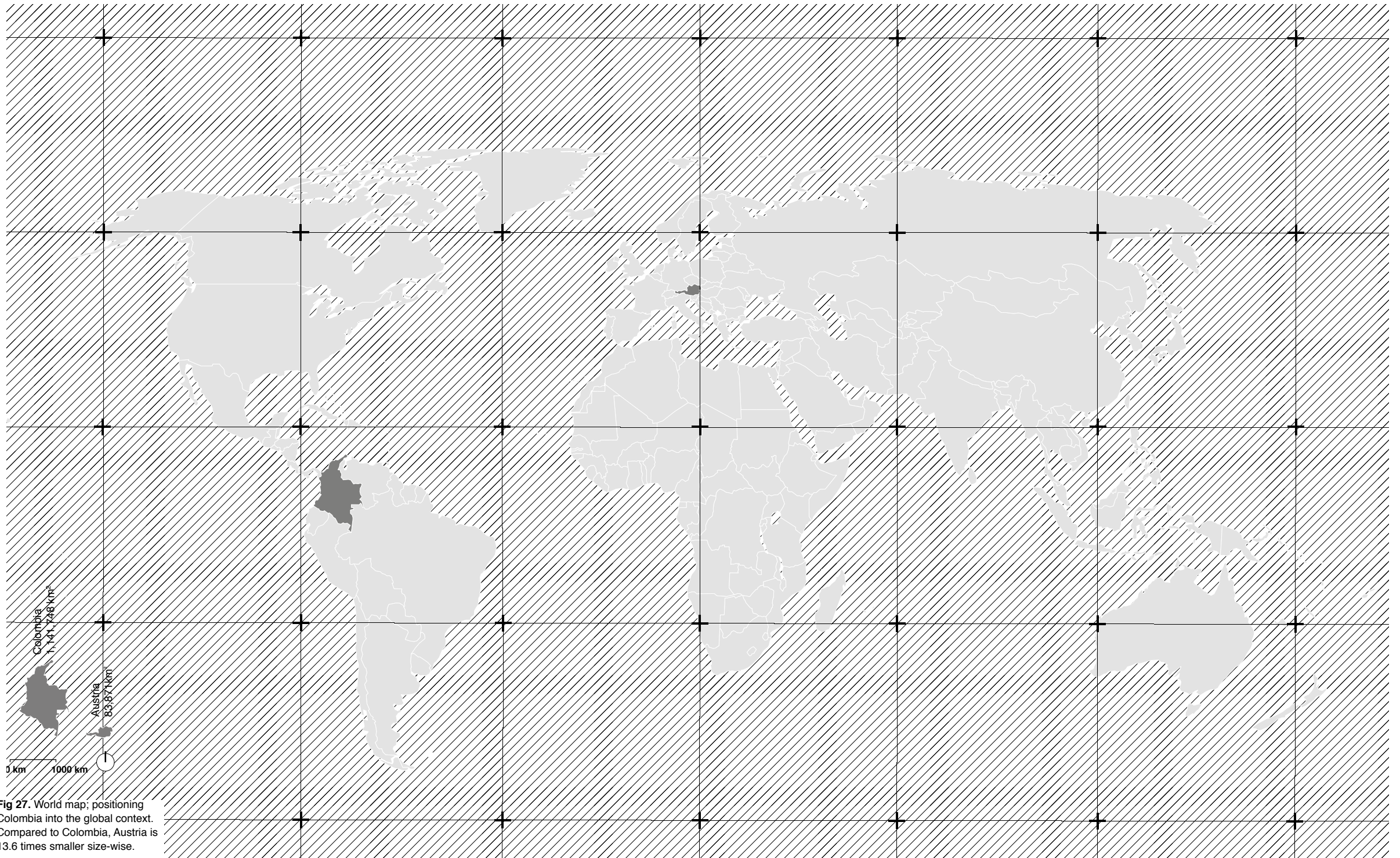
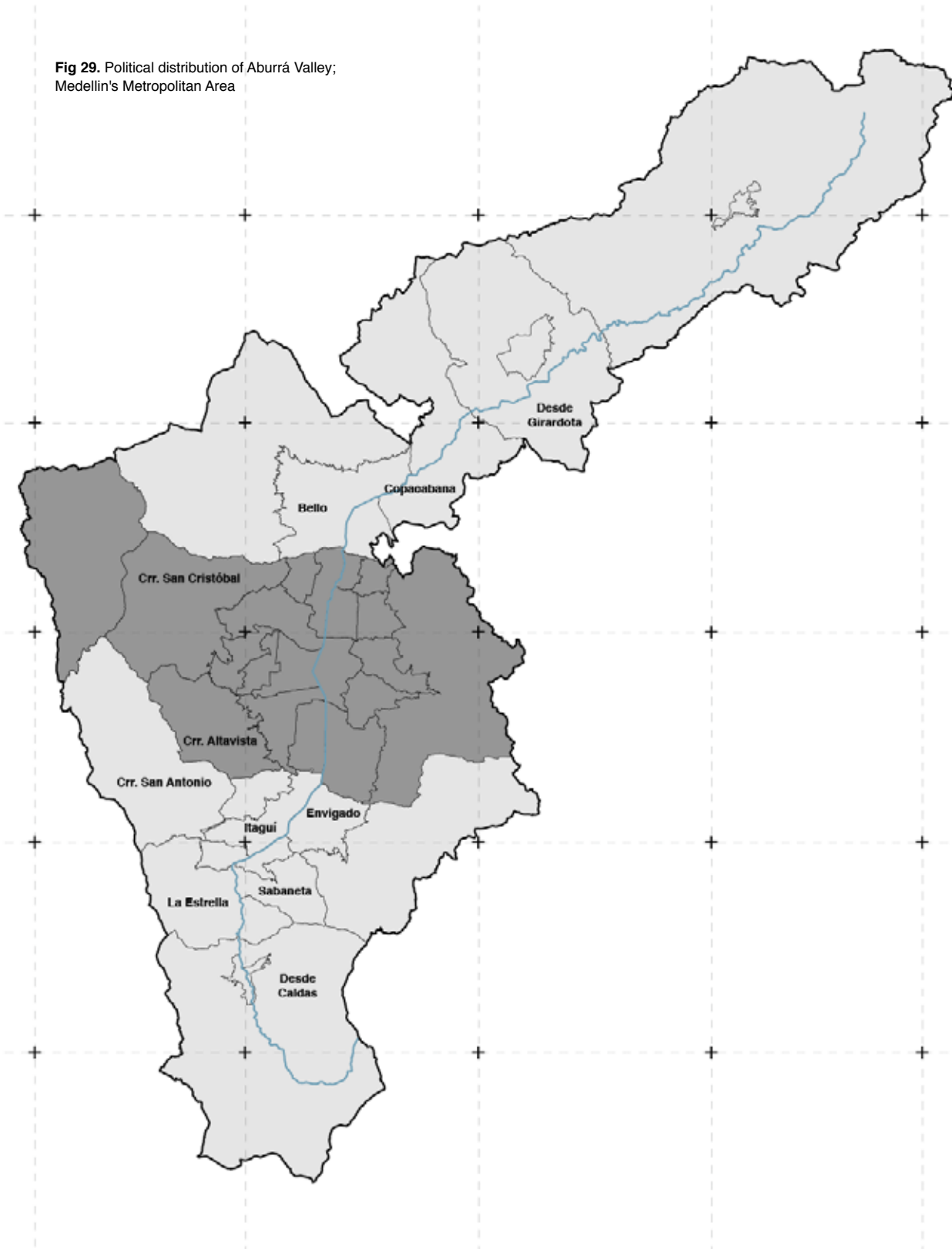


Fig 27. World map, positioning Colombia into the global context. Compared to Colombia, Austria is 13.6 times smaller size-wise.

Fig 28. Political distribution of Colombia; Antioquia Department



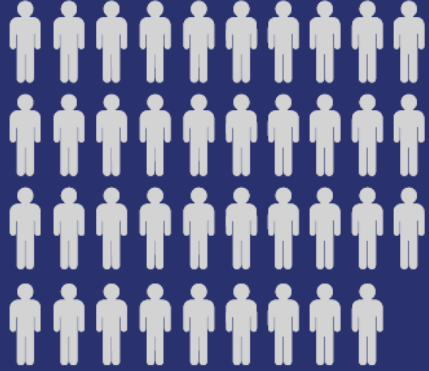
Fig 29. Political distribution of Aburrá Valley; Medellín's Metropolitan Area



INFOSHEET #1

POPULATION (2018 est.)

49,546,433



<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/colombia-population/>

28th
in the world

By 2005 the urban population increased to



35%

of the total population is concentrated in 4 major cities

LIFE EXPECTANCY

78 years

71 years

99.2%

Language: Spanish (official)

MAIN INDUSTRIES

Coal, coffee, copper, emeralds, flowers, fruits, gas, gold, hydropower, iron ore, natural nickel, petroleum, platinum, and silver.

SOCIAL ISSUES

High rates of criminal violence, societal discrimination against women, child abuse, child prostitution; child labor; drug addiction; poverty; & displacement of the rural population.

GDP
\$292.1 billion in 2016

NOMINAL GDP
\$14,100 per capita

Second most biodiverse country in the world.

after only Brazil which is 10 times its size. It is one of only 17 "megadiverse" countries in the world.

5th most popular hub for cosmetic surgery.

Colombian women don't hesitate to change their bodies if they're dissatisfied.

(Source: Economist, 2013)

CURRENCY
COL\$
Colombian Peso

COLOMBIA is the oldest...



democracy in South America



★ Capital City
● Major Cities

TOTAL AREA
1,138,910 km²

The fourth-largest country in South America

32 provinces (departments)

5 geographic regions

DENSITY

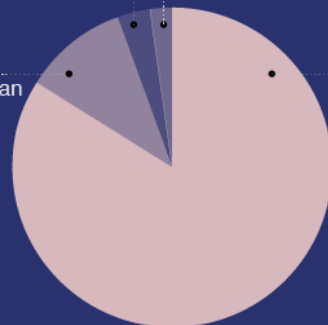
43.32/km²
Colombia

106/km²
Austria

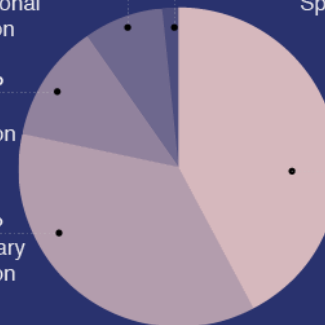
× 13.6 = COLOMBIA
Colombia is approximately 13.6 times the size of Austria

ETHNICITY / RACE

3.4% Amerindian
10.4% Afro-Colombian
84.2% Mestizo & white
2.1% Unspecified



7% Professional education
10.5% Without education
31.7% Secondary education
1.3% Specialized studies
37.2% Basic primary education



home to over 1,800 species of birds



58 national parks that cover about 11% of the country

INFOSHEET #2

POPULATION (2018 est.)

3,933,652



<http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/colombia-population/>

DENSITY

10 351

residents /1 km²

DEMOGRAPHY



1,327,914

52.9%



1,180,538

47.1%

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

8,7%

It was the first city in the world to use cable cars for mass transit

Art in public space

The largest collection of Botero sculptures on public display in the world

One of the most innovative cities on the planet

2013 - Innovative City of the Year Award

2016 - Lee Kuan Yew World City Prize, a sort of "Urbanism Nobel Prize"

The City of Eternal Spring

Because of its many terraces, parks, and gardens

TOTAL AREA
382 km²

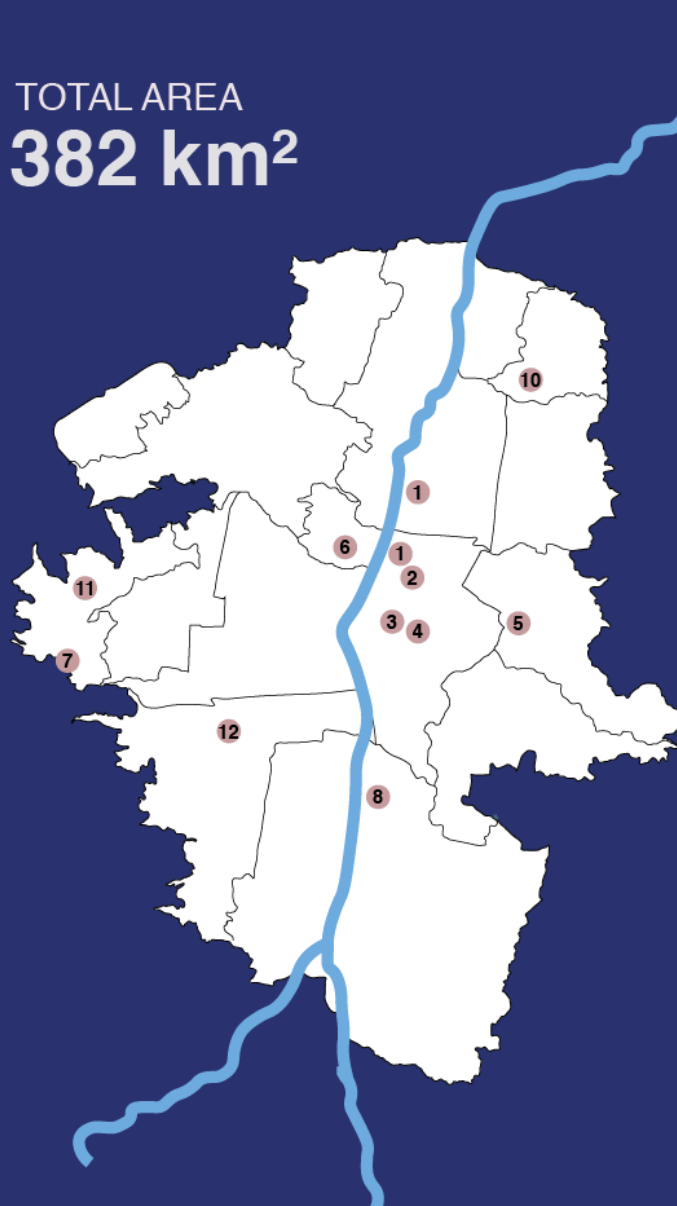
16 districts
(comunas)



murders rise
up to more than 30%
626 homicides
in 2018
(7.6% more than 2017)

over 50%
of the murders
correspond to clashes
between criminal gangs

ca. 400 000
people do not feel
safe in the city



POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Jardín Botánico Joaquín Antonio Uribe
2. Parque Explora
3. Museo de Antioquia
4. Plaza Botero
5. Museo Casa de la Memoria
6. Parque Natural Cerro El Volador
7. Escaleras Electricas Comuna 13
8. Museo Arte Moderno Medellín
9. Centro de Desarrollo Cultural de Moravia
10. Parque Biblioteca España Santo Domingo Savio
11. Parque Biblioteca San Javier
12. Parque Biblioteca Belén

TIMELINE #1

TIMELINE OF FEAR

Civil war 250 000 - 300 000 killed | **Guerrilla war** | **Peace talks** ~~X failed~~ | **Peace talks** ~~X failed~~ | **Peace talks** ~~X failed~~ | **Peace Process** | **Agreement**

Dictatorship
National Front

ELN: Leftist National Liberation Army
EPL: Maoist People's Liberation Army



foundation

foundation

FARC: Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia - largest guerrilla group

National People's Alliance

National Civic Movements



foundation

Patriotic Union
Formed by the FARC and other leftist groups



Becomes legal party after reaching peace agreement with government

New Constitution
CONVIVIR
legalised paramilitaries

Plan Colombia
US\$1 billion from the US

Democratic Security
Militarism and foreign investment

Cuba
Mediator: President Hugo Chavez

Gustavo Pinilla No party (Military)	Military Junta No party (Military)	Alberto Lleras Liberal Party	Guillermo León Valencia Conservative Party	Carlos Lleras Liberal Party	Misael Pastrana Liberal Party	Alfonso López Liberal Party	Julio César Turbay Liberal Party	Belisario Betancur Conservative Party	Virgilio Barco Liberal Party	César Gaviria Liberal Party	Ernesto Pizano Liberal Party	Andrés Pastrana Conservative Party	Álvaro Uribe Colombia First (Independed)	Juan Manuel Santos National Unit	Iván Duque Democratic Center
-----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	----------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------

Imposed martial law

Intensive fight against drug trafficking

Grants guerrilla amnesty and frees political prisoners

Wins election by record margin

Elected on anti-drug platform

Subsequently charged of receiving drug-cartel money for his election campaign

CONVIVIR, legalised paramilitaries
Paramilitaries operated within this framework and were therefore essentially legalised.
In Medellin the CONVIVIR are consolidated during these years as well as groups such as the MAJACA (Death to the Car Thieves)

Peace talks with guerrillas

Plan Colombia: wins almost to fight drug-trafficking and rebels who profit and protest the trade

Promises to crack down hard on rebel groups

Succeeded in removing guerrilla groups from comunas and neighbourhoods in Medellin (although usually these were replaced by paramilitary groups)
"Democratic Security" emphasised tourism, exportation (mining and petroleum among others) and foreign investment in the country.



Popular militias
Change in the Economy

city-wide strike
because of the increase in the price of public transportation

War against drug cartel
P.Escobar elected to congress
Coltejer (textile industry) went bankrupt getting replaced by the service industry.

Medellin centre of the cocaine export cartel

Death of P.Escobar
The Office of Envigado rises

Non Aggression Pacts

Peace and Coexistence Counsel!

Operation Orion - Comuna 13

Removing guerrilla groups in Comuna 13
"Operation Orion was led first by troops by General Mario Montoya, in conjuncture with (DAS), special forces of the National Police and the District Attorney's office.

"I'll buy the War"
employment and educational programs to youth in exchange for tranquility within

"Urabeños"

The "Urabeños", part of the Office of Envigado, start taking control of the city, leading to higher violence especially in the comunas 8,10,13 and 16.

49 Mayors in 40 years

During this time the national law is that mayors are appointed, not elected. This leads to a situation in which mayoral terms last on average 10 months, making it impossible to make long term plans.

- Juan Gómez Martínez
- Omar Flórez Vélez
- Luis Alfredo Ramos
- Sergio Naranjo
- Juan Gómez Martínez
- Luis Pérez Gutiérrez
- Sergio Fajardo
- Alonso Salazar
- Aníbal Gaviria
- Federico Gutiérrez

TIMELINE #2



TIMELINE OF FEAR

Civil war 250 000 - 300 000 killed

Guerrilla war

Peace talks **X failed**

Peace talks **X failed**

Peace talks **X failed** Cuba Mediator: President Hugo Chavez

Peace Process Agreement

Pilot Plan
Colombian Society of Architects
Paul L. Wiener & Josep Luis Sert

Territorial division of the urban sector
64 illegal cores
15 279 dwellings = 16% of the city population

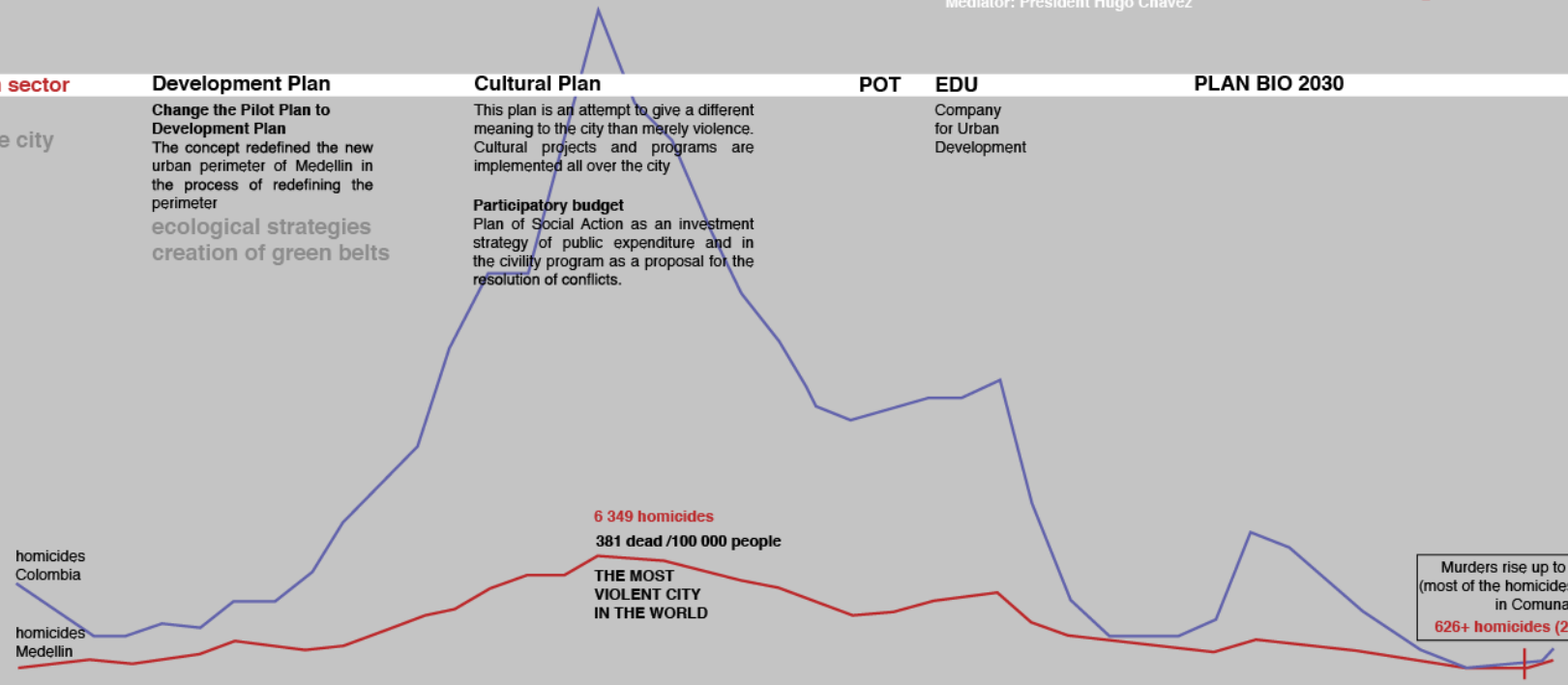
Development Plan
Change the Pilot Plan to Development Plan
The concept redefined the new urban perimeter of Medellín in the process of redefining the perimeter
ecological strategies
creation of green belts

Cultural Plan
This plan is an attempt to give a different meaning to the city than merely violence. Cultural projects and programs are implemented all over the city
Participatory budget
Plan of Social Action as an investment strategy of public expenditure and in the civility program as a proposal for the resolution of conflicts.

POT

EDU
Company for Urban Development

PLAN BIO 2030



Drug Cartels **Guerrilla** **Paramilitary** **Demobilization** **Criminal Gangs (Combos)**

First Parks Plan
an inventory for green zones in the city for recreation

Metropolitan Train

Construction of San Antonio "Park"
Investment in recovering public spaces in the centre of the city through the construction of tourist sites. This "park" has no real green spaces and much more resembles a plaza.

PRIMED Phase 1
Integral program of improvement of subnormal neighborhoods in Medellín

Inauguration of the Metro System

Construction of Plaza Botero

Metrocable Line K
Formulation of the partial plans

PUI
Proyecto Urban Integral: Comuna 13

Escaleras Electricas
Walking connections in Comuna 13

49 Mayors in 40 years

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Sergio Fajardo
Alonso Salazar
Aníbal Gaviria
Federico Gutiérrez

TIMELINE #3

TIMELINE OF FEAR

Civil war

250 000 - 300 000 killed

Guerilla war

Peace talks

~~X failed~~

Peace talks

~~X failed~~

Peace talks

~~X failed~~

Cuba
Mediator: President Hugo Chavez

Peace Process Agreement



During this time the national law is that mayors are appointed, not elected. This leads to a situation in which mayoral terms last on average 10 months, making it impossible to make long term plans.

2.3 Medellín:

A Model of Urban Transformation and Social Resilience

2.3.1 The expansive process

Founded in 1616, by the Spanish conquistadores, Medellín developed to have a reputation of a prestige city of the nineteenth century, thanks to the production of gold and coffee. In 1875, Medellín held the pedestal of a model of modernisation and progress in Latin America.

Between 1888 and 1928, the population of Medellín increased from 44,000 to 120,044 inhabitants, which was almost a triplication in a lapse of 40 years. One of the main reasons for this migration was the industry factor, putting the city in the centre of the industrial development of the country. During this period craft workshops were transformed into semi-manufacturing activities, and new and big industries emerged that generated new demands and new public amenities that characterise every urban centre in the formation. As coffee exports increased, the textile industry—led by the creation of the Coltejer Company in 1907—signalled Medellín's rise as a center of commercial and entrepreneurial activity. Major food, beverage, and glass companies soon followed and Medellín's first airport was built in 1932. From 1905 to 1951, the population of the city grew from just under 60,000 to nearly 360,000. In short, **Medellín emerged as Colombia's leading industrial center in the first-half of the twentieth century.**

1910 was the year that celebrated a century since the independence from Spain. During this period, there was the idea to design a plan for the city that could lay down the basics for a future development of the city, and in the same time one that can respond to the necessities towards creation of the modern city. The *Society of Public Improvement* called a competition to choose the best plan of Medellín Futuro. The winning project was the one of Jorge Rodríguez, later developed by team of engineers and architects with the support of School of Mines who did the of 1913. **This plan represented a project of improvement and physical expansion of the city that was inspired by the European post-liberal city model, through which it focused on expansion, hygiene and complexity of the city of Medellín.** Even though this plan intended to generate a holistic approach and to initiate a dialogue between landlords, developers and city administration, it did not bring huge difference into city planning, since the private interest always prevailed over the public, and also because the municipality fiscal capacity was not capable of coping with the work that was proposed.

Restrepo, 1981; Melo, 1996;
Patiño, 2011

V. Perfetti del Corral,
Jaramillo, 1993



Fig 30. Plano Futuro de Medellín
(Future Plan of Medellín)
[Jorge Rodríguez Lalinde, 1913]

2.3.2 A tale of two cities

In 1951, Medellín had 358,159 inhabitants, many of whom were migrants moving to the main industrial city of Colombia for looking for better life opportunities. At the time, additional activities took place, that created the demand for further extension of services, offers for employment, health and education as well as infrastructure. The newly created situation requested the importance for ordering and developing a new urban plan for the city. This leads me to the second important city urban development contribution presented by the *Regulatory Plan* of Sert and Wiener. In 1948 the *Oficina de Valorización* (established in 1938, in that time the main public body responsible for urban planning in the city) gave them the task to create the *Medellín Pilot Plan*. As a matter of fact, Sert and Wiener introduced the urban and architectural principles of the Athens Charter in Medellín. In the streams that flow into the river they created linear parks for recreation, sports and other activities, as well as control of the rainwater courses. **From the perpendicular routes to the river a regular or irregular route is configured, according to the topography.** The plan kept the traditional centre and the commercial activities around it, but moreover proposed a complementary Civic Center that represented a triangular piece next to the Medellín River. Here, a set of public facilities have been concentrated: governmental buildings, cultural buildings as well as a park, in a way integrating the landscape with the community and the everyday life.

Tarchópulos, 2010

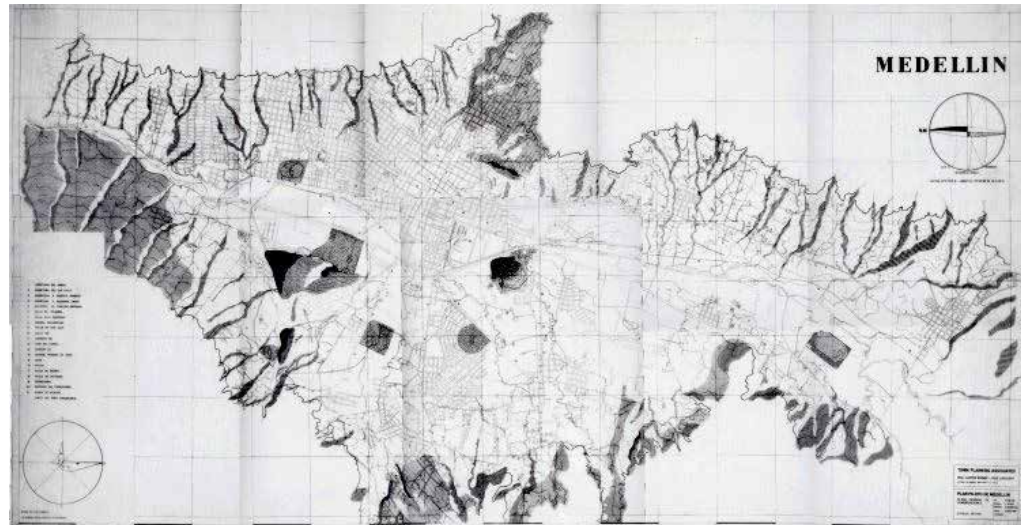


Fig 31. Sert and Wiener, The Pilot Plan 1950, [Departamento administrativo de planeacion Medellín]

One of the biggest consequences of the continued migration towards the city, as well as the challenging characteristics that Medellín represents through its personality as a city during the 20th and the 21st century is the process of “informalization”. The effects of this demographic growth became evident in the considerable rise in the demand for housing. In the 60s, the density of the illegal dwellings raised in the city, counting 118,826 illegal households that have completely missed basic infrastructure and any kind of social amenities. **During the period from 1958 to 1972, the population reached 600,000 in the newly formed informal part of the city, representing half of the whole city population.**

Alcaldía de Medellín, 2015

The high demand for housing was tightly connected with the mass production of working class housing for the uncountable number of manual workers that were needed in the emerging industrial sector at the time. From this time on, newly established neighbourhoods started to appear in the city - at the beginning, near the northeastern bank and along the tram route and principal roads. This kind of new division of the city resulted into creation of new social dynamics and division of the city spaces. The State introduced different measures in order to stop the illegal invasion of the land such as controlling rural migration and improving countryside life conditions, as well as adopting repressive measures against people illegally occupying space.

Despite all these activities, the expected results did not occur. This meant that there was the need to take steps towards regulation and formalisation of the illegal land occupancy. During the upcoming period, a lot of new public amenities were set up, collaboration between the public and private sector was supported towards creating more sustainable models that would be able to address the problem of the informal city. The new urban dynamic that occurred in the city could not be controlled. It increased in intensity, and was spreading at great rate creating segregation within the city’s physical, social and economic western slopes and as a final act, the informal city began to emerge. In this part of the city, one finds the “ad hoc residences” constructed by the poor. Opposite to these, the middle and upper class have settled in the centre and south of the Aburrá Valley in the planned formal city. Medellín’s path diverged into two realities - two opposing “cities” - dramatically segregated by location and geographical relief, the formal and the informal.

During this time, the first manifestation of the phenomena that can be recognised as “invisible borders” between the two cities of Medellín is being drawn by the hand of class and society.

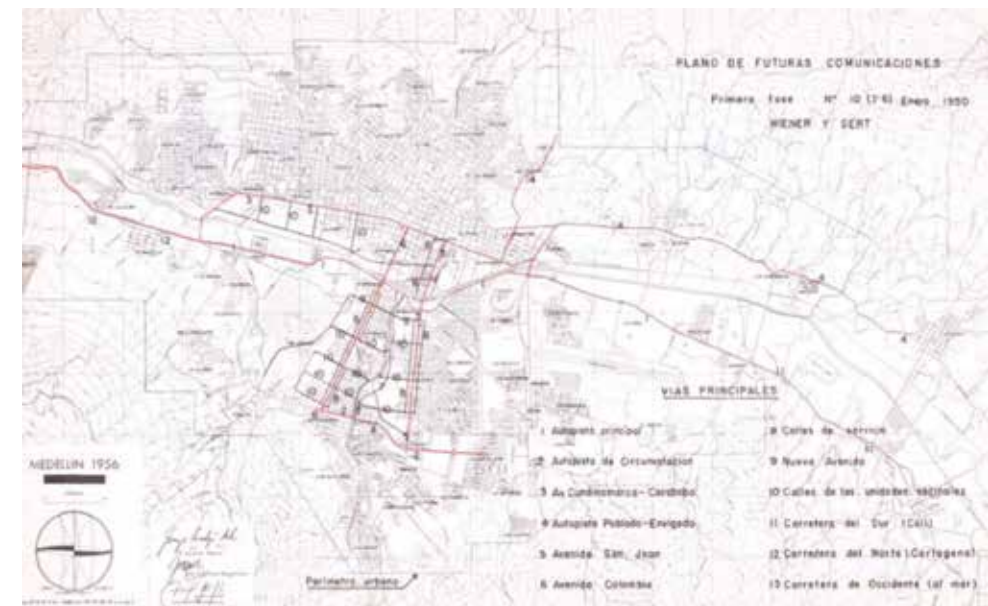


Fig 32. Sert and Wiener, The Regulatory Plan 1951, [Departamento administrativo de planeacion Medellín]

2.3.3. Marginality as urban frontier

It is easy to imagine how the city spread over the edges of its territory with an uncontrolled rapidity. Taking into consideration the topography of Medellín, it is clear that the accessibility to these new edges of the city which were “invaded” by the newcomers had difficult accessibility. The transport of goods and difficulties became more difficult with each meter to climb and walk. People did not have the feeling that they still lived in the city. They did not go to the centre or any other place since their mobility was restrained. This great amount of public and private effort in order to satisfy the housing demand that was continuously growing in the following decades was not enough. **A migratory wave following the rural displacement and political violence of the 1950s pushed the city’s annual growth rate to 6%.** In just ten years of time, Medellín doubled its population. This figure would be the start of the massive appearance of informal squatter settlements (*esp. urbanizaciones piratas*) as well as illegal neighbourhoods (*esp. barrios de invasión*) in the most distant and inaccessible peripheral areas. Some authors explain the territorial concentrations of poverty in Medellín as the collision of rapid unplanned development, which through the state’s negligence and impotence, permitted high risk

The President and Fellows of
Harvard College, 2016

areas to be developed informally. These neighborhoods were settled by migrants from other parts of the country fleeing the conflict that has unraveled since the early 1950s. **They usually arrived lacking resources to obtain housing in the overwhelmed and high cost formal market.** The development of informal settlements in Medellín is a way that new migrants cope with the challenges of finding housing and employment. The migration of people displaced by violence in other parts of the country to Medellín continues to this day.

Guillermoprieto 2000;
Roldan 1999;
Cardona et al. 2005

Most low-income immigrants provided housing for themselves through land invasion or acquisition of illegal land partitions and self-settlement in the urban periphery. Thus, illegal forms of tenure, precarious dwellings, and violations of established regulations and codes characterised most of their settlements. Local governments could not intervene because they would be violating private land property rights or their own rules. Hence, improvements depended largely on settlers. Eventually, government developed a mechanism of intervention based on the distribution of construction materials and the loan of heavy equipment to settlers who then carried out the work. Meanwhile, government policies addressing the housing needs of the poor evolved from direct development of public housing to the provision of subsidies.

Betancourt, 2007



Fig 33. Barrio Otrabanda (today Barrio Carlos E. Restrepo), 1960, [Legado Antioquia]

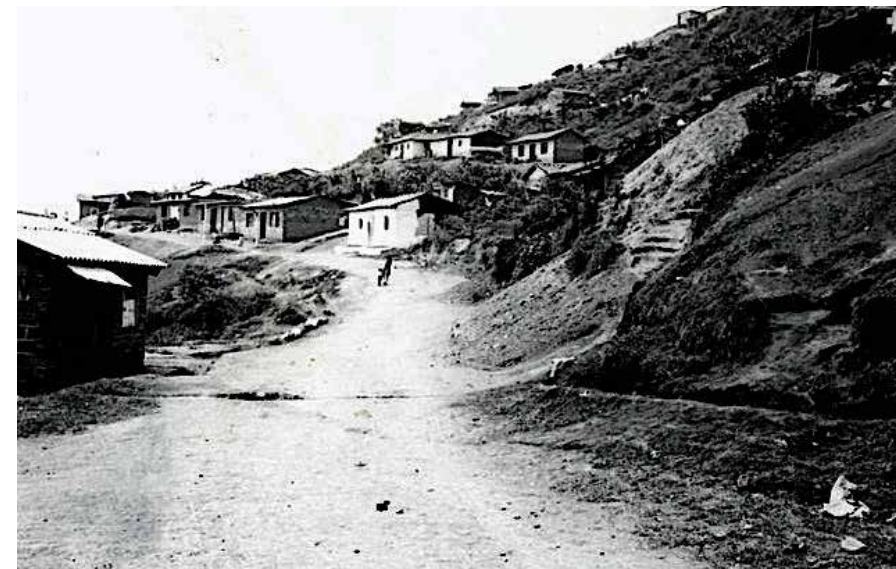


Fig 34. Barrio Santo Domingo Savio, 1960, [Album Padre Gabriel Diaz,

2.3.4. The decades of violence

Hylton 2010 pp. 349–352

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Medellín gained an international reputation of a “global murder capital” as homicides, car bombs, and terror became common, most especially in the poorest neighbourhoods on the urban outskirts. This disastrous wave of violence was followed by rural displacement, emerging narco trafficking which put the debate of informalization into dramatic political and social directions. One of the leading cause for violence was the narco-traffic network that was based in Medellín. **In the last wave of violence in Colombia between 1989 and 1994, Medellín experienced 25% of all public order problems in the entire country. In a country with a century-long history of violence and an internal civil war, Medellín has been the territory where the consequences were among the most visible.**

Betancourt, John J. Global Urban Development Magazine, 2007

Samper, 2011

IDB

In 1991 6,349 killings were recorded, a number which represented a homicide rate of 380 per 100,000 citizens. The neighbourhoods on the slopes of the valley, commonly termed as “*comunas*”, became the habitat of illegal gangs-bands of assassins who acted on the orders of narcotics traffickers and other criminals. State control and presence in these sectors was almost nonexistent. Ever since, there is a constant flux of different armed groups of gangs “**Combos, Bandas and Oficinas**” which have a larger presence in informal settlements. Violence concentrated in the areas of the city that are segregated - both spatially as well as socially.

Avendaño, 2009

Farah, Washington Post, 1991

"It is very difficult to definitively interpret what is happening in Medellín," said President Cesar Gaviria at a press conference on March 1, 1991. "In part, there are changes in the power structure of the criminal organisations that operate there, but I do not think that is the sole cause of what is going on in Medellín... It transcends drug trafficking, and it will take a relatively long time to secure public order there."

1993 was the same year when Nelson Mandela won the Noble Peace Prize and Pablos Escobar was murdered by the hands of the police. After these year, the terror in the city started to decline, as did the murder rate. Even though, the drug leader was dead, the paramilitary groups and the guerrilla continued to fight over the urban territories, especially in the city's informal parts. As a result of informalization, 25 percent of Medellín's territory (a total of 2,400 hectares) today lies captured by marginal neighbourhoods. Initiatives aimed to transform the quality of life in the city have been implemented by the public administration among with the academic and non-governmental sector

for decades now, in order to address the inequality and the poor life standard in many parts of the city. **Although violence had a downward trend, in 2010 the homicide rate remained at the relatively high rate of 55 per 100,000 inhabitants. As recently as 2010, the murder rate was over 160 in 100,000 people.** To put that in perspective, the most dangerous city in the world at the time of writing of this thesis (year: 2019)-**Los Cabos, Mexico and Caracas, Venezuela-have a rate of something over 111.**

Merchán-Bonilla 2011, pp. 60

World Atlas, The Most Dangerous Cities In The World, 2019

Calvin, 2014 pp.21

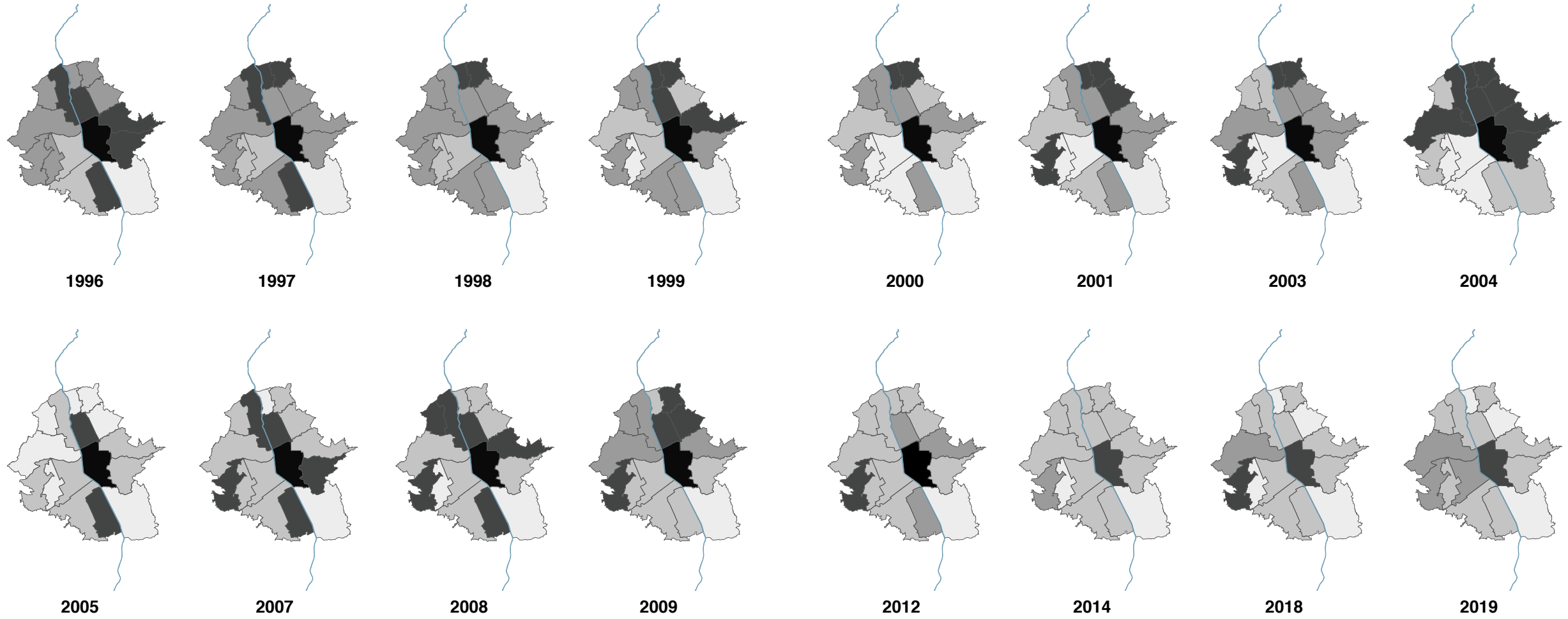
Pérez-Ayala, 2011

The vacuum caused by the erosion of the Bloque's hold on Medellín's poorer neighbourhoods has led to an increase in small, more conventional neighbourhood gangs. Despite the relative decrease in violence throughout the 1990s, large parts of the city remained in the grip of paramilitary groups. After decades of violence, **patterns of economic segregation had become amplified, as the citizens were not willing or even were free to move around the town.** Convinced that conventional political parties could not effectively deal with the massive challenges, in 2003 the city elected mayor Sergio Fajardo, pulled together a so-called *Civic Engagement Coalition* from the business, academic and social sectors. Fajardo's mandate focused on what he promised-to create a transformation within the city-physically, socially, and institutionally, a commitment that was realised by the *Proyectos Urbanos Integrales* (PUIs).

Many difficulties of the informal city-inequality, violence, and segregation-were an inherent aspect of its past. Although they remain challenges for the present, there is a move toward change so that they will not be part of the future of Medellín.



Fig 35. Newspaper headlines like the one above in Glasgow's *The Herald*, 1989, formed a negative image of Medellín in the 1980s and 90s



1996

1997

1998

1999

2000

2001

2003

2004

2005

2007

2008

2009

2012

2014

2018

2019

Fig 36. Homicide rate in Medellín (1996 - 2019)

highest rate of homicide
 lowest rate of homicide

2.3.5. Reinventing the City

The conditions that I have discussed so far, constructed a playground for future improvements in the city—a set of different moments throughout the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, that represent complex urban plans and programs addressing urban development of Medellín.

2.3.5.1 PRIMED

As a first representative in this period is the Comprehensive Program was an initiative dedicated to the improvement of “subnormal” neighbourhoods in Medellín, better known as PRIMED. During the 80s, Medellín faced series of very serious urban and social conflicts. On the one hand, it was one of the cities where a lot of people during the armed conflict fled and seemed for a shelter and new home. During this time, the city was not prepared to offer a comprehensive solution to the migration problem that it faced. On the other hand, this was the era of the narco cartels boom, of paramilitary and organised crime which became the main source of employment for the population. During this period, Medellín was strangled between urban violence and loss of the control over the city’s territory.

Under the above circumstances, the Presidency of the Republic created in 1990 a Ministry for the Metropolitan Area of Medellín, in order to address the problems of violence, governance and social decomposition of the informal settlements. During this time the PRIMED Program is launched. PRIMED proposed a participative methodology that aimed to improve the situation of informal neighbourhoods and housing, to tackle the problem of legalisation, geological risks, training and employment, health and education.

The year 1997, Colombia introduced the **Law 388**, and inaugurated the idea of *Territorial Planning*. As a result, Medellín implemented the *First Territorial Plan*. This Plan examined the usage of central zones, infrastructure, incorporation of hydrographic and orographic systems, multiple program areas recovery of the traditional city center, the balanced mixture of land use, as well as the environmental and rural resources and the pressure of urban expansion. One year before, the Faculty of Architecture of the of the Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana founded the *Laboratory of Architecture and Urbanism (LAUR)*, in cooperation with the *Barcelona Urban Planning Laboratory (LUB)* of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. Under the lead of Manuel de Solá Morales and his group, a local group led by Giovanna Spera,

Betancur, John J.
Global Urban Development
Magazine, 2007

Perez Jarmillo, Patino, Spera,
Garcia, Tarchopolus, Cardona,
2014

Law 388/1997 sought to carry on with the goal of urban reform, due to great national concern over the issue of territorial planning and its relationship with land management and the country’s economic and social development goals. The LDT principles are a combination of two Constitutional principles (the social and ecological function of property and the prevalence of public over private interest) and two new principles added by the LDT (the public function of urbanism and the equitable distribution of benefits and burdens); principles that elaborate on the concept of rights and duties. UN HABITAT, 2018

Patricia Schnitter and Jorge Pérez was formed. During these years, the city experienced some successful urban management highlights with unique works that showed the initiative of using urban actions is supported. During these years, the city experienced some successful urban management highlights with unique work that showed the initiative of using urban regeneration projects as transformative tool. At the same time, a *Model of Metropolitan Occupation* was produced, dedicated to the occupation and urbanisation of the Aburrá Valley. This model defined the two environmental borders formed by the two mountains that surround the valley taking the Medellín River, as the main structural axes of the valley.

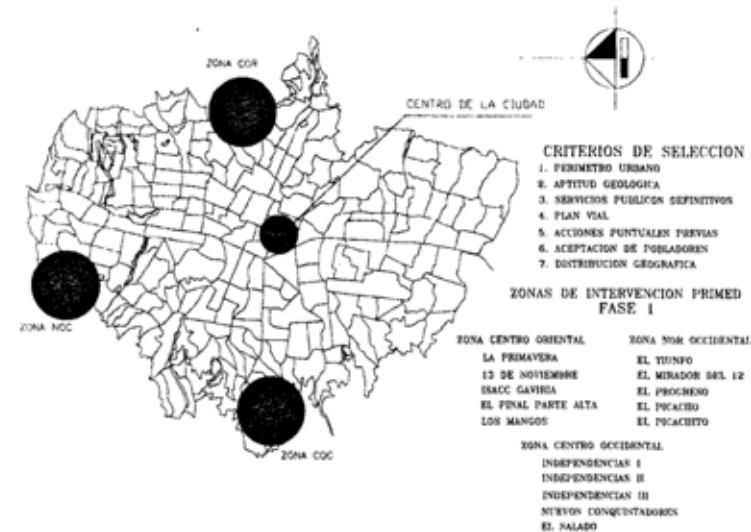
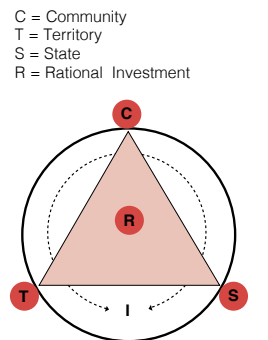


Fig 37. Areas of focus and selection criteria. Diagram from UNESCO’s 1996 based on PRIMED Report compiled by UNESCO.

Fig 38. Planning principles applied for neighbourhood upgrading. [PRIMED documents compiled by UNESCO]



2.3.5.2 Social Urbanism

Some would say that the year 2004 was the year when the whole process of transformation lasting for many years in Medellín, finally took its physical form. 2004 was the year when Sergio Fajardo was elected as a mayor and from day one he bet on a public policy that focused on reducing the profound social debts that had accumulated over the decades as a legacy of the violence. In order to address these challenges, his office implemented programme that merged three pillars - education, culture and entrepreneurship. This programme at most, was devoted to the neighbourhoods that most needed it - the ones that during the decades have been abandoned by the state and have been under constant pressure of violence. In terms of the transformation of the comunas, this involved social urbanism and urban projects that drew on the best technical knowledge and designs. It represented a new planing instrument in the planning culture of the

city of Medellín - a set of *Integral Urban Projects* (known as *PUI*). These projects focused on dealing with existing deficits in the marginal urbanisation of the periphery of the city, in response to the problems mentioned above. The Integral Urban Projects emphasise the component of what is being called “*Social Urbanism*” which corresponded to a set of spatial interventions that were implemented by the government of the Mayor Sergio Fajardo (2004 - 2007), focusing on the urban rehabilitation of the slums through improvements of housing, public spaces and mobility. **Social Urbanism became the main framework for all urban projects, especially those located in the deprived neighbourhoods of the city.** This concept does not appear in the plans as such, but it became the “**buzz word**” in the political discourses that derived from the Integral Urban Projects (PUI). The *EDU (Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano)* experienced an internal transformation, as specialised interdisciplinary teams focused to each of the strategic urban projects were set up, becoming vital instruments that planned and executed urban projects in the prioritised territories. Each strategic project had a manager responsible for creating channels of communication and coordinating relations between the various actors and institutions. The EDU assumed sole technical leadership over this exclusive group of projects and territories. Some of the keys to success were the political leadership and inter-institutional coordination. Teaming with the city’s planning office and rigorously monitoring all of the internal processes of administration and execution enabled, in only a few years, the completion of a wide range of highly complex projects. EDU assumed sole technical leadership over this exclusive group of projects and territories. Some of the keys to success were the political leadership and inter-institutional coordination. Teaming with the city’s planning office and rigorously monitoring all of the internal processes of administration and execution in only a few years enabled the completion of a wide range of highly complex projects.

BID, 2009

Restrepo, 2014;
Roldán & María, 2011

2.3.5.3 Integral Urban Projects Methodology

The PUI is an instrument for planning and physical intervention in areas characterised by a high degree of marginalisation, segregation, poverty, and violence. PUIs are targeted to solve specific problems in a territory where the state has generally been absent. The main idea behind the PUI is to initiate the community participation, inter-institutional coordination, promotion of housing and the improvement of public spaces and mobility. In addition, the PUI offers support for collective amenities and the restoration of the environment. **Its objective was that whenever there was an urban intervention, in parallel to the physical transformation, when new social institutional programs and activities that complemented the physical change.**

Echeverri, 2006a

The northeastern neighbourhoods of Medellín provided the perfect working conditions for a pilot project in order to test these criteria. These parts of the city had the lowest rating on quality-of-life index of human development. At the same time, in the same area, there was the launch of the Metro-cable, a system of transportation that connected these informal settlements to the city Metro system by cable car. The PUI helped to choose the location for the stations, with the objective of complementing and amplifying the positive impact of the Metro-cable.

The PUI-Model established a specific methodology and an operative framework for managing each project. The pillar of this whole initiative consisted on a decentralised agency of the municipality called the “PUI-Team” that dealt exclusively with urban upgrading projects. The team consisted on an interdisciplinary group of professionals (planners, architects, social workers and environmental engineers), that managed, coordinated and supported all the different actors, institutions and projects within each PUI Plan. This was done with the intention of guaranteeing efficiency and direct responsibility of the process and the outcomes. Some of the members of the PUI-Team were located directly in the area of intervention. This allowed a closer contact with the community in case of doubts, suggestions or difficulties during the process.

Echeverri, 2006a

PUI: Integral Urban Project			
	COMPONENTS	ACTIONS	
INTEGRAL URBAN PROJECT - PUI NORTHEASTERN COMMUNE: MEDELLIN	INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION	INTERINSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION	
		INTERSECTORIAL COORDINATION	
	SOCIAL	COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND COMMUNICATION	IDENTIFICATION
			VALIDATION
			PARTICIPATION
			EDUCATION
	PHYSICAL	PUBLIC SPACE & TRANSPORT	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PUBLIC SPACES
			IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING PUBLIC SPACE
			ORDERING OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEMS
		HOUSING	NEW HOUSING CONSTRUCTION
			HOUSING IMPROVEMENT
			HOUSING LEGAL TENANCY
		PUBLIC FACILITIES	IMPROVEMENT OF COMMON FACILITIES
			CONSTRUCTION OF NEW FACILITIES
ENVIRONMENT		ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY	

Fig 39. PUI Main Components and Actions; Adapted from: Urban Development Enterprise EDU - Medellín Mayor's Office

1. Institutional
Involving the coordination of activities carried out by all elements of the municipality in a particular zone. In addition, alliances with the private sector, NGOs, national and international bodies, and community organisations are promoted.
2. Social
Relying on a strategy of identifying problems and opportunities, establishing and approving projects, and using participatory design practices such as public workshops. Combined with strengthened community organisation and leadership promotion, this allows for restoration of the social fabric.
3. Physical
Based on urban interventions and strengthened by community participation. Included the construction and improvement of public spaces, housing, and public buildings, and restoration of the environment.



Fig 40. España Library-Park in Santo Domingo Savio neighbourhood serves as a monument of the rhetorics of social, political, cultural and urban change. [Alcaldía de Medellín, 2017]



Fig 41. Parque Jardín Botánico de Medellín / Orquideorama. [Sergio Gómez, 2008]



Fig 42. Photo overlooking at Comuna 13 and the electrical staircase (escaleras electricas) 385m long, built in 2011. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

CATALOGUE

The production of urban borders
in Medellín

Political Borders

The metropolitan area of Medellín is the second-largest urban agglomeration in Colombia in terms of population and economy. The city is administratively known as Municipality of Medellín (*Spanish: Municipio de Medellín*).

The Municipality of Medellín administratively and politicaly is divided into six zones: The urban zone, which is subdivided into 16 comunas (districts). The comunas are further divided into 249 official neighborhoods. The remaining zones outside the urban zones comprise five corregimientos, or townships (listed below).

Comunas

North - Eastern Zone

1. Barrio Popular
2. Santa Cruz
3. Manrique
4. Aranjuez

North - Western Zone

5. Castilla
6. Doce de Octubre
7. Robledo

East - Central Zone

8. Villa Hermosa
9. Buenos Aires
10. La Candelaria

West - Central Zone

11. Laureles-Estadio
12. La América
13. San Javier

South - Eastern Zone

14. El Poblado

South - Western Zone

15. Guayabal
16. Belén

Corregimientos

17. Santa Elena
18. San Cristóbal
19. Alta Vista
20. San Antonio de Prado
21. San Sebastián de Palmitas

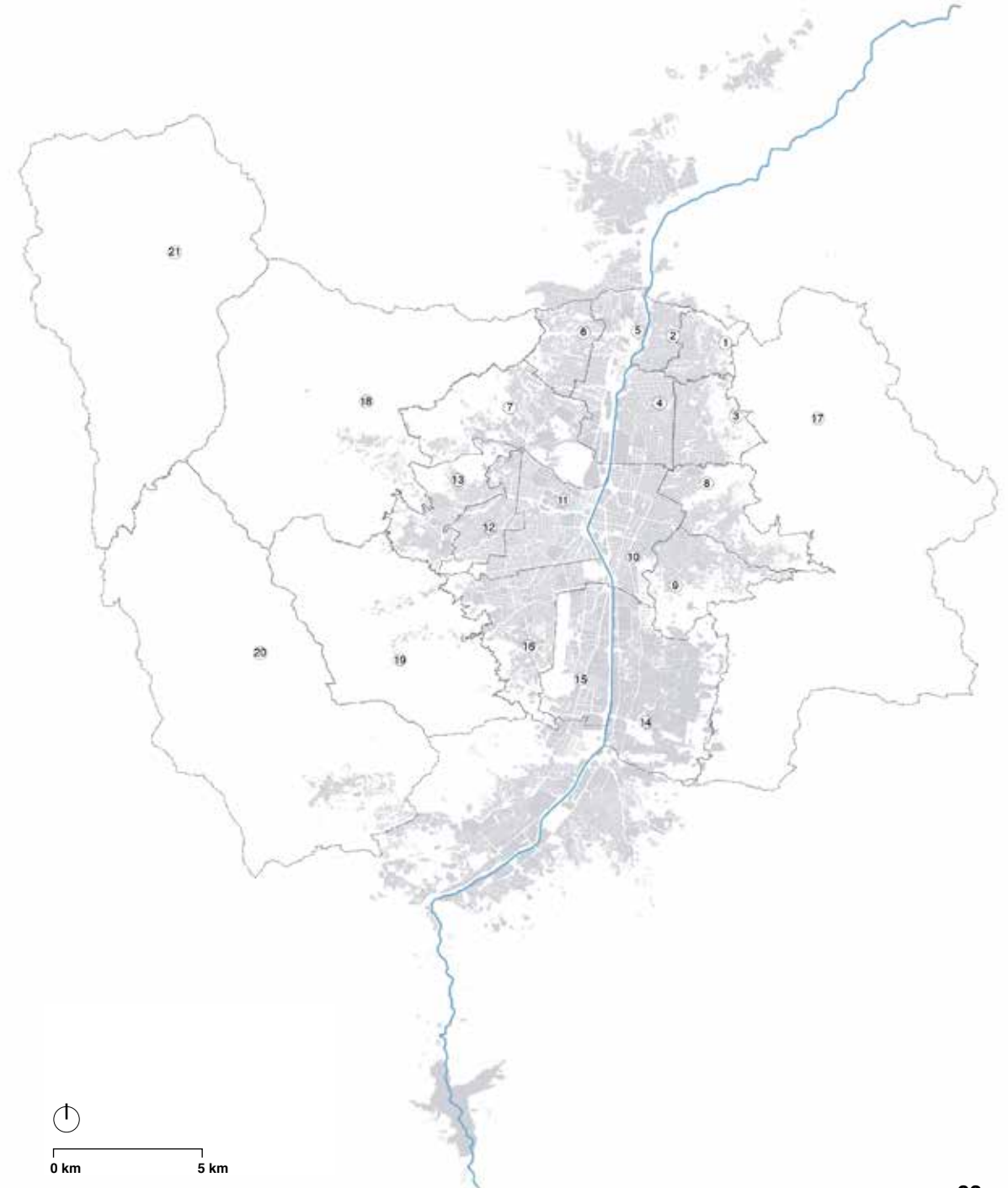


Fig 43. Medellín's Metropolitan Area, (2018 / 2019)

- built structure
- comuna / corregimiento
- Medellín River
- - - - borders of the metropolitan area



Ecological Borders

Medellín is located into the center of the Aburrá Valley, with an elevation of 1,495 meters. There are two ecological elements that naturally create two very important borderlands of urban separation within the city.

The first one is the Medellín River. It articulates the territory of the city into topographical and physical level. Additionally, it also creates a cultural and social division creating important fragmentations in the city. The physical barriers adjoining the river flow such as roads, railways and metro are also preventing the inhabitants to approximate near to the river.

The second ecological element is the high elevation of the Aburrá Valley. The setting defined by the particular topographical conditions, demonstrates a repeated manner of inhabiting these parts of the city and inverting them in most of the cases into disharmonious dialogue between urban setting and nature. In this sense, a high risk of habitat is being created. Vulnerable areas that generate habitual and spatial fragmentation, pushing human and other species to flee for better places.

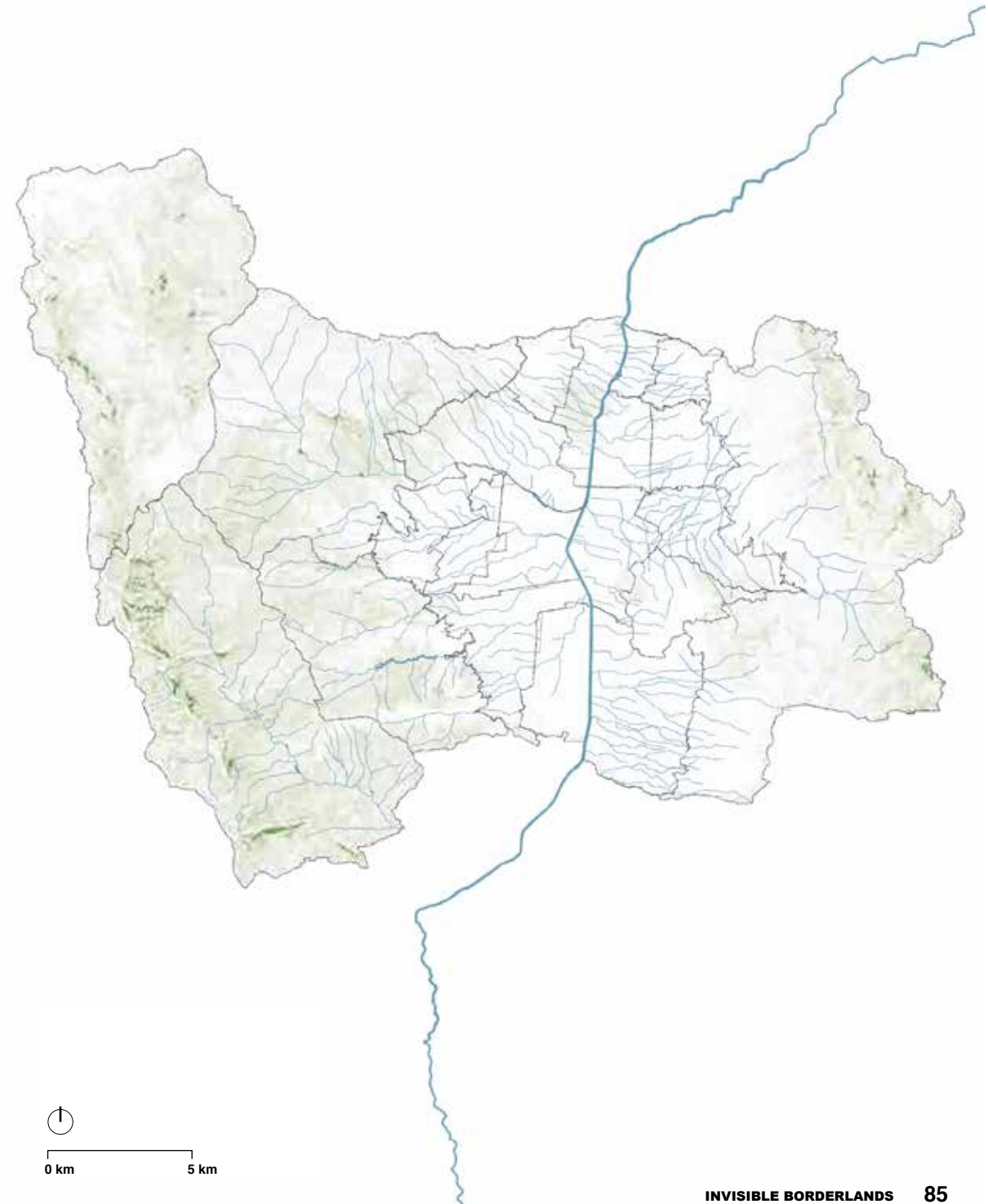


Fig 44. Medellín's Metropolitan Area Topography (2018 / 2019)

- topography
- Medellín River
- borders of the metropolitan area
- water network
- built structure

Borders of Urban Development











During the years of Medellín's urban development, the great segregation of the city and the division between its citizens led towards creating a decentralized city. Even though the city still has its official and first historical center as such, the development of subcenters on the district level occurred. Further on, the necessity for neighbourhood centrality are evidently needed.

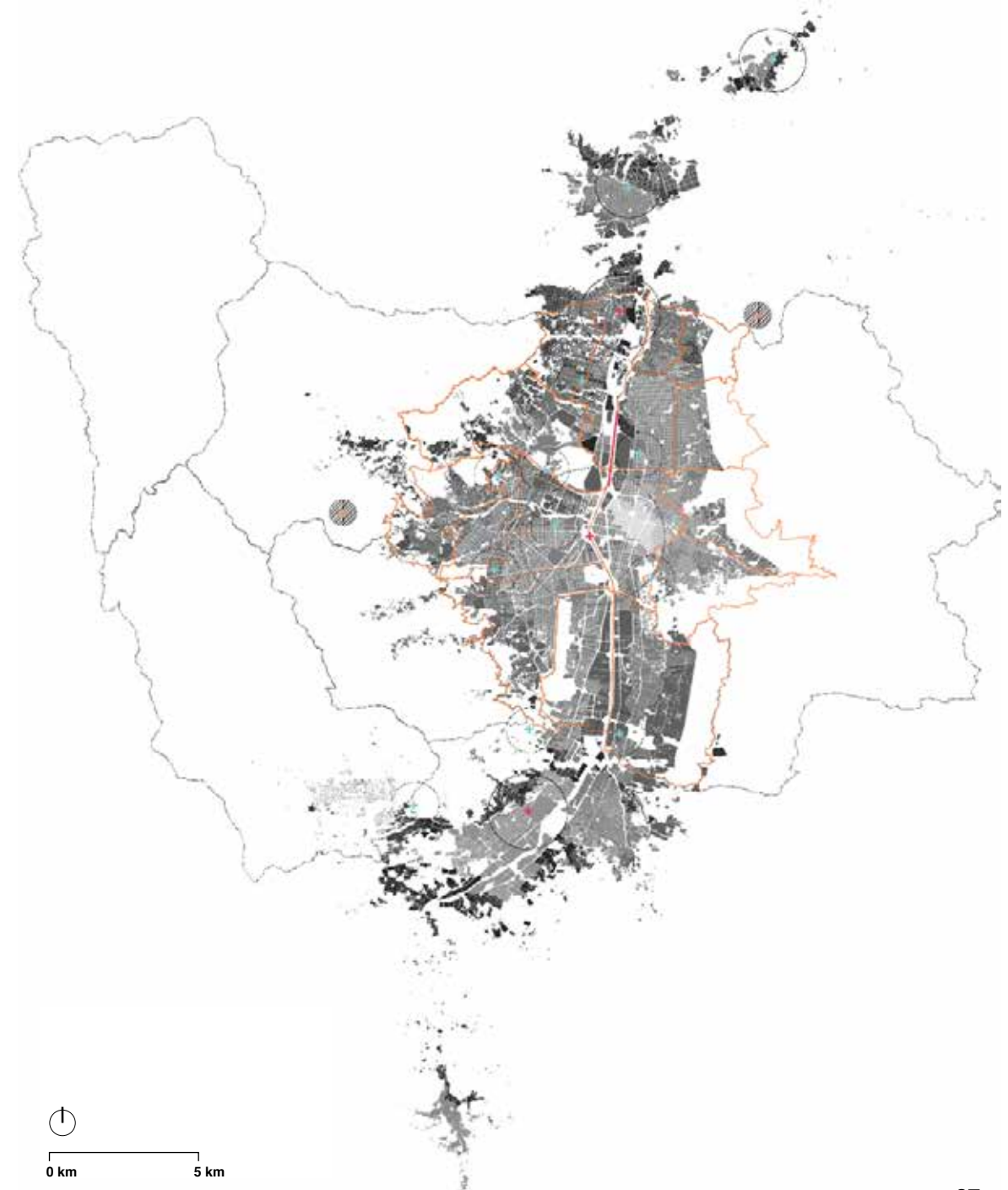
The perimeter of the historic center is still representing the central zone of production, even though there are additional logistic centers development on the outskirts of the city.

UN World Urbanization Prospects

It is estimated that by 2030 the population of the city will grow up to the number of 4,344,161 citizens.

Fig 45. Medellín's City Centers & Urban Development (2018)

stages of city growth		2000 -
		1985 - 2000
		1909 - 1970
		1847 - 1909
		1707 - 1800
		metropolitan centrality
		traditional and municipal centrality
		logistic centers
		Medellín River
		borders of the metropolitan area



Colombia Reports, 2018

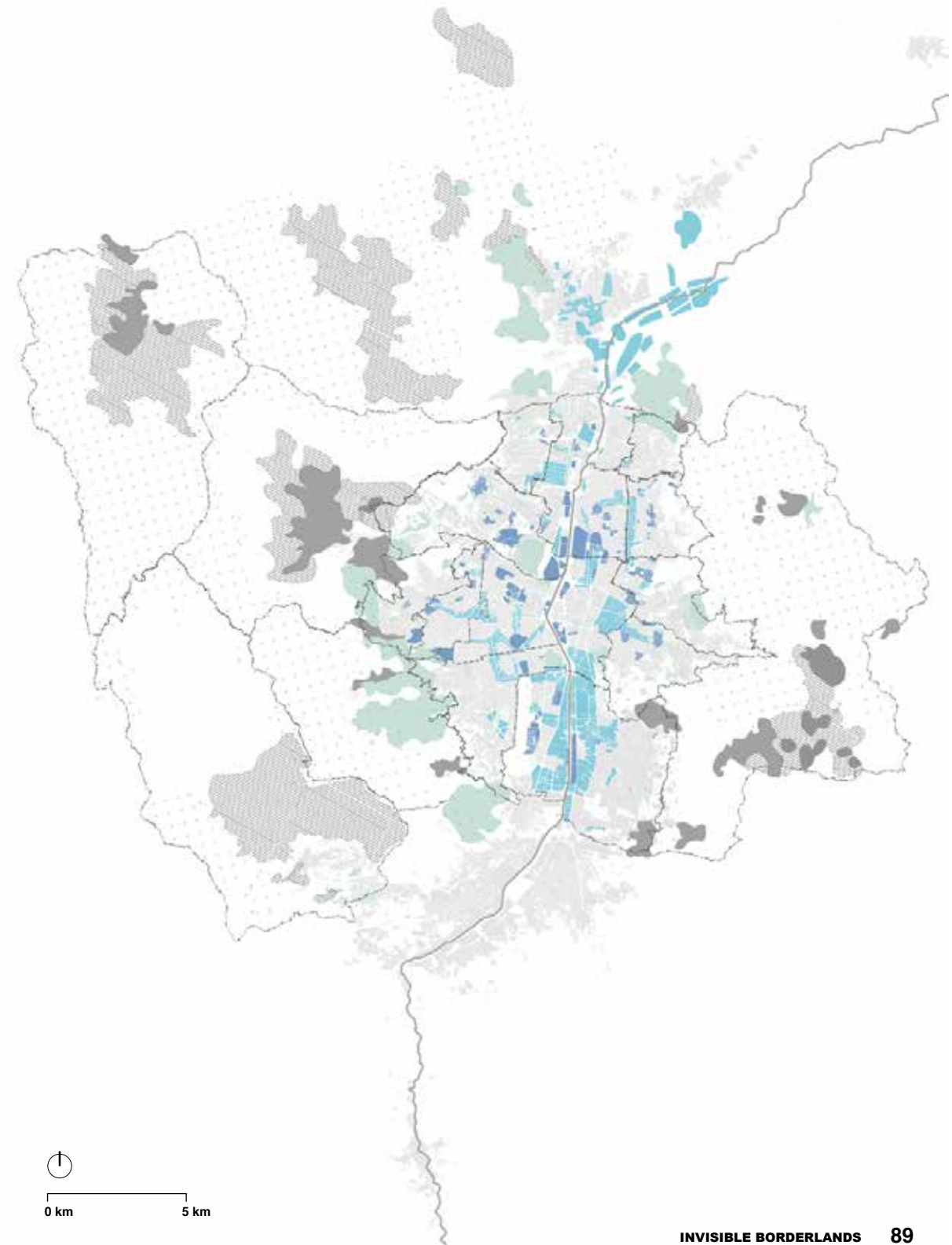
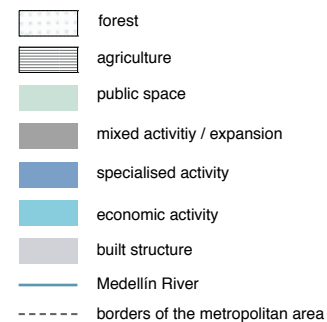
Economic and Borders of Production

Medellín is widely recognized for its entrepreneurial spirit. However, only a small minority of the city's registered businesses has a **business worth more than \$13,000 in 2017**. The majority of businesses are considered "micro businesses" and almost half of Medellín's businesses are not registered.

A great number of any kind of commercial and programs of economic development happen along the river flow, or more precisely, are situated in the city's center. The city center represents the major flow of economic development as well as the part of the city with most of additional specialised activities.

The hilly parts of the city are hardly serving any kind of additional program and activities that would trigger an economic development or would bring any extra attribute to the quality of everyday urban life.

Fig 46. Medellín's Territorial and Economic Division (2018)



Borders of Infrastructure and Social Uurbanism

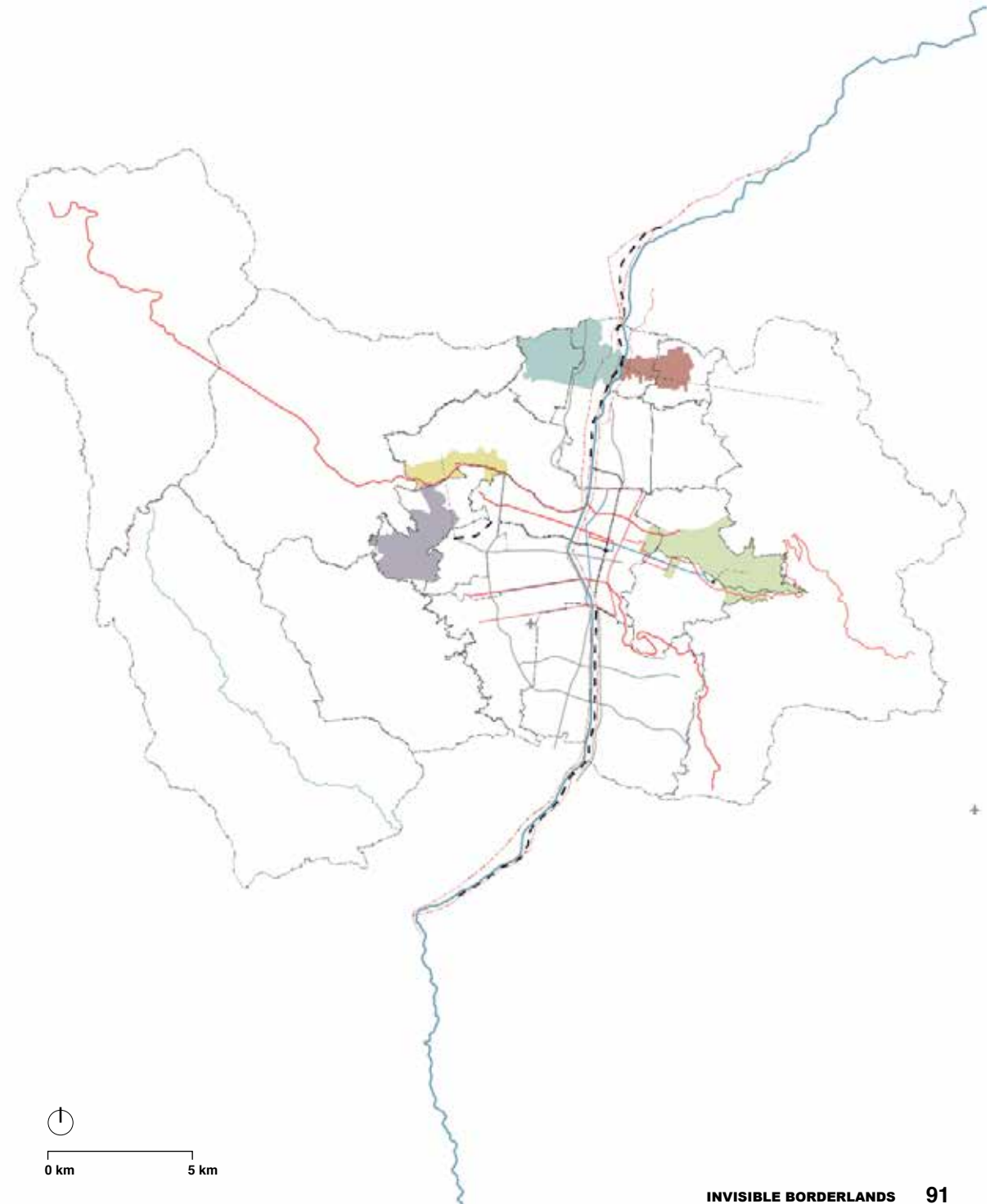
The main transportation axes in the city are developed in the two most common directions - north - south, following the river flow, and east - west, with the intention of connecting the most distinct parts of the city.

The metro system connects Bello in the north of Medellín with Itagüí in the south and Comuna 13 in the west. There are four *Cable Cars* (col: *Metrocables*) in the city. The Cable Car represents a gondola lift system implemented by the City Council of Medellín, Colombia, with the purpose of providing a complementary transportation service to that of Medellín's Metro. It was designed to reach some of the city's informal settlements on the steep hills that mark its topography. Additionally to this, there is a tram line and two **BRT** (Bus Rapid Transit) lines which connect the outskirts to the center.

As the main objective of the urban transformation of the city, there are the 5 Integration Projects (PUIs), situated in 5 different areas in the city.

Fig 47. Medellín's Infrastructure (2018)

- PUI Iguana 2010
- PUI Noc - Nor Occidental 2008 - 2012
- PUI Nor - Nor Oriental 2004 - 2008
- PUI Cor - Centro Oriental 2006 - 2012
- PUI Coc - Centro Occidental 2006 - 2012
- freeway
- metroplus BRT/tram
- river
- network of main streets
- metrocable cable car
- metro
- metro (above ground)
- Medellín River
- borders of the metropolitan area



Informe de Calidad de Vida de Medellín, Medellín Cómo Vamos, 2017

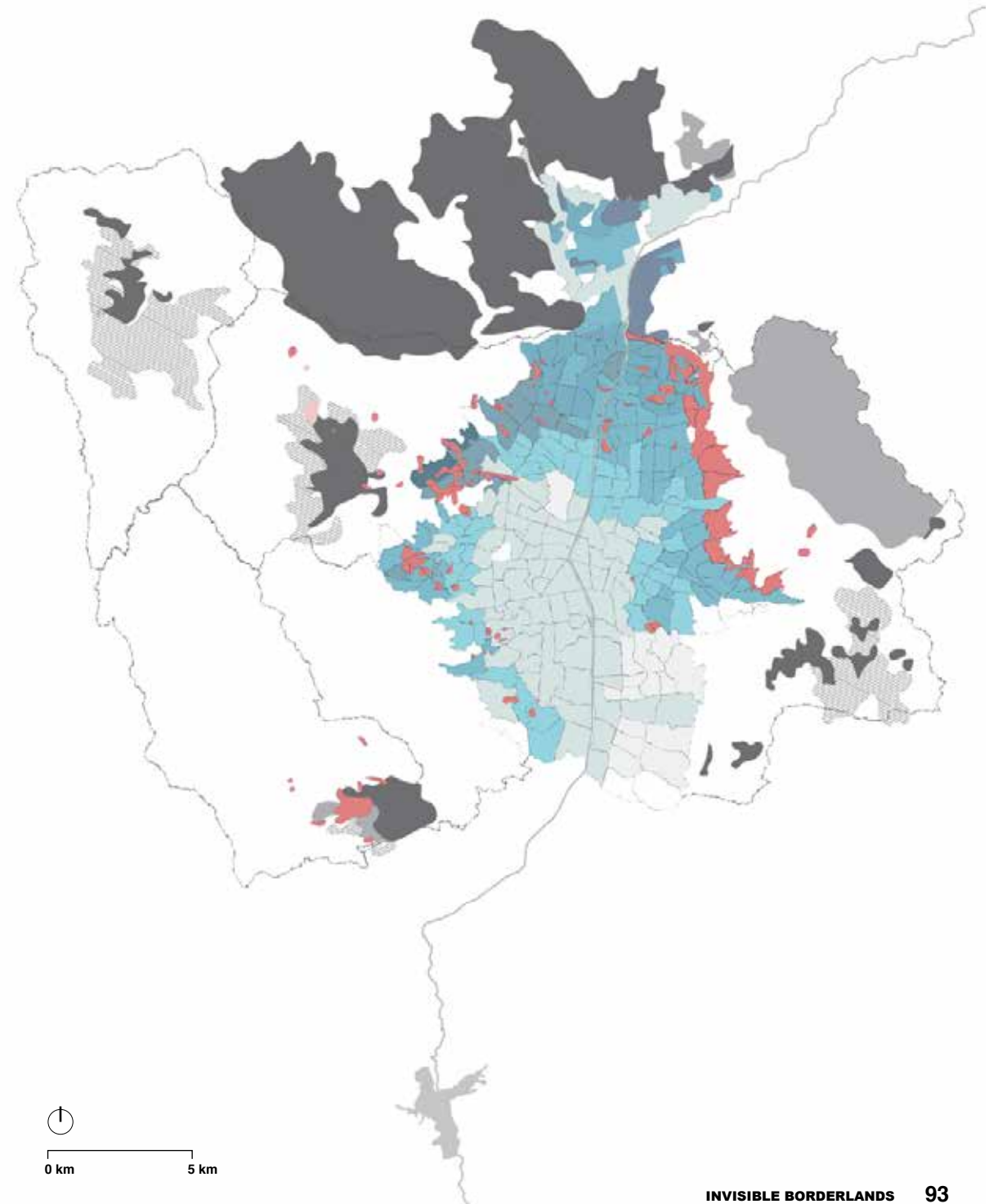
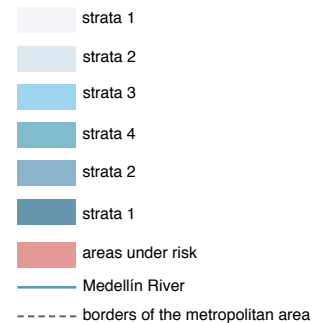
Social Borders

The social stratification in Medellín is not linked to income, but determined by the neighbourhood you live in. Residents in lower-ranked sectors receive a subsidy on public utilities while those living in the higher-ranked neighbourhoods pay extra. The social stratification is ranked on a one to six socioeconomic scale (with 6 being the highest). This is known as *estrato or strata*. Estrato 6 is considered a wealthy area for Colombians and estrato 5 is an upper middle class area, while estratos 3 and 4 are considered Colombian middle class areas. And estratos 1 and 2 are generally low - income areas.

In the Medellín Metropolitan Area only **3.4% of the homes are ranked as estrato 6 and 7.2% of homes are ranked as estrato 5. A total of 43.8% of homes in Medellín are classified as estratos 3 or 4, and 45.5% are classified as estratos 1 or 2. The vast majority of the homes in Medellín (76.4% of homes) are in estratos 2-4.**

It is evident that there is a clear differentiation and placement of the strata system in Medellín. The Southeastern and Southwestern Zones are occupied by citizens from the strata 5 and 6. As the city is spreading from the center towards the western and eastern hillsides, the strata level is dropping. Consequently, the citizens of strata 1 and 2 are occupying the edges of city.

Fig 48. Medellín's Social Division (2018 / 2019)



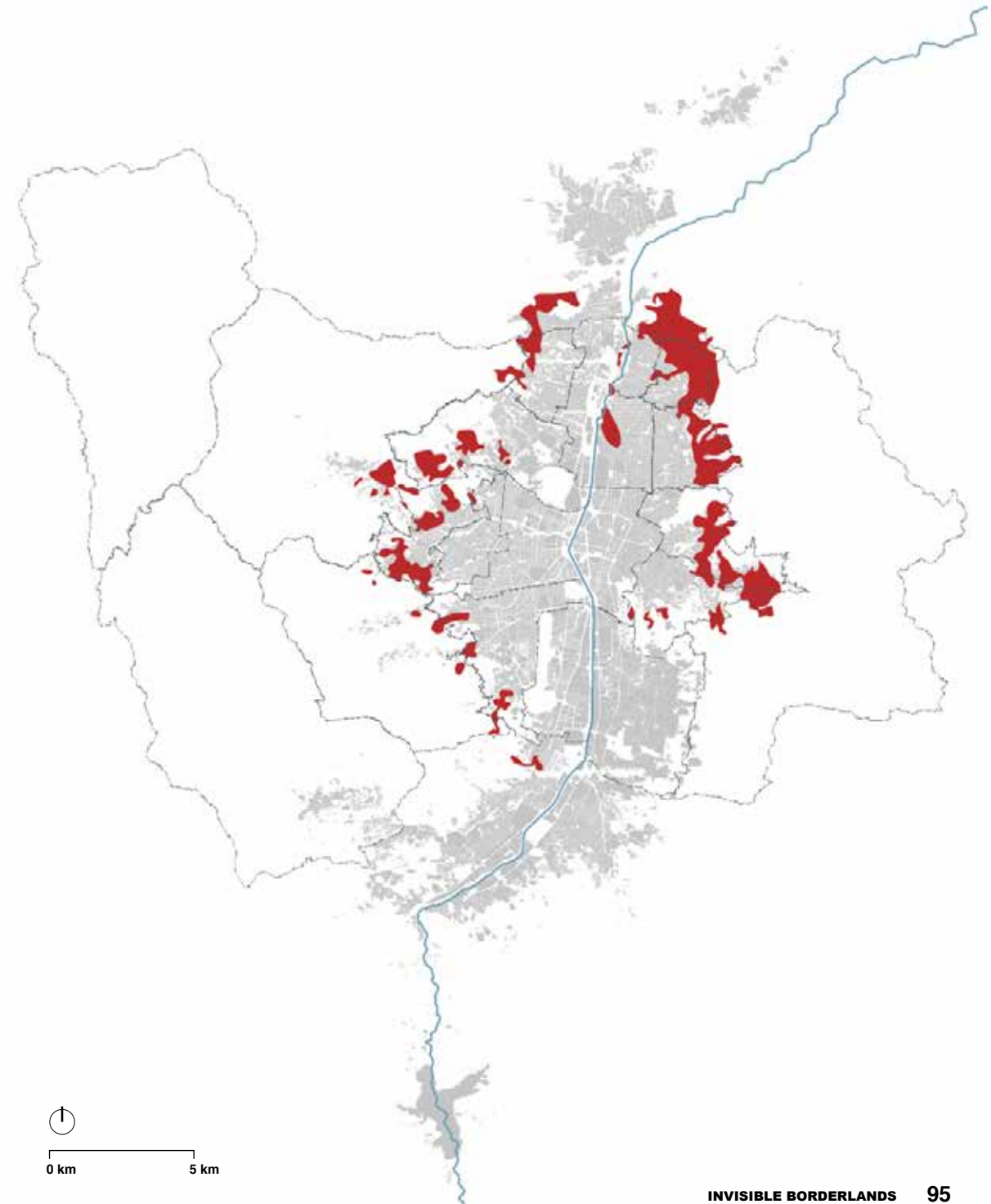
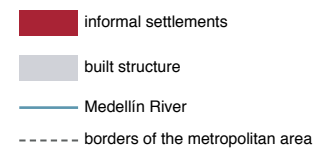
Borders of Marginalization and Informality

High slopes have exerted pressure for the city to grow along a spine. As the result of fast individual growth, informal settlements normally lack the capacity not only to build communal spaces that in time would provide for the social needs and services their dense urbanisation demands; but what is more problematic is to even leave open spaces in anticipation for this to happen. As a consequence, when the government arrives, it is almost always too late and costly to carve out space within the informal fabrics in order to provide for these shared spaces, as the process involves both demolition and displacement of its inhabitants.

Currently, there is no exact number of how many people live in informal settlements in the city of Medellín, but it is estimated that **around 1/3 of the citizens still live below the poverty line**, without access to basic infrastructure.

Colombia Reports, 2018

Fig 49. Medellín's Informality (2018)



Colombia Reports, 2018

Borders of violence

After years of relative peaceful situation between the illegal gangs in Medellín, gang-related crime and violence in Colombia's second largest city since 2018 is on a rebound (**626 murders were recorded in 2018, which is over 30% higher rate than 2017**).

Colombia Reports, 2018

The city has approximately **240 different gangs with an estimated 5,000 members, the majority of whom are loyal to the Oficina de Envigado**, the organised crime syndicate that once was the local enforcer army of late drug lord Pablo Escobar.

Colombia Reports, 2018

Medellín's downtown area since always had the city's highest homicide rate because it is where most drug dealing, fencing and contraband trading takes place. **Ongoing gang wars are mainly affecting the peripheries of the western districts, especially in San Javier (Comuna 13), Robledo (Comuna 7) and Belén (Comuna 16)**. This archipelagos of urban violence are ordering the segregation of the city and create "urban order" and control of the everyday life activities.

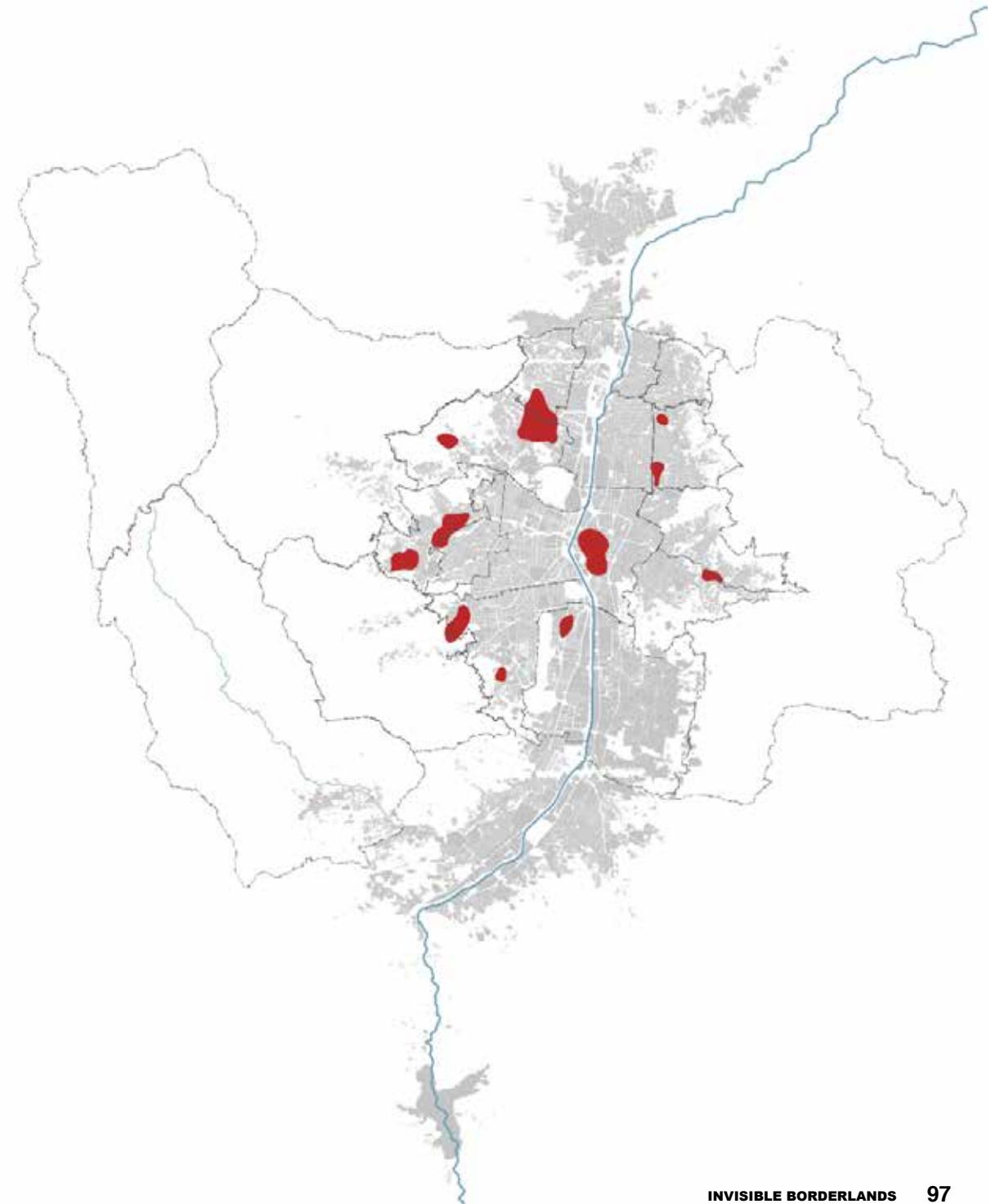


Fig 50. Medellín's Polygons of Violence (2018 / 2019)

- polygons of violence
- built structure
- Medellín River
- borders of the metropolitan area

2.4 Medellín today: A future still fragile

Here I would like to go from the place where I left at the beginning of this chapter - telling the story of how Medellín reinvented itself. I feel obliged to say that after some time passed in this city full of life and excitement, I feel that there is no miracle behind the story of reinvention. I really truly believe that this change was not given as such - this happened throughout years of investments in the city. Through love for the place where you were born, through stubbornness and dedication. And here we are today, talking about a city and the story that everyone knows, writing about the park-libraries, the orange staircases and cable cars that spring up from the mountains. The city's fathers, they started strong, but somehow it seems that they did not succeed fully to create the unified communities they were aiming for. Even today, as I write this, the underprivileged are still living on the top of the mountains left out in great manner from the formal city and its everyday life dynamics. This challenge is something that I was trying to understand and also to address through this publication.

When walking around the city of Medellín many things are crystal clear. First of all, a lot of its neighbourhoods are divided through big roads. Clear as it is, the first division of the city is made by its infrastructure. The second observation I want to offer is based on the socio-economic factors. Big gated complexes of housing for its privileged communities versus almost unreachable mountains of low income areas, making even further division between its citizens. Life on the street against life inside the mansion. This is a typical, everyday image of the city. Of course, such image is not to be seen everywhere. We can argue that there are parts of the city where inclusive citizens' dynamics can be seen and public life can be enjoyed. But even in such places, this kind of "citizens' luxury" is limited by access or by certain hours.

El Tiempo, 2018

In 2018, Medellín tallied 626 homicides, a 7.6 percent increase from the prior year. Battles among criminal groups were responsible for more than half the murders. Much of the bloodshed occurred in Comuna 13, a district on the western outskirts of the city that saw the largest jump in homicides, from 48 in 2017 to 91 last year. Neighbourhood gangs, known as combos, battled it out on the steep hills overlooking the city in an effort to control local extortion rings and drug sales. In the following page, based on site observations and primary research, I offer the main emerging challenges that occur within the urban core of Medellín today.

Emerging issues in Medellín:

#1 Economic

- income inequalities
- poverty
- unemployment
- lack of commercial offer and no diversity
- substandard touristic offer
- shortage on job opportunities

#2 Political

- power relations
- social tensions
- peace agreement
- lack of governmental presence
- deficient public health care

#3 Social

- spatial marginalisation and exclusion
- zoning and social homogeneity
- poor social mobility
- uneven access to public goods
- poor living conditions
- lack of "active" spaces and public events

#4 Security

- high rate of violence and homicides
- marginalisation
- discrimination
- lack of cohesion and participation
- abandonment at night

#5 Environmental

- vulnerability
- lack of resilience
- contamination
- waste management
- land degradation
- air and water pollution

#6 Spatial

- substandard design of public space
- substandard infrastructure
- vacant lots / buildings
- poor walkability
- lack of inclusive public spaces
- deficit of green areas
- lack of orientation
- lack of urban furniture
- missing centrality
- invisible borders

PHOTOESSAY

Urban borders and
everyday life in Medellín



Fig 51. Photo of the center of Medellín, overlooking at the Palace of Culture placed on the Botero Square. The photo depicts the Metro Medellín, one of the symbols of the urban transformation of the city. [Official Travel Guide of Medellín, 2007]



Fig 52. Photo of Medellín, overlooking at the city, depicting the cityscape of Comuna 12 and Comuna 11 in the background and capturing the brick landscape of Comuna 13 in front plan.
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 53. Photo of Medellín, overlooking the city at night and the hills of informality.
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]

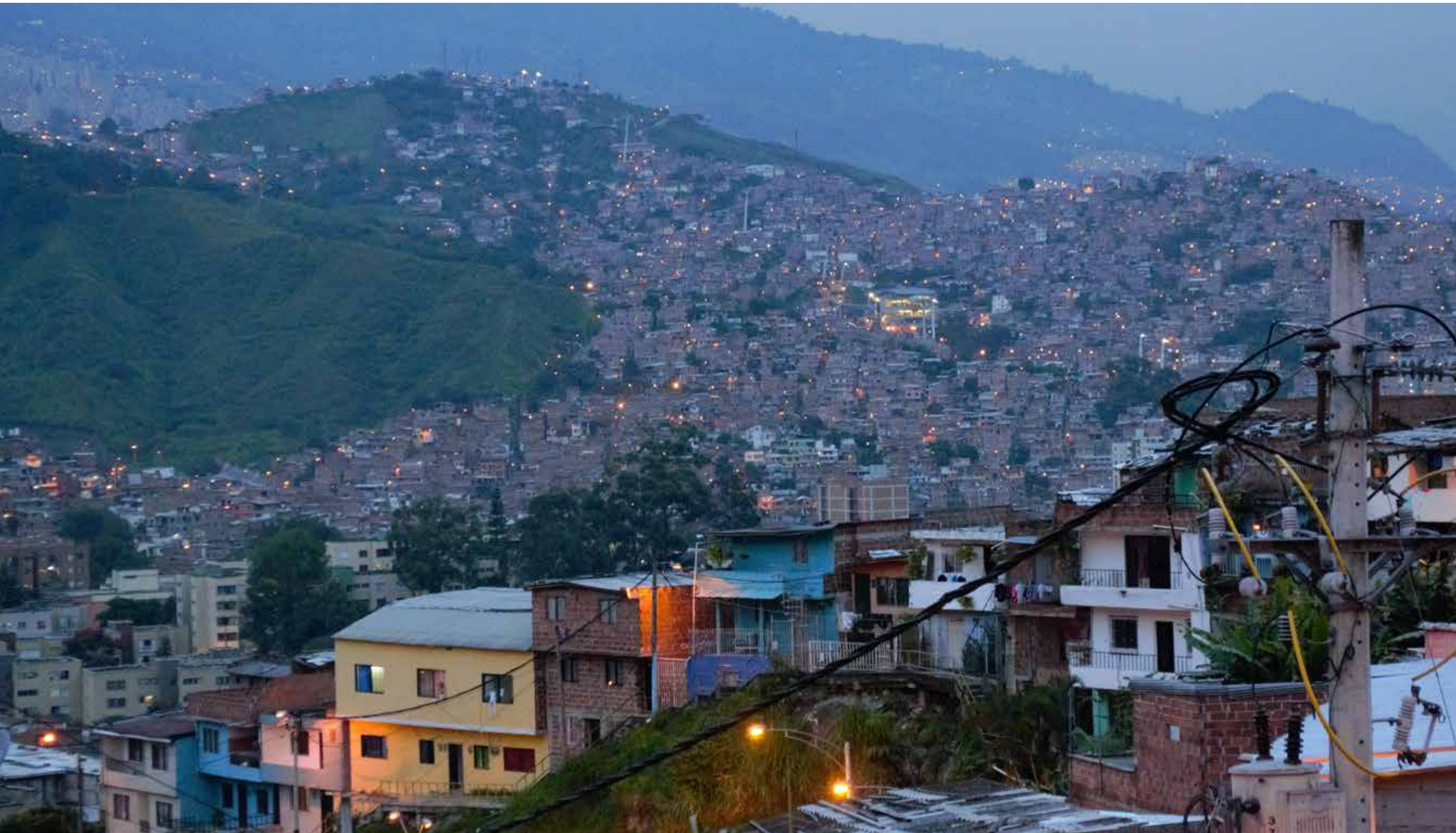




Fig 54-56. Scenes from everyday life.

(Fig.54) Busy street filled with different kind of commercial activities in the barrio 20 de Julio in Comuna 13; **(Fig. 55)** Two children walking around the Viaduct in barrio La Independencia 1; **(Fig. 56)** Comuna 13 and Scene of social housing versus single family housing in barrio El Socorro.

[Photos taken by the author, 2017]



3

INVISIBLE BORDERLANDS IN COMUNA 13: (B)ORDERING SPACES

Unfolding the problem by
understanding the invisible
borderlands

3.1 The shadows of an unseen hand

On a narrow street marking the boundary between two neighbourhoods of Comuna 13, while overlooking Medellín, I gaze at the city lights shining from across the valley. I stand on a street corner together with Johnny, one community leader, while drinking beer and watching people dancing. I ask myself if the electrified group of young men standing next to us, smoking cigarettes and drinking rum might be part of a combo, Colombian slang for gang. Johnny tells me about his work. He is the co-founder of an organisation called Stairways Storytellers, an NGO working with the youth in the neighbourhood for years now. Besides their activities in informal education, collaborating with many "extranjeros" from all over the world, who are willing to contribute and educate the children in an unorthodox way, teaching them different skills in various fields. They also organise street parties just like this one to bring people together. Johnny's organisation aims to empower the youth through the informal education as well as to tell the history of the Comuna 13 in a very unconditional way - by giving free tours to tourists.

I decided to change the subject and be straightforward with what is on my mind - violence and invisible borders. I started asking Johnny questions about how the combos are organised and how do they decide where to draw the invisible lines of their territories. A young boy of about 10 years comes towards us, looks at me, stops and starts to explain that one of his uncles was shot two months ago on the same spot where we stood, just because he crossed an invisible border. Johnny asks me to put away my notebook and camera, and remains expressionless...

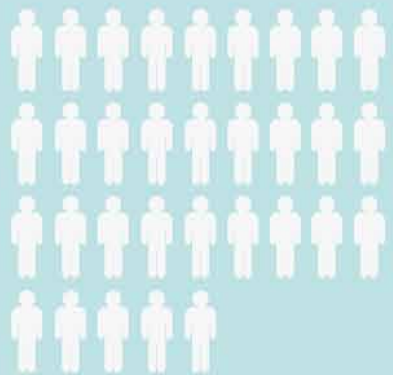
An extract from author's journal,
22 October, 2017

Fig 57. Photo of a local child looking at the hills of informality in Comuna 13. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]



POPULATION (2018 est.)

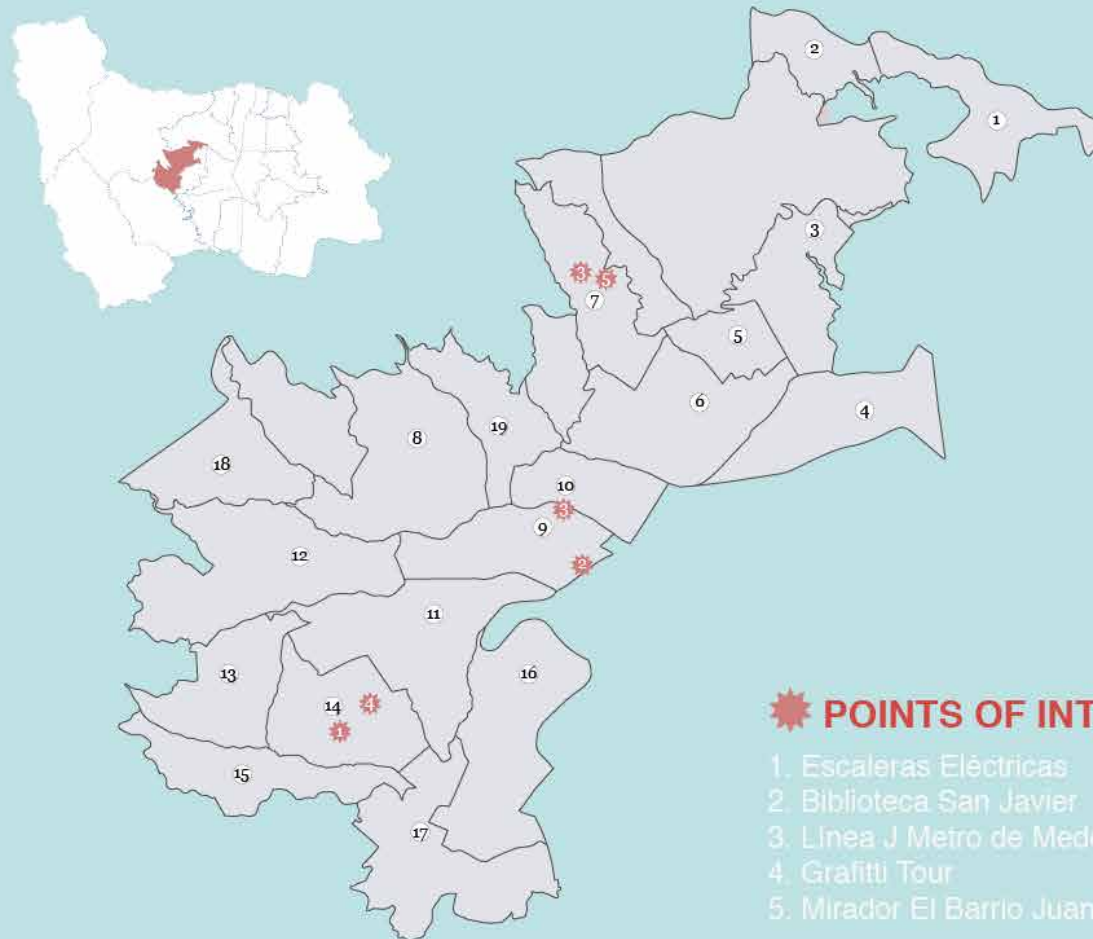
161 000



 **58,983**

 **75,489**

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION



INFOSHEET #3

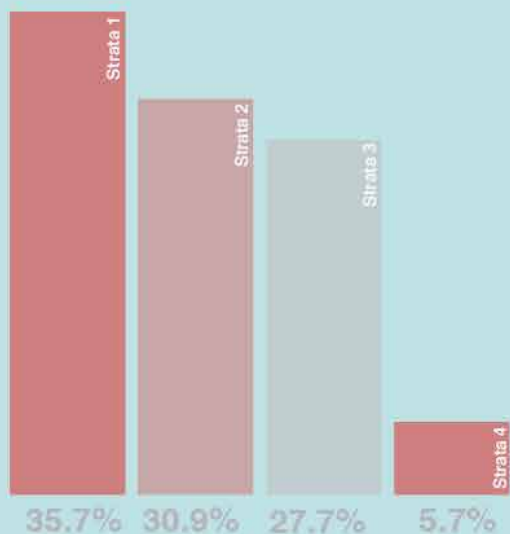
● NEIGHBOURHOODS

1. El Pesebre
2. Blanquikal
3. Santa Rosa de Lima
4. Los Alcázares
5. Metropolitano
6. La Pradera
7. Juan XXIII
8. Antonio Nariño
9. San Javier 1
10. San Javier 2
11. Veinte de Julio
12. El Salado
13. Nuevos Conquistadores
14. Las Independencias
15. El Corazón
16. Belencito
17. Betania
18. Eduardo Santos
19. El Socorro

★ POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Escaleras Eléctricas
2. Biblioteca San Javier
3. Línea J Metro de Medellín
4. Graffiti Tour
5. Mirador El Barrio Juan XXIII

SOCIAL STRATUM



AREA

7km²

DENSITY

19,210 p/km²

the most densely populated municipality

VIOLENCE

34 combos

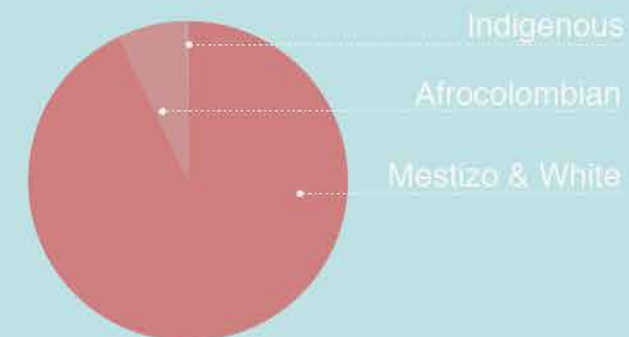
(gangs)

over 90

homicides in 2018

after years of declining violence murders rise again in Comuna 13 since 2018

ETHNOGRAPHY



Guerrilla war | **Peace talks** ~~X failed~~ | **Peace talks** ~~X failed~~ | **Peace talks** ~~X failed~~ | **Peace Process** | **Agreement**

Ruled by the Narcos | **Murder Capital** | **Operation Orion** | **Still notorious** | **Everybody is a victim**

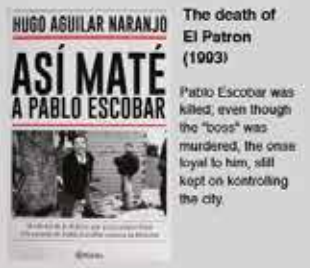
controlled by those loyal to Pablo Escobar

Medellin witnessed 6,349 killings, a murder rate of 380 per 100,000 people (1991)

Operation Orion
Launched by the Colombian military, dozens of people were killed, over 100 people were injured, 98 people missing and more than 200 families were

Still notorious
Despite all the interventions done, Comuna 13 still remained the most violent neighborhood in Medellin, where 243 out of the city's 2,019 homicides took place and almost 1,500 residents were displaced

Everybody is a victim
February 16: Two 11-year-old boys were abducted by armed men while playing in barrio El Corazon. Police discovered their tortured bodies, dismembered and stuffed in sacks. Just because they crossed something known as *frontera invisible*



Removing guerrilla groups in Comuna13
"Operation Orion" was led first by troops by General Mario Montoya, in conjuncture with (DAS), special forces of the National Police and the District Attorney's office.
"I'll buy the War"
employment and educational programs to youth in exchange for tranquility within neighbourhoods.

Community against the gangs (2012)
A local hip-hop artist, El Duke, was murdered, along with several other hip-hop artists, for daring to speak out against the gang violence



49 Mayors in 40 years

During this time the national law is that mayors are appointed, not elected. This leads to a situation in which mayoral terms last on average 10 months, making it impossible to make long term plans.

The initiatives | **PRIMED** | **POT** | **Parque Biblioteca** | **The Metrocable** | **Escaleras Eléctricas** | **Tourism (2014)**

Initiation of civic engagement and critical thought throughout the city | PUI Project

San Javie Parque Biblioteca - designed by architect Javier Vera Londoño (2006) | The metrocable to La Aurora opened (2008) | Opened the 385-metre long escalator Comuna 13 (2011) | Walking tours started in La Comuna 13 (2014)



TIMELINE #4

3.2 Comuna 13: the ex-fortress of Colombian violence

The most western part of the city of Medellín, San Javier, or simply known as Comuna 13, was the epicentre of crime and drug wars for years (one can still argue that this statement is more than true even nowadays). Comuna 13 is one of the 16 districts in Medellín and is one of the most densely populated areas in the city. The neighbourhood nowadays known for its “*escaleras eléctricas*” is built on a steep hills outside of the main city, a labyrinth of thousands of tiny small brick and cement houses with corrugated metal roofs, splayed, heaped together, with the occasional splash of greenery bringing visual relief, connected by even tinier streets, paths and stairs. The inaccessibility to the highest parts of the neighbourhood resulted into forbidding people to become part of the daily life in the formal city. As expected, poverty is at extremely high rate in this area of the city, even though nowadays the tourism and major municipal efforts to improve the life might give a different impression.

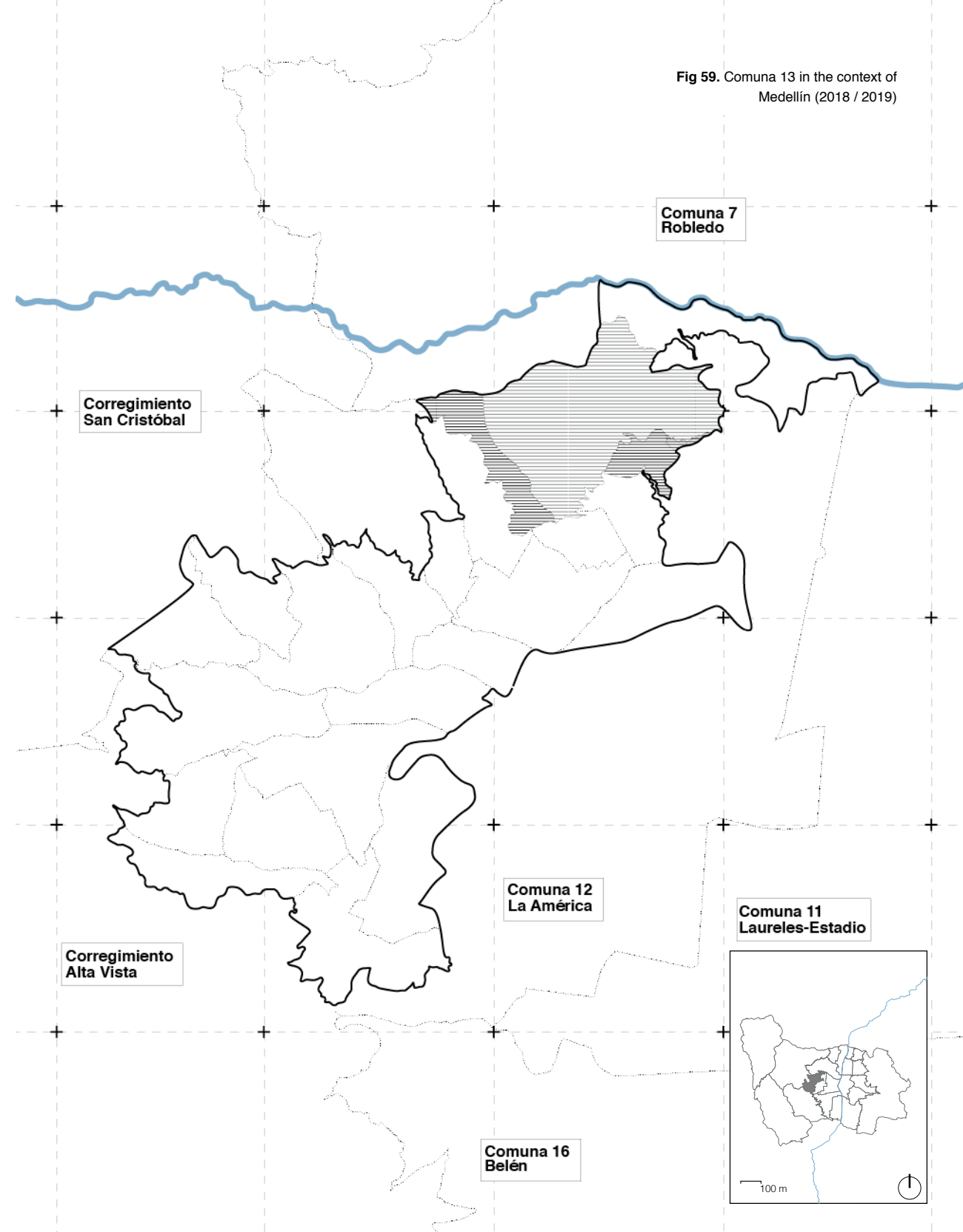
Comuna 13 is located in the western part of the city of Medellín, which is made up of the Comuna 11, Comuna 12, and Comuna 13. In such configuration, the Comuna is situated towards the western end of the city - geographical attributes that have allowed the construction and urbanisation of a large part of this territory to be carried out on the slopes of the mountains. The Comuna has its borders towards north with Comuna 7 - Robledo, towards south with Corregimiento of Alta Vista, to west with the Corregimiento of San Cristóbal and to east with Comuna 12 - La América. In 2017, according to *Medellín Cómo Vamos: Análisis de calidad de vida (Survey of Quality of Life)*, this part of the city had **161,000 inhabitants of which 58,983 were men, and 75,489 women.**

Medellín Cómo Vamos: Análisis de calidad de vida, 2017



Fig 58. Colourful houses in barrio Independencia 1 in Comuna 13. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 59. Comuna 13 in the context of Medellín (2018 / 2019)



Placing Comuna 13 in the middle of the conversation when talking about Medellín implies an action of recognition that has the ability to blur away some of the forever existing stereotypes about the city. This part of the city represents a palmists of layers of many stories - histories that are one of the most disturbing examples of urban violence worldwide, but also stories about a city's transformation that are equally vital and regenerative and set a positive sample. Since this thesis is focused on city's borders of everyday life that construct the territories, and especially on the phenomenon known as invisible borders, further in this part, I will continue to use the same methodology of exhibiting the various borders in the city the same way as until now. The limits of territorial ordering that coincide with the historical, social and cultural limits that are established between neighbourhoods and sectors within a population. For its part, it is important to note that the armed conflict in Colombia generated in many ways the image of the today's territories in the 13th district of Medellín. Moreover, the States's military interventions from 2002 in the Comuna 13 through two main operations known as Operation Mariscal and Operation Orión, which later were recognised as the biggest military operations carried out in an urban area in Colombia brought the division within the Comuna even further. In this sense, one can state that **the exclusion in Medellín, especially the one in Comuna 13, is being constantly constructed through the image of violence.**

Quiceno Toro, Cardona Echeverri, Montoya Gil, 2006

3.2.1 History of urban development in Comuna 13

The History behind the construction of the territory of Comuna 13 dates back to the early 20th century (1938), when the Corregimiento of La America, which today is part of the Comuna 13 that we know, became a Corregimiento of the city. Some years later, in this part of the city the expansion and construction of informal neighbourhoods begins. Some of them are today know as: El Corazón, San Javier, El Salado, El Socorro and La Puerta (today know as Santa Rosa de Lima). All these, with the exception of the neighbourhood of San Javier that today represents the centre of the Comuna, were classified as "invasion neighbourhoods". During the 70s, the construction of some of the neighbourhoods took place (Independencias I, II and III, Veinte de Julio and Nuevos Conquistadores).

The scenario of further invasion of uncultivated land belonging to the territory of Comuna 13 continues in the decade of 2000, now taking into its own perimeter the territory of the neighbourhoods of El Socorro and Juan XXIII and some other sectors. Despite the fact that most of the territory of Comuna 13 has been constructed through land invasion and informal construction of unplanned neighbourhoods the district

has been developed towards its today's scenario through the process of community participation with the support of various community and political organisation collaborating in this activities. These have helped in great manner to develop better life qualities for the community and to empower the citizens how to self-manage their land.

Comuna 13 evolved from discretionary programs (1978–2002) to securitisation and (para)militarisation (2000–2003) and then social urbanism, a program of participatory urban upgrading (2004–2011). The latter, a reformist approach, aims to provide better services, foster participation, and reduce socio-spatial segregation. Underlying these positive aims, however, two contradictions remain concealed: deep-seated inequality resulting from decades of normalised exclusion and the perpetuation of a regime of hyper-securitisation and (para)policing that recreates itself under new governance and spatial arrangements.

Luisa Sotomayor, Dealing with Dangerous Spaces: The Construction of Urban Policy in Medellín, 2016

3.2.2 Violence in Comuna 13

Life as child was not carefree in La 13 (referring to Comuna 13). We had to train ourselves to survive. And had to imagine that it was all a game - living in a war-zone. We would go to school, but once we would hear the shooting, we knew that we cannot go further. We just needed to find a place to hide and wait for it to be over. Sometimes, we were stuck hiding in the sewage pipes, and it lasted for hours... There were times when even at school, we needed to take cover from the bullets. You never knew when you could be shot by a bullet. And many of our friends did had that fatal destiny... remembers Johnny, a community leader in Comuna 13.

Extract from an interview done with a community leader Johnny, 2017

Until the 80s, the Comuna 13, or San Javier, was actually one of the least violent areas in Medellín with a homicide rate well below that of the city average. Things started to drastically change during this period. Unlike other parts of the city where the right-wing armed groups had controlled many territories and had incorporated vigilantes and combos that were previously loyal to Pablo Escobar, the territory of Comuna 13 was controlled by communist urban militias. At that time, the strongest armed groups in the country, FARC and ELN also reached this part of the city and started taking over the control, since it was one of the best strategic points in the city. The situation started to emerge when the right-wing armed groups started to push the leftist away because this part was very well connected with the highway San Javier that connects the city with the port where the import of drugs and weapons was taking place. This kind of situation created the perfect conditions for the uncontrolled violence that started to spread around the Comuna.

Colombia reports, 2012

While Medellín's average homicide rate had been steady around 170 per 100,000 inhabitants around the turn of the century, the homicide rate in the Comuna 13 tripled between 1997 and 2002, going from a relatively low 123 to a staggering 357 per 100,000 inhabitants. In that same period, forced displacement went from three cases to 1259.

Since those days, violence in Comuna 13 became part of the daily conversation between its residents. Murder yesterday, car bomb today, forced displacement tomorrow, extortion everyday. It was never easy for its people, since the informality and the strategical geographical position were always an advantage for the city's vigilantes. Ever since the 80s, the Comuna has experienced one of the highest rates in violence throughout the country. First came the drug lords and they had they share for over 15 years, then there were the armed groups that turned this territory into a battle field, and today the leftovers of these armed groups can be felt all over the place. After 2002 and the shattering Operación Orión they re-grouped into combos and super combos (col. gangs) operating within the borders of the comuna, dealing with any kind of dirty business.

Operación Orión

The year 2002 was one of the most devastating year for the population of the Comuna. It was in fact, the year when the state decided to finally intervene inside the closed territory of the comuna, a territory that has long been closed for the government officials and anyone who has not been part of this part, either resident or a notorious criminal. Comuna 13 was the last part of the country where the guerrillas still had presence. The newly elected president of the country at that time,



Fig 60. Siege of Comuna 13 during Operación Orión [published in *El Espectador*, 2017, (photography) Diana Durán Núñez / Santiago Martínez Hernández 2002]

Alvaro Uribe, held a security council in Medellín on October 15, 2002, and decided that it was about time to intervene and get the rebels by force from the Comuna. October 16, 2002, was the day when the military by force attacked the Comuna 13 with helicopters and armoured vehicles. Soldiers were directed to shoot everything that moved - women, children, old people. October 16, 2002, meant an end for many people. The Operación Orión is not a story with happily ever after. **More than 1,000 soldiers and policemen, supported by armed helicopters, attacked the area 24 hours later. Heavy combat lasted until October 20 after which the police and military had successfully expelled the communist militias from the comuna. Witnesses, local media, BCN commander and Oficina de Envigado chief "Don Berna" have said the police and military were aided by paramilitaries.**

This operation was brutal as much as it can be. With white sheets and handkerchiefs, the residents asked for a break, but the Operation still lasted for several days. It left the residents with many loses - dozens of civilians were murdered. The official number of how many people were murdered has never been publicly issued. Hundreds disappeared without traces. And thousands of people were displaced and forcibly moved from their homes. That was the compensation that many innocent residents had to pay. While the left wing rebels have been moved away from the Comuna, place for the right wing paramilitaries was made. Some argue that the worst during these days passed, but years were needed in order things to come back to normal. Following the devastating events, the Operación Orión was praised as one of the most successful actions against the illegal armed groups. **The year after the siege, the homicide rate in the Comuna 13 dropped from 357 to 72 and the mayor Luis Pérez Gutiérrez claimed 72 hostages**



Fig 61. Siege of Comuna 13 during Operación Orión, [Published in *Semana*, 2017, (photography) Jesús Abad Colorado, 2002]

were rescued from the slums, an assertion that was later denied by other officials. However, residents and human rights organisations began complaining about security forces torturing civilians, arbitrary detentions, disappearances, and that Don Berna, and not the security forces, had taken full control of the Comuna 13, and violence has continued. Nevertheless, official figures on the amount of people who have disappeared since Operación Orión are not publicly available and local authorities have failed to fulfil their promise to investigate the dump site and locate and identify the remains of those who disappeared. The forced displacement that started after the paramilitary incursion in 1999 also continued after the paramilitary groups had taken control. A 2011 study showed that between 2003 and 2009, almost 3,500 people were displaced from the Comuna. City-wide, forced displacement grew more than double since then. The excessive homicide rate that spurred Operación Orión returned after Don Berna's extradition in 2008. Warring fractions of the Oficina de Envigado, later joined by neo-paramilitary group the *Urabeños*, secured that by 2011 the Comuna 13's homicide rate was higher than before the arrival of the paramilitaries. Inhabitants of what once was one of Medellín's most peaceful comuna never settled on a regular peaceful day without the talk of violence ever since.

Los Urabeños (today known as El Clan del Golfo the gulf's clan), is a Colombian drug cartel (formerly a right-wing neo-paramilitary group) involved in the Colombian armed conflict. It is considered one of the most powerful criminal organizations in Colombia with some 3,000 members in the inner circle of the organization. In late 2011 Los Urabeños declared war on Los Rastrojos over the control of the drug trade in Medellín. Los Urabeños is one of the organizations that appeared after the demobilization of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia.



Fig 62. Commemoration of 15 years since the Operación Orión in Comuna 13. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

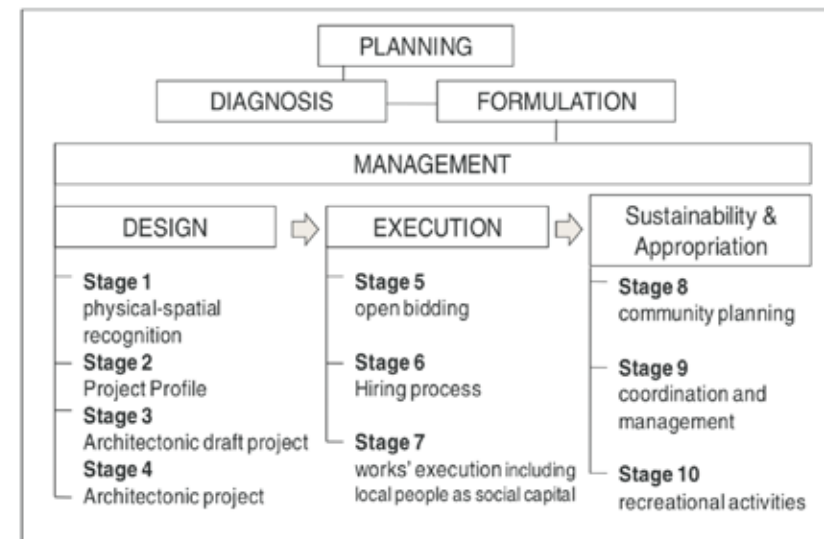
3.2.3 Social Urbanism in Comuna 13: Evolution of bold ideas

As one of the most vulnerable areas in the city, Comuna 13 became part of the urban transformation and regeneration program of the local government. Here, I would not cover the various interventions done

since the early 80s, but I would rather focus on the more recent history and some of the most important interventions done through the implementation of the PUI Plan (2006 - 2012). In 2004, the city got its new mayor - the mathematician, Sergio Fajardo that became world wide famous for its non-orthodox approach of city renewal, focusing on education and urban regeneration in order to solve city's most emerging issues. An "equal city for all and where all citizens can construct relations stimulated by neighbourhoods rich in services, culture and public space" became the main goal of the 3 year development plan of Medellín 2004-2007. Poverty, inequality, violence and the lack of participatory arenas that would guarantee good governance were identified by the development plan as obstacles for achieving the goals of the city as a whole. Hence, integrated and participatory upgrading projects were given the highest priority in the political agenda. The local administration considered this as strategic, believing that that the improvement of the social, economic and spatial problems of these neighbourhoods would contribute to the development of the city as a whole. In many ways, this mission resulted with great success.

Municipio de Medellín, 2004

The first intervention revolves around creating inclusiveness and vibrant public spaces with the main focus of education. This is how the construction of Parque Biblioteca San Javier occurred - a school, green public space, urban orchard, and a gathering hotspot for young people. The second stage of the urban regeneration focused on further construction of inclusive, and appealing public space as well as reactivation of small intersections within the Comuna, infrastructure and public buildings.



McNamara, 2009

These reforms brought the benefits of increased access to public spaces, improved relationships between the residents and Medellín's local government, and addressed critical issues of social inclusion. Ever since these events, Comuna 13 has seen increased employment and improvement of the community life through various communal activities, access to education and information, and strengthened community culture.

Fig 63. Methodological Diagram [based on: Medellín Mayor's Office - BID; Integral Urban Project Document 2006]

Education and Public Buildings: Parque Biblioteca San Javier

McNamara, 2009

The inauguration of the San Javier Library took place in 2006. It was the first *Parque Biblioteca* network in the city, build at a cost of \$4.5 million. According to McNamara, the government of Medellin defined the Parque Bibliotecas as “**centers for coexistence that promote social inclusion and community participation within their reliable sites and with the necessary infrastructure to execute programs and projects that are aimed at science, culture, entertainment, diversion, new technologies, and mainly to promote respect towards other ideas and opinions**”. The Project was designed by the architect Javier Vera Londoño. The main idea behind the project is to support the idea of cultural and educational improvement of the community life, as well as to strengthen the participation of the community activities, access to information, and to promote equality. Aside from its educational purpose, the Parque Biblioteca has also a leisure component, which means that there is place for different kind of sports activities, theatre, conference rooms, children’s playground and green areas.



Fig 64-65. Ground Floor Plan and Section from the Parque Bibliotheca San Javier.
[Graphics by JAVIER VERA ARQUITECTOS, 2006]



Fig 66. The Public space in front of the Parque Biblioteca San Javier. This area is often used as a plaza where the different local artists perform for the community.
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]



Fig 67. Parque Bibliotheca San Javier as seen from the Metro Station San Javier.
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Mobility: Metro, Metro-Cable and Escaleras Eléctricas

The mobility was also a very important component throughout the process of reinvention of this district. Before this intervention, many people living in the highest parts of the western hills of the city, did not have any access to the urban life inside their district, and commuting to the city center was totally unimaginable for them. This situation changed right after the implementation of the mobility interventions.

The Line B is the metro line that connects San Javier with the rest of the public transport and the city. From the last stop of Line B, there is the additional connection towards the hillsides, enabled with the Cable Car (Line J). This additional line allowed many citizens to reduce their commute time from over one hour to less than ten minutes. It did not just reduce the community time, it also enabled access to job opportunities and helped towards reducing the borders between the formal and informal parts of the city.



Fig 69. The rail trucks of the Metro Medellín (Station San Javier) looking towards Comuna 12, Laureles.
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]



Fig 68. The Metro Station San Javier as seen from the Parque Bibliotheca San Javier.
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]



Fig 70. The interior of the Metro and Cable Car Station San Javier. Line J going towards neighbourhood Juan XXIII.
[El Colombiano, 2018]

As one of the most famous projects done throughout this process are the orange electric staircases - *escaleras eléctricas*, situated in the neighbourhood Independencia I. They zigzag up the steep slope, almost 30 stories high; They are in operation Monday to Friday, from six o'clock in the morning until late at night, on Sundays and public holidays from eight to seven o'clock. The escalator enabled many residents who live in the neighbourhood to have easy access to their everyday environment, jobs and schools. The escalator paths do not just have a mobility component - they also represent a public space, small gardens, and opportunity for different type of small commercial activities that bring people economic benefit.

Architect Jeff Geisinger, who investigates the built environment's impact on social capital traveled to Medellín in 2010 and 2011 and noted the following about the escalator design process:



Fig 72-73. Comuna 13's steep and dangerous streets before and after the intervention - a view of the escalator, stairs and plazas afterwards in barrio Independencia.

[Monica Guerra, EDU, 2017]

Jeff Geisinger
The Architectural League of
New York

"Forming committees of neighbourhood parents and children during the design phase, the municipal architects communicated the benefits of the new transportation network and taught safe and respectful practices when riding. I attended a meeting in which a social coordinator, using design pamphlets made by the project's architects, cultivated awareness and a sense of ownership with a group of neighbourhood children to promote the sharing of knowledge and respect of the project to their peers. The community even participates in model-building workshops with the architects to raise excitement about the escalators and envision the positive changes to their neighbourhood".



Fig 71. The Cable Car going from San Javier Metro Station towards the barrio Juan XXIII. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

CATALOGUE

The production of urban borders
in Comuna 13

Political Borders

Comuna 13 seizes an area of 7 km², divided through **19 neighbourhoods** officially recognised by the Administrative Department of Planning (*Departamento Administrativo de Planeación*) in 2000.

These neighbourhoods are:

- (1) El Pesebre
- (2) Blanquizal
- (3) Santa Rosa de Lima
- (4) Los Alcázares
- (5) Metropolitano
- (6) La Pradera
- (7) Juan XXIII-La Quebra
- (8) San Javier 1
- (9) San Javier 2
- (10) Veinte de Julio
- (11) Belencito
- (12) Betania
- (13) El Corazón
- (14) Las Independencias (I, II and III)
- (15) Nuevos Conquistadores
- (16) El Salado
- (17) Eduardo Santos
- (18) Antonio Nariño and
- (19) Socorro

What is important to note is that for the construction of the daily life of the inhabitants that live in this territory the official political - administrative division does not play any role. For them, this official division that has been made does not recognise the real conditions of the community as well as the historical context. Because of this, the community recognises another division of the Comuna 13 which identifies **32 sectors or neighbourhoods**. These neighbourhoods are: *El Corazón, La Asomadera, Betania, Belencito, Villa Laura, Independencias 1, Independencias 2, Independencias 3, Nuevos Conquistadores, Veinte de Julio, El Salado, Eduardo Santos, Quintas de San Javier, Antonio Nariño, San Javier 1, San Javier 2, El Socorro, La Gabriela, La Luz del Mundo, Altos de la Virgen, Juan XXIII, La Quebra, La Divisa, La Pradera Parte Baja, La Pradera Parte Alta, Santa Rosa de Lima, Metropolitano, Alcázares, Blanquizal, El Pesebre, El Paraíso, Mirador de Calasanz*. This informal division of which there are no written records on where exactly the line between these sectors in the Comuna is drawn, is the result of the action of the community boards, which basically represent the organisations that are in charge of managing and constructing the territories of the comuna.

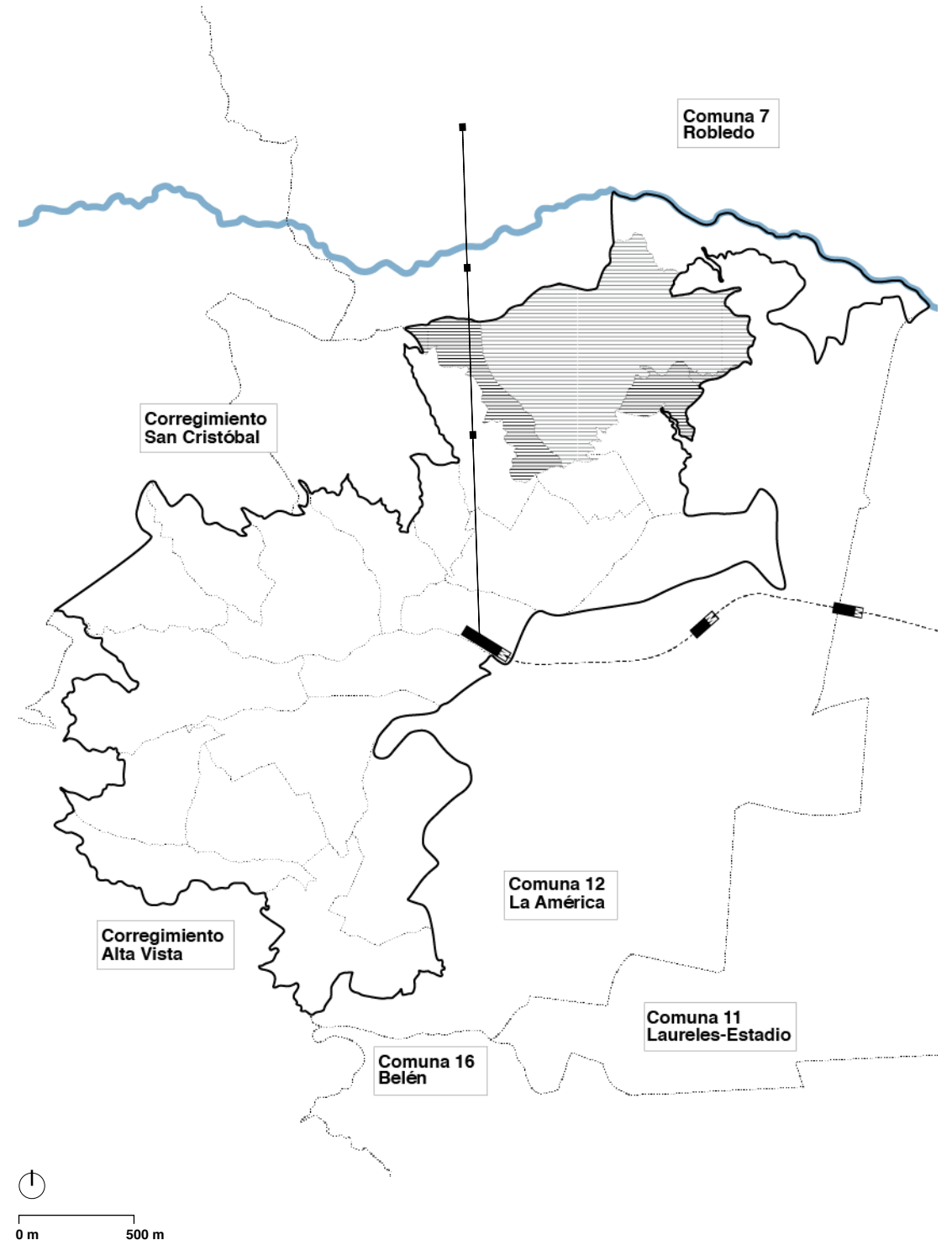


Fig 74. Political Borders of Comuna 13, (2018 / 2019)

- administrative formal borders
- area of extension
- River Quebrada Iguana
- barrios
- Medellín Metro
- Metro Cable

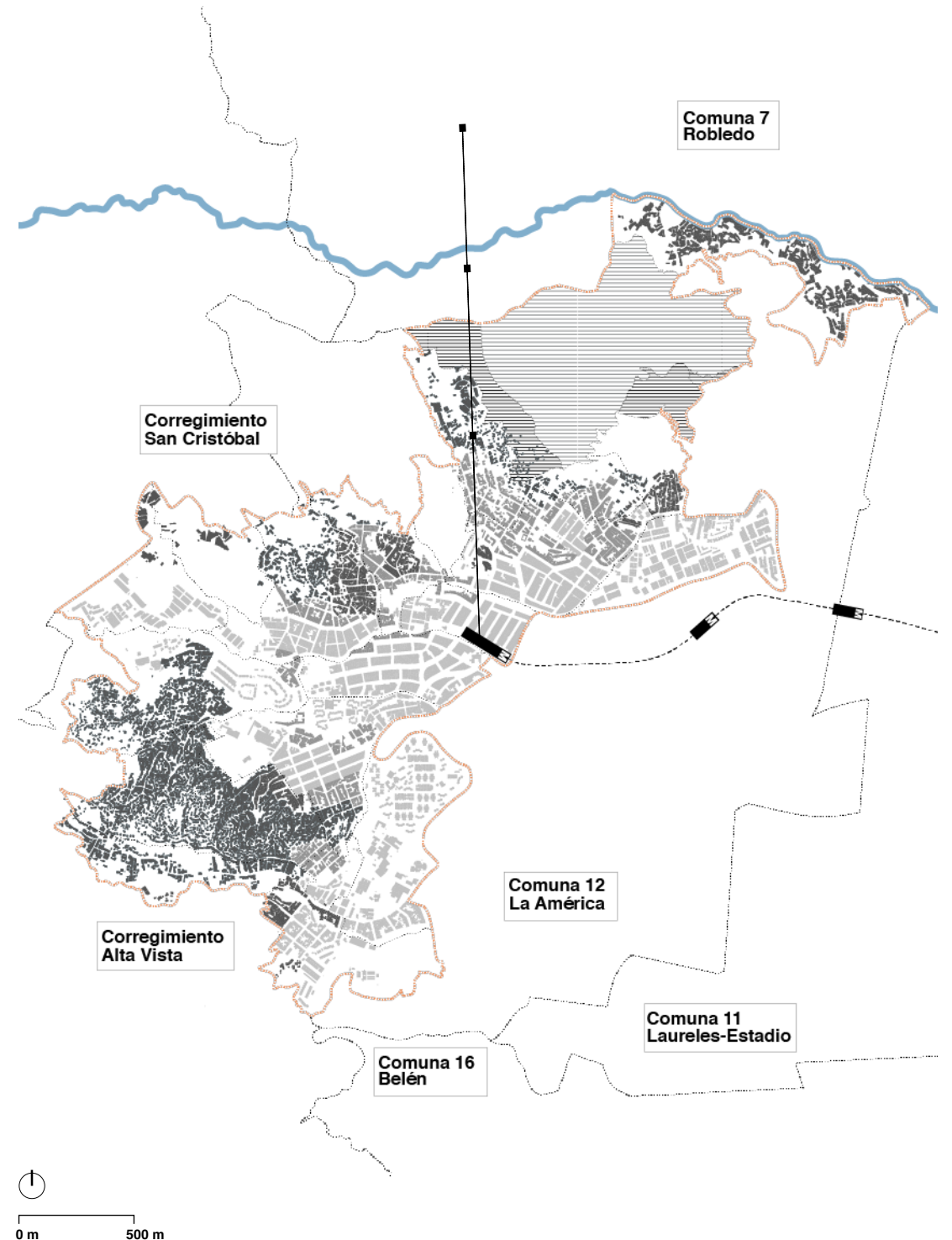
Borders of urban development

The major part of the constructed dwellings throughout the whole territory of Comuna 13 have been a product of an informal planning of the territory and a lot of them have been built in areas of high risk. This conditions determine that even today, there is a high amount of vulnerability, exclusion and extreme poverty rambling around the Comuna 13.

These issues are carved up even more to the core of the daily life of the community through the lack of government presence in many parts of the comuna, which creates a lot of problems experienced in daily life such as the shortage of public services, infrastructure, garbage collection, high density from overpopulating the mountain slopes and extreme poverty.

Fig 75. Development Stages of Comuna 13, from 20th century until today (2018 / 2019)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| administrative formal borders | ■ Metro Cable |
| ▤ administrative formal borders | ▨ planned development |
| ■ area of extension | ▩ invasive development legalised through PRIMED |
| — River Quebrada Iguana | ■ invasive development, not legalized |
| ○ barrios | |
| — Medellin Metro | |

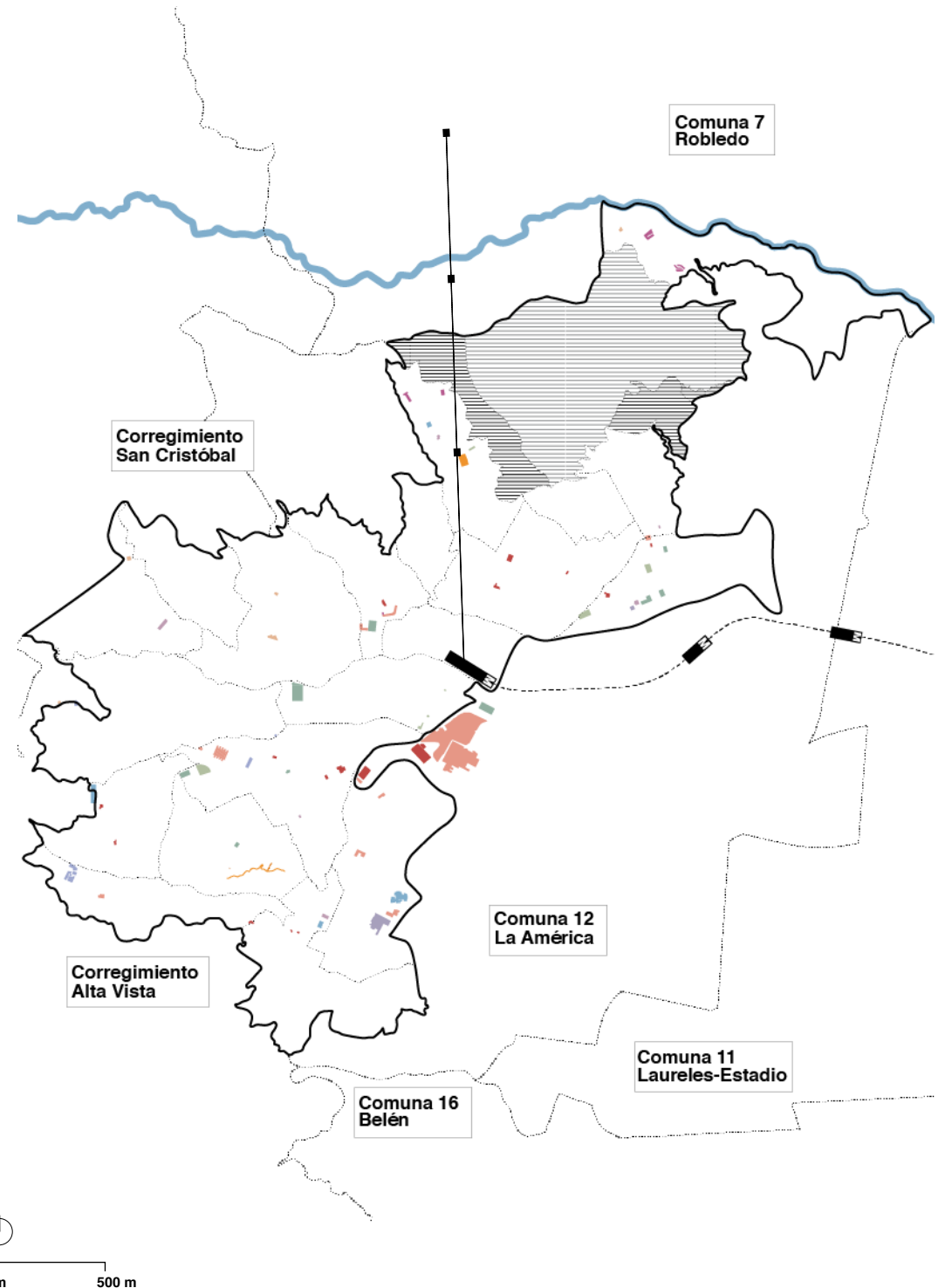


Borders of Production

When it comes to the services and activities offered within the area of Comuna 13, one can talk about two major things - education and religion. The schools are seen as one of the moving forces of the society and this is why, it is very important to have an accessible school in almost every barrio (neighbourhood) of the Comuna. When it comes to public spaces, one would say that in the Latin American city, there are two hotspots - the street ("la calle") and the football court ("la cancha"). These two spaces are the magnet of everyday activities in every barrio in the Comuna and they are directing the everyday life. Sport, performances from street artists, graffiti, vendors selling food and refreshments. Even the criminal activities happen here.

Fig 76. Land Use in Comuna 13, (2018 / 2019)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| administrative formal borders | public administration |
| ▨ area of extension | sport |
| — River Quebrada Iguana | hospital |
| — Medellín Metro | community center |
| — Metro Cable | public space |
| ■ religious buildings | public infrastructure |
| ■ education | culture |



Borders of Social Urbanism

Through participatory budget funding process promoted by the Administration of the mayor Sergio Fajardo, the Communal Council of Comuna 13 decided in 2004 to invest \$ 170,000,000 (one hundred and seventy million pesos) in order to perform diagnosis of the situation of the comuna and the issues related to its future development. In 2005, there was a second moment an additional funding of \$ 90,000,000 (ninety million pesos) with an objective of formulating a Development Plan for the Comuna 13, based on the knowledge gathered from previous year.

The local development plan had the following vision:
In 2020, commune 13 will be a territory of peace, where the participation and leadership of its inhabitants will be recognised locally, nationally and internationally, working to achieve a better quality of life, where education is the main way to achieve a sustainable harmony with the environment, the economic, social and political development of the community.

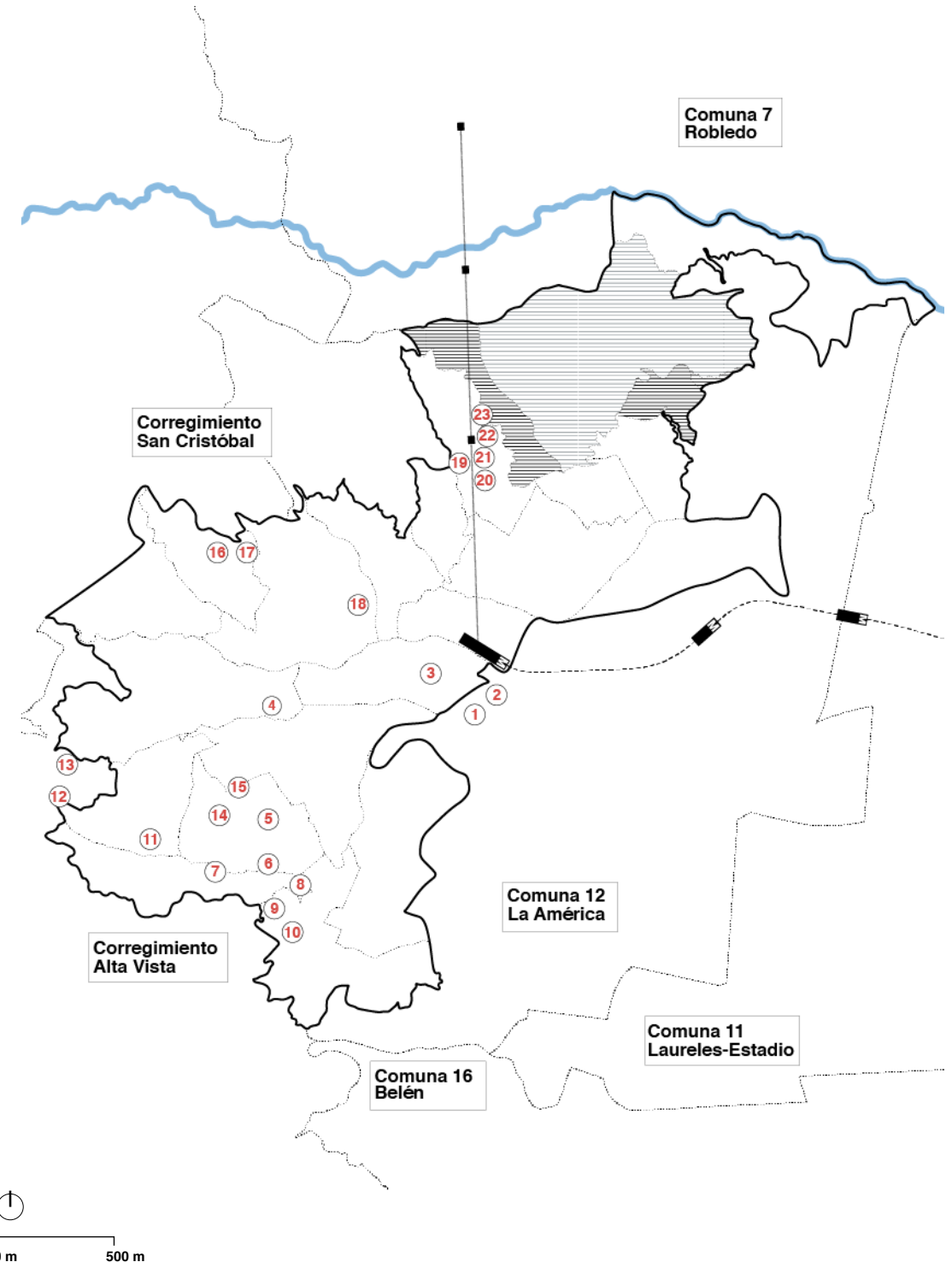
Alcaldía de Medellín, 2006, pp.14

List of the Projects of Social Urbanism in Comuna 13:

1. Parque Biblioteca San Javier
2. Educational Institution Bendikta Zur Nieder
3. Urban passage Carrera 99
4. Sport Center Antonio Nariño
5. Urban passage Carrera 109
6. Park 20 de Julio
7. Reversal Independencias 1
8. Reversal Independencias 2
9. Escaleras eléctricas
10. Viaduct Media Ladera 1
11. House for the elderly
12. Sport Center El Salado
13. Via Conductividad Barrio El Salado
14. School La Independencia
15. Court of justice
16. Commemorate House El Socorro
17. Stabilisation works
18. Parte de las Teresas
20. Park of the children (Parque de los niños)
21. Environmental Park
22. Urban passage Carrera 49
23. Connecting trails

Fig 77. Regeneration Projects (PUIs) in Comuna 13. [Urbam, EAFIT, 2014]

- administrative formal borders
- ▨ Laureles Campestre
- ▨ botadero de escombros La Margarita EEVVM
- ▨ area of extension
- River Quebrada Iguana
- ① PUI Projects location
- Medellin Metro
- Metro Cable



List of active gangs in Comuna 13:

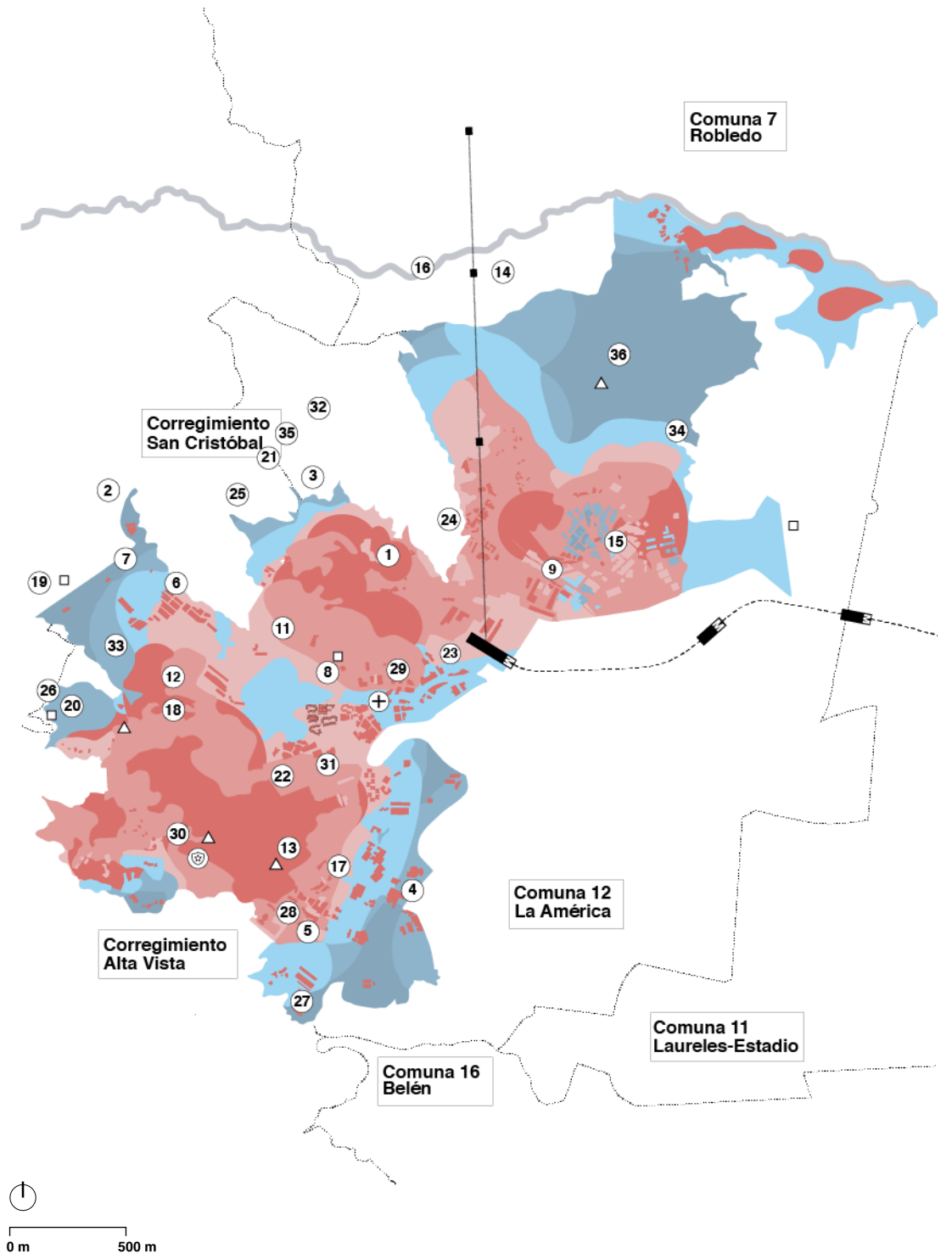
1. La Agonia
2. Guadarrama
3. Antonio Nariño
4. Belencito
5. Betania
6. Cuatro Esquinas
7. Eduardo Santos
8. El Chisepro del 20
9. El Coco
10. El Pesebre
11. El Salado
12. La 115
13. La Independencia / Los del Uno
14. La Divisa
15. La Pradera
16. La Quiebra / Juan XXIII
17. La Torre
18. La Urba
19. Los Paracos
20. Los Pucas
21. Peñitas
22. Plan del Che
23. San Javier
24. El Socorro
25. La Luza del Mundo / Alto de la Virgen
26. Travesías
27. La Sexta
28. Curvitas
29. Pirusos
30. Reversadero del Dos
31. Los del 20 / Zonita
32. La Loma
33. El Seis
34. Metropolitano
35. San Pedro
36. La Gabrielia

Borders of crime

The map shows the current distribution of different gangs (combos) throughout the Comuna 13. Namely, there are currently 34 combos that are "operating" within the territory of the Comuna. If we analyze the map, the highest density of combos can be found in barrios of 20 de Julio, El Salado and in the central part of the comuna. The map also suggests that the position of governmental bodies such as police or military base do not suggest the less density of gangs.

Fig 78. Comuna 13 Gang Distribution & Homicides' Density (2004 - 2018)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| administrative formal borders | △ barrios with military base |
| ▨ Laureles Campestre | □ National Police of Colombia |
| ▨ botadero de escombros La Margarita EEVVM | ⊕ House of Justice |
| ■ area of extension | ⊙ police station |
| — River Quebrada Iguana | ■ barrios with low gang presence & rate of homicides |
| ① PUI Projects location | ■ barrios with high gang presence & rate of homicides |
| — Medellin Metro | |



Borders of violent acts: Fronteras Invisibles

This represents one part of the summary results from the field research done during my stay in Medellín. I tried to map all of the current existing invisible borders within the territory of Comuna 13.

The existence of the invisible borders constructed by urban violence and so-called "casual" division of the territory between different gangs "operating" inside the Comuna 13 leads to the conclusion:

1. Invisible borders are always placed within the outline of public spaces, such as street, plaza, sports field;
2. There is an unmistakable connection between the urban violence (density of homicides) and the existence of invisible borders;
3. There are existing results pointing out specific tools and methodologies that have the capacity to manage and negotiate the invisible borders. These can be traceable through:
 - installation of urban elements within the public spaces
 - strengthening of urban infrastructure
 - public amenities
 - art in public space
 - urban furniture and public illumination
 - public security (police presence, but also "eyes on the street"-presence of the local residents into the public life)

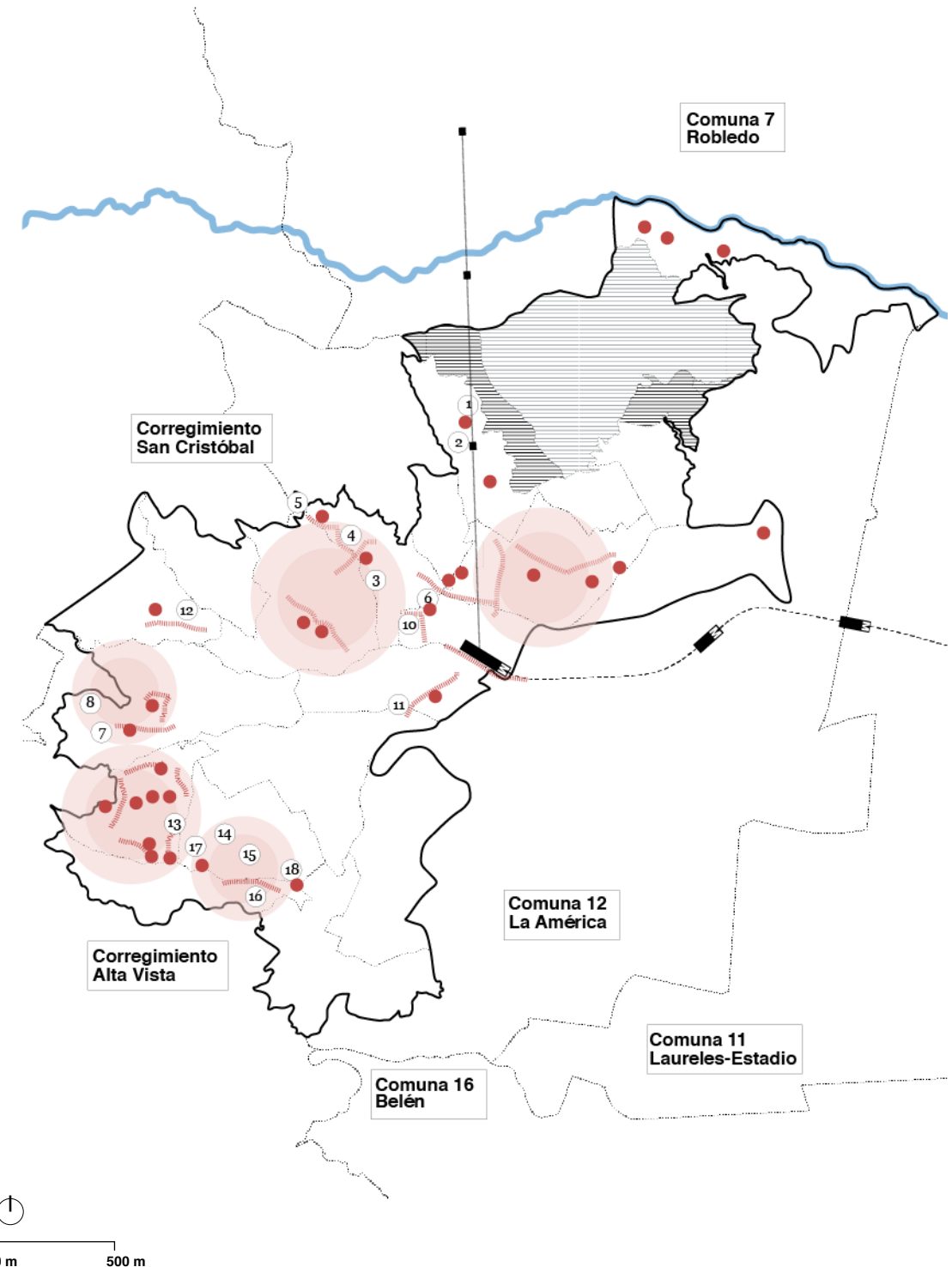


Fig 79. Location of the Comuna's 13 invisible borders and homicide (2018 / 2019)

..... administrative formal borders invisible borders
▨ area of extension	○ polygons of homicides
— River Quebrada Iguana	● homicides 2017/2018
— Medellín Metro	① PUI Projects location
— Metro Cable	



1. Barrio Juan XXIII



2. Barrio Juan XXIII



3. Barrio El Soccoro



4. Barrio El Soccoro



5. Barrio El Soccoro



6. Barrio San Javier 2



7. Barrio El Salado



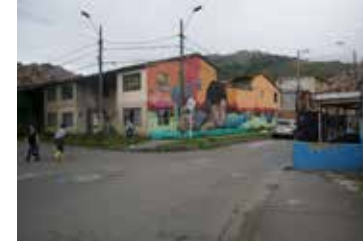
8. Barrio El Salado



9. Barrio El Soccoro



10. Barrio San Javier 2



11. Barrio San Javier 2



12. Barrio Antonio Nariño



13. Barrio Independencia II / La Torre



14. Barrio Independencia II



15. Barrio Nuevos Conquistadores



16. Barrio Independencia I



17. Barrio Independencia II / La Torre



18. Barrio Plan del Che

Fig 80-97. Photos of the location of the Comuna's 13 invisible borders and homicides (2018 / 2019)
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Emotional Topography in (B)ordering Spaces

As part of the research process, I did an "ad-hoc" workshop, covering the whole territory of the Comuna 13, walking around the barrios and asking people the following questions:

1. Where do you feel safe? (esp. ¿Dónde te sientes seguro?)
2. Where do you feel unsafe? (esp. ¿Dónde te sientes inseguro?)
3. Where do you feel happy? (esp. ¿Dónde te sientes feliz?)
4. Where do you feel unhappy? (esp. ¿Dónde te sientes infeliz?)

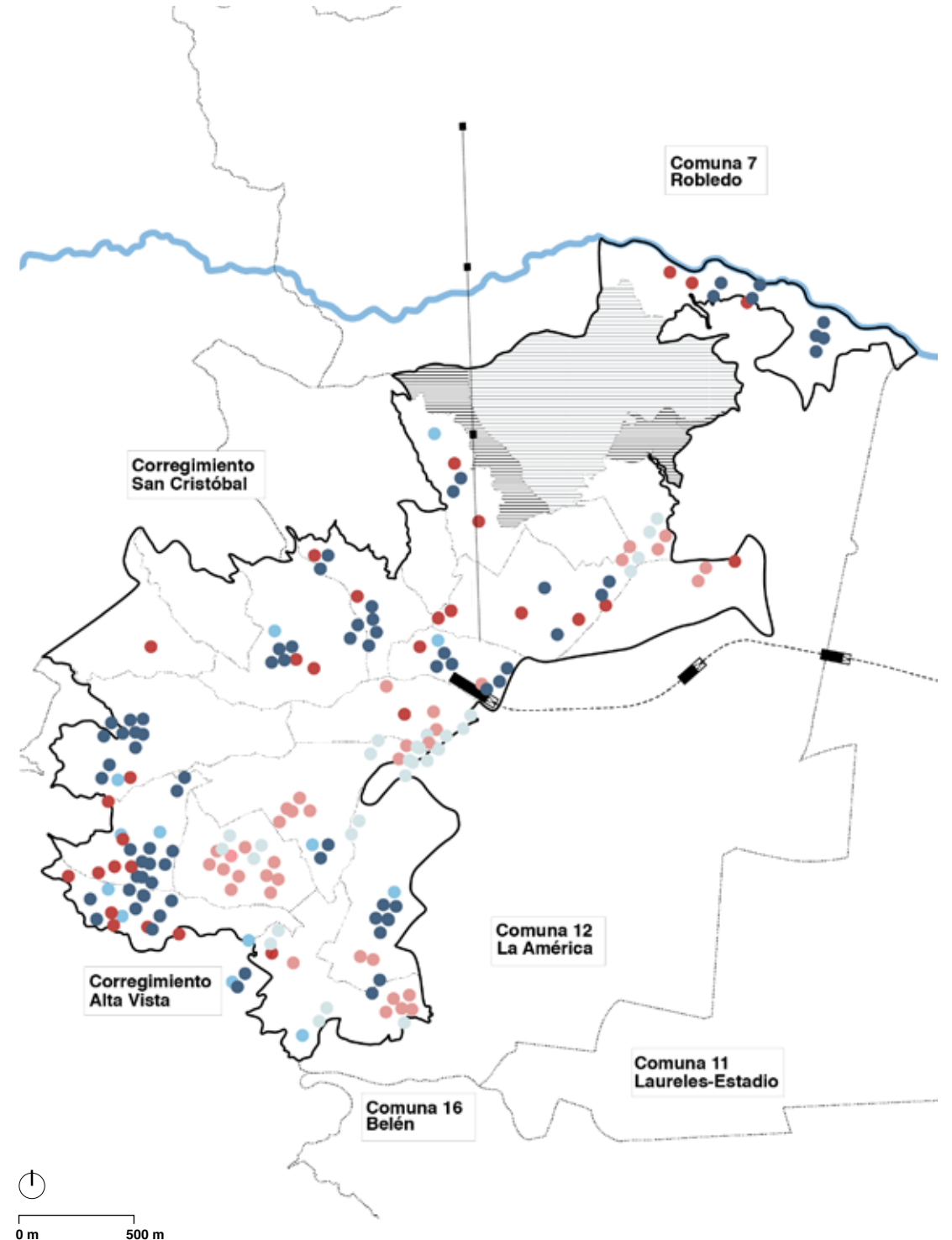
Additionally to the emotional topography one extra layer is being added to the map-one which represents the places where most homicides have happened in the last 2 years (2018 and 2017). The overlapping of the density of the "sad" and "unsafe" answers, together with the places of homicides leads to the conclusion that places of violence in these urban spaces and the fear of invisible borders are overlapping.



Fig 98a - 98b. Emotional topography and ad hoc workshop conducted by the author as part of the thesis research 2017 / 2018

Fig 98c. Location of the Comuna's 13 invisible borders and homicide, 2018/2019

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| administrative formal borders | ● feeling happy |
| ■ area of extension | ● feeling safe |
| — River Quebrada Iguana | ● feeling sad |
| — Medellín Metro | ● feeling unsafe |
| | ● homicides (2017 / 2018) |



3.4 Actors and Stakeholders in (B)ordering Spaces

As part of the Social Urbanism Propaganda, the city of Medellin undertook many actions towards creating different amenities in order to support the process of reinventing the city. Public companies, network of institutions part of a cultural infrastructure and foundations supported the process all the way from its very beginning until today. Aside from those, academia has also very strong presence and is an important actor inside this system of stakeholders. All these are under the leadership of the City of Medellin (Alcaldia de Medellin).

Despite the fact that the publicly owned companies and institutions might be seen as the great catalysts of the urban social change, I would like to underline the existence of one more part in this chain of stakeholder network, and those are the representatives of the non-government sector, that can be strongly sensed in Comuna 13. The active presence of different community organisations from the non governmental sector is highly present within the borders of Comuna 13. Historically speaking, this part of the city has been in great manner an example of active participatory methods throughout the violent times. Art, culture, music, hip hop and agriculture are just some of the activities that different community organisations are undertaking in order to bring the vibrancy in the neighbourhoods, raise the living standards of the community and increase the quality of public life. Community leaders as active members of the public life in the Comuna, are fighting against violence and the everyday fear of it, through their unconventional and rather creative methods. Moreover, they are confronting the combos that are operating within the comuna and are trying to convert many young adolescents from criminals towards more decent lifestyle.

Extract from an interview (conducted in 2017 by the author) with Lina Álvarez, psychologist, director of the initiative of the Peace and Reconciliation Program of the Mayor's Office of Medellin and the Ministry of Education.

There are 2 major kinds of situation: children either are forced to join an armed group, or they choose to be there because they believe they can satisfy their life needs, economic conditions or recognition. This is why, our aim is to seek for long-term solutions that can generate skills and strategies so that children and young people, do not fall into temptation to become part of an illegal organisation.

During my stay in Medellin, I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to meet some of these leaders and see their work, as well as to be part of the things they do. I learned that change does not always need to be physically seen. Sometimes change can be translated into a song, or dance, or a simple corner of the street planted with different vegetables.

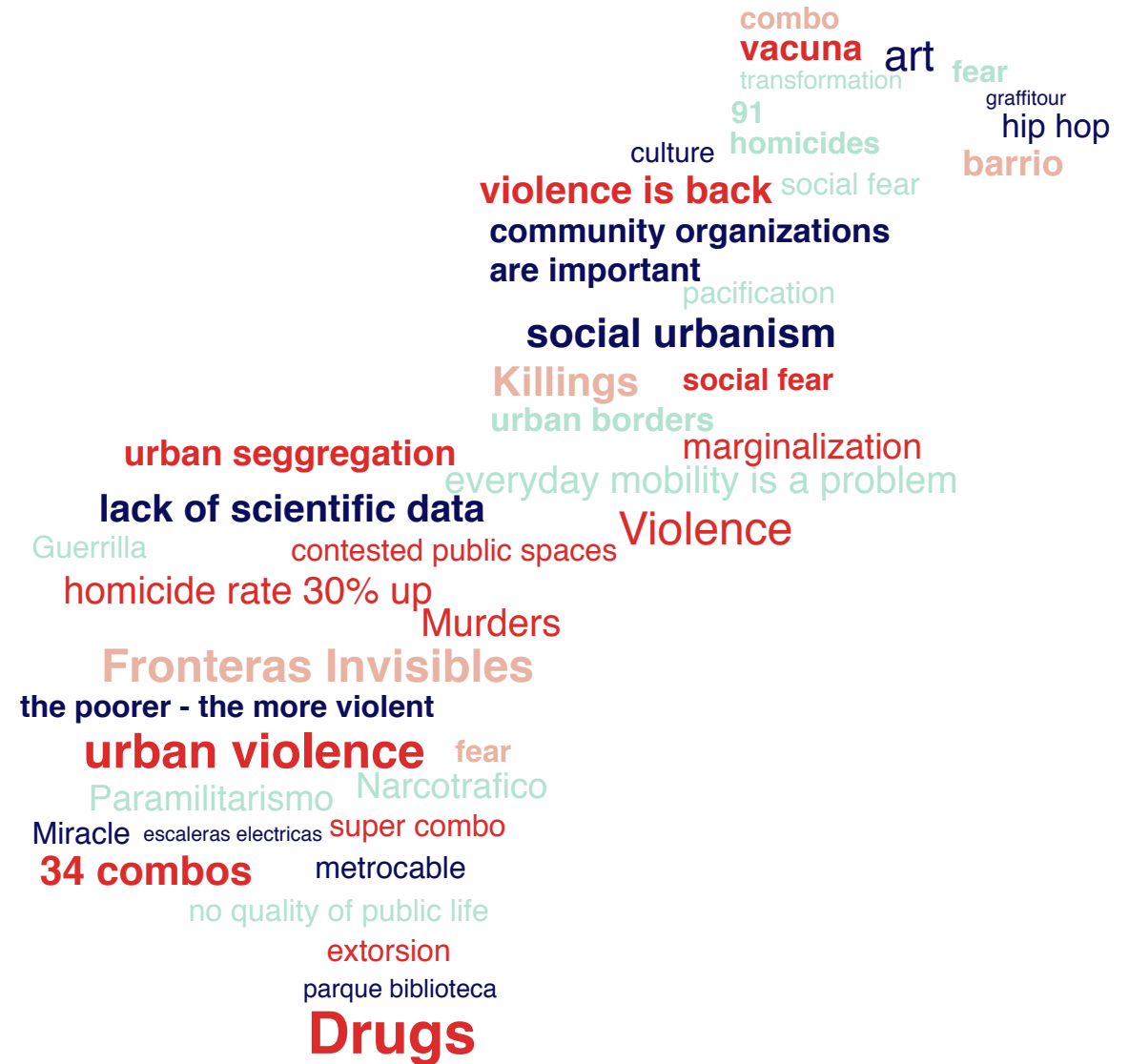
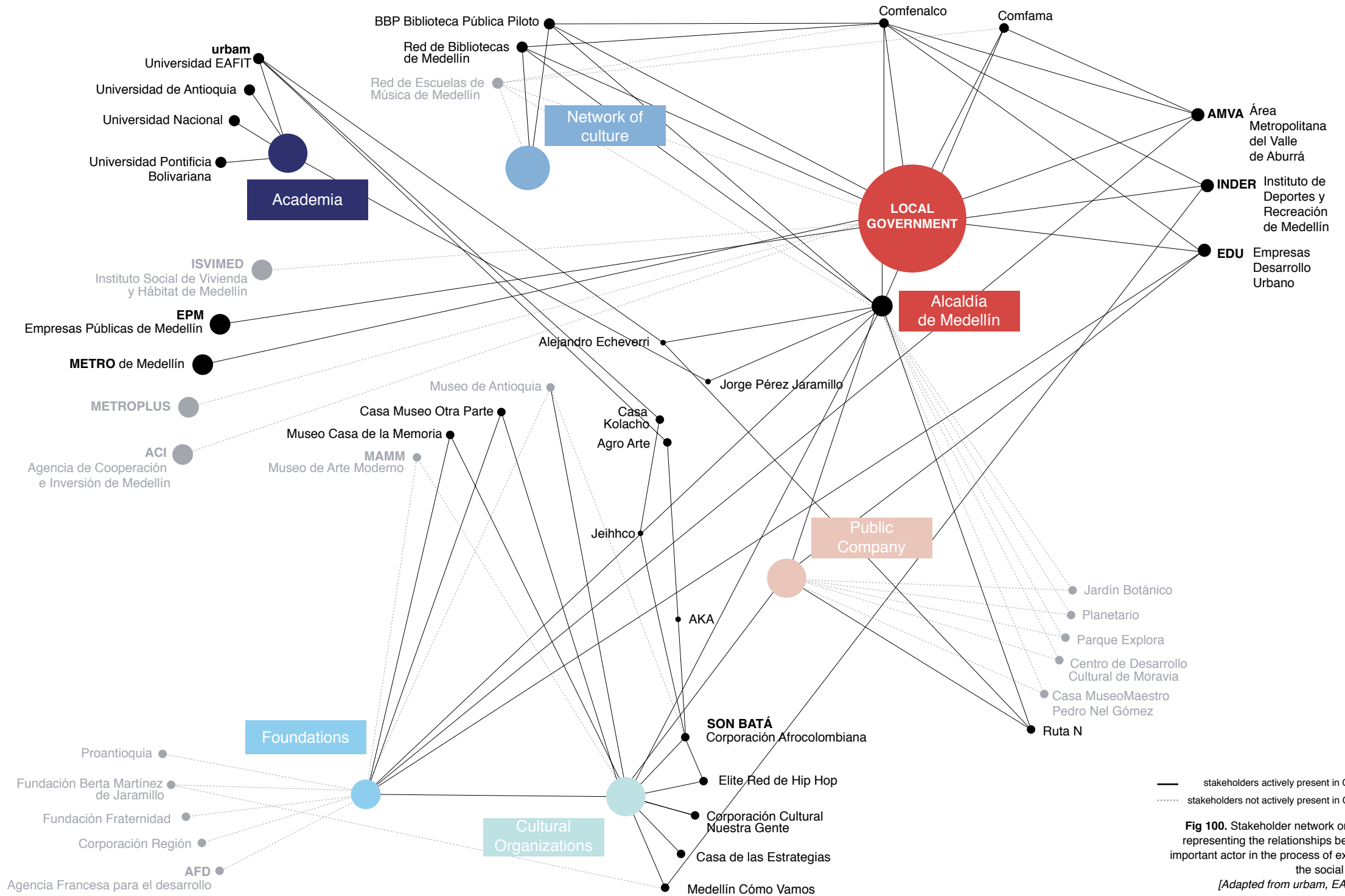


Fig 99. A collection of the words that usually showed up during the interviews conducted with the residents of the Comuna 13



— stakeholders actively present in Comuna 13
 stakeholders not actively present in Comuna 13

Fig 100. Stakeholder network on city level representing the relationships between the important actor in the process of execution of the social urbanism. [Adapted from urbam, EAFIT, 2014]

Fronteras Invisibles, fronteras que matan.

Dos bandos, una guerra.

LA ESCROMBRERA



"That is the thing with combos. It just the easy way in life. You don't have family? They will be yours. You need money? Of course, you will always have. Best cars? Best motorcycles? They will be yours. What you need to do is just kill for them and keep the territory safe".

Fredy, a hip hop artist from Son Bata, school for dance and music



"We need more development here, more infrastructure, more social projects and public spaces, but most importantly, we need to educate the people".

STAIRWAY

Zara & John, the founders of Son Bata, school for dance and music

"No, you can not walk alone in Nuevos Conquistadores, trust us!"

"Many guys suffered and were killed here, all these represent fronteras invisibles. Today, you can cross them, but you always wonder what can happen on the other side, I don't want to come here".

Andres, dancer from Son Bata, school for dance and music

All statements given here represent a collage of the impressions from different people. Crucial to note is that there are no scientific facts given-all of the statements are deriving from rather personal experiences-from experts coming from the architecture and urban planning field, photographers, social workers, community leaders, artists, musicians and last but not least regular citizens from the Comuna 13. The most important thing that everybody agrees on: the invisible borders are dangerous thing; they have a negative impact on the dynamics, spread fear and bring violence in the spaces of everyday life in Comuna 13.

more than 300 people have been buried there, but not a single body has been found.

Juan, a street vendor from barrio Las Independencia 1



Bianquizal

"Niña, if I were you, I wouldn't go in those barrios uphill. It is too dangerous. It is dangerous even for us. Stay were the police is".
Doña Maria, a resident from barrio 20 de Julio

El Pesetre

"My father, he is in jail. My mum doesn't let me go much further than the football court behind the corner. She says it is too dangerous."
Juan, a kid - resident in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores

Juan XXIII

"I don't feel secure in many places in the Comuna. There are a lot of combos in the comuna and therefore, invisible borders. And I don't want to cross them".
Doña Maria, a resident from barrio 20 de Julio

Santa Rosa de Lima

"Art was our way of resistance towards all the violence that happened. We try to be heroes for our sons and all the little boys and try to show them that there is another way in life, and that is not violence".
Jhonny, a community leader and co-founder of Stairway Storytellers, organization focused on community empowerment

Metropolitano

"There are 34 combos in Comuna 13 right now! And all the bus drivers pay vacuna, all the arepa vendors that you see pay vacuna, all the tiendas as well... And it is not a joke, they have to pay up to \$25.000!"
AKA, hip hop artist and one of the community leaders from Agro Arte

Los Alcazares

"A lot of our friends chose the wrong way and entered combos, a lot of them are either in jail or are dead now".
Carlos, a street vendor from barrio Las Independencia 2

San Javier n° 2

"My uncle was murdered 2 months ago at the viaduct.. He was in a combo and he wanted to leave that business. They killed him".
David, a kid - resident in barrio El Salado

San Javier n° 1

"You see, the transformation of this Comuna was not through urbanism, it was through the way we learned how to trust each other, how to work with one another and how to build a community".
Jorge Pérez Jaramillo, an architect

San Javier n° 2

"This slides, they are a former frontera invisible. A little guy of only 8 years was playing one day when he suddenly crossed the imagined line. And they got him shot. So the community constructed this slides to remember this kiddo, Santiago. That was his name...
Jeichho, hip hop artist and founder of Casa Kolacho, school for hip hop

San Javier n° 1

"Do you know how the fronteras imaginarios work here? So, they are set up by combos that are operating in a particular area and they are dividing the territory. At the time that someone crosses the territory they are keeping safe, if they don't know this person, he or she is in a really big trouble".
Felippe Mesa, a photographer, Heroes sin fronteras (Mas Heroes)

San Javier n° 1

"... when the combo wants to spread the territory, they start looking for potential places of working. And when they find it, it is very often that already another combo operates in the area. They don't want to get into conflict at first, but they establish an imaginary line which is not allowed to be crossed not by any member of the combo, or the neighborhood"

Fig 101. Collection of Interviews with experts & local community members conducted by the author, (2017 / 2018)

3.5 Comuna 13 today

Jeihhco, a community leader in Comuna 13; owner of Casa Kolacho

"If the state lets people disappear, so does the state," says Jeihhco. "It loses its legitimacy, so we have to make our own suggestions, we say we disagree, we do things differently."

Jeihhco is a rapper from Comuna 13, owner of Casa Kolacho - a hip hop school for children and a concept store. The members of Casa Kolacho also offer graffiti tours in the Comuna, as part of their daily activities and are trying to transfer the story of this part of the city to the people who are willing to learn the real city of Medellin, and get to know its real citizens. I met Jeihhco and his friends during my stay in Medellin in 2017. I even had the opportunity to do couple of tours with them, helping out as a translator to those who couldn't speak English. The hip hop culture that the guys from Casa Kolacho are trying to tell to their visitors, their art that is exhibited on the walls of the everyday environment of the Comuna 13, and their music are just some of the segments of the story that they are trying to tell. It is a story of historical social transformation in the city. A transformation that did not come from the government, but one that came from the citizens.



Fig 102. One of the most famous graffiti inside the Comuna 13 in barrio La Independencia 1. Picturing the story of two brothers members of a combo. The author of the graffiti is unknown. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

The rise in violence in Medellin makes me feel a lot of concern. Today, we are facing a very difficult moment for all of us living in the city. We have a homicide rate that we did not have 5 years ago, and it is striking. What especially concerns me about it is that it creates silence and anxiety. But above all, it creates fear. The fear is back.

Jeihhco, a community leader in Comuna 13; owner of Casa Kolacho

I believe that a new message is needed for the city, we need to start looking for a new goal. We did our best, and now it is about time to move on, to pass the old fame on which we are still relying on and start creating something new. In the last year we have accumulated a lot of fear, a lot of distrust and lack of hope that we are moving forward. We do not have the luxury to wait for a utopia - to wait for the poverty to end so we do not have any more violence. Nor we can wait to imprison all the gang leaders and destroy all the combos and bring some tranquility in the neighbourhood. Today, in the city there is a blank page to reduce the violence that we can all fill with proposals. I dream of a macro strategy for the Comuna 13 that will change the language of all its actors. I dream of a strategy that will give everyone a second chance, but most of all, dignify the victims. This should be a neighbourhood that has model strategy that will reduce violence to ground zero, a neighbourhood where the cultural, social and artistic leadership needs to gain more space and transfer a message of a city where everyone is equal.

...There are many more community leaders that work in Comuna 13. Just like Jeihhco. They are all fighting for the same purpose - to live in a place where violence will not be the everyday topic. Instead of that, they dream of a neighbourhood which will be famous by its outstanding approach to hip-hop culture, public art, treatment towards the environment, and the best education - formal and informal that the city has ever experienced.

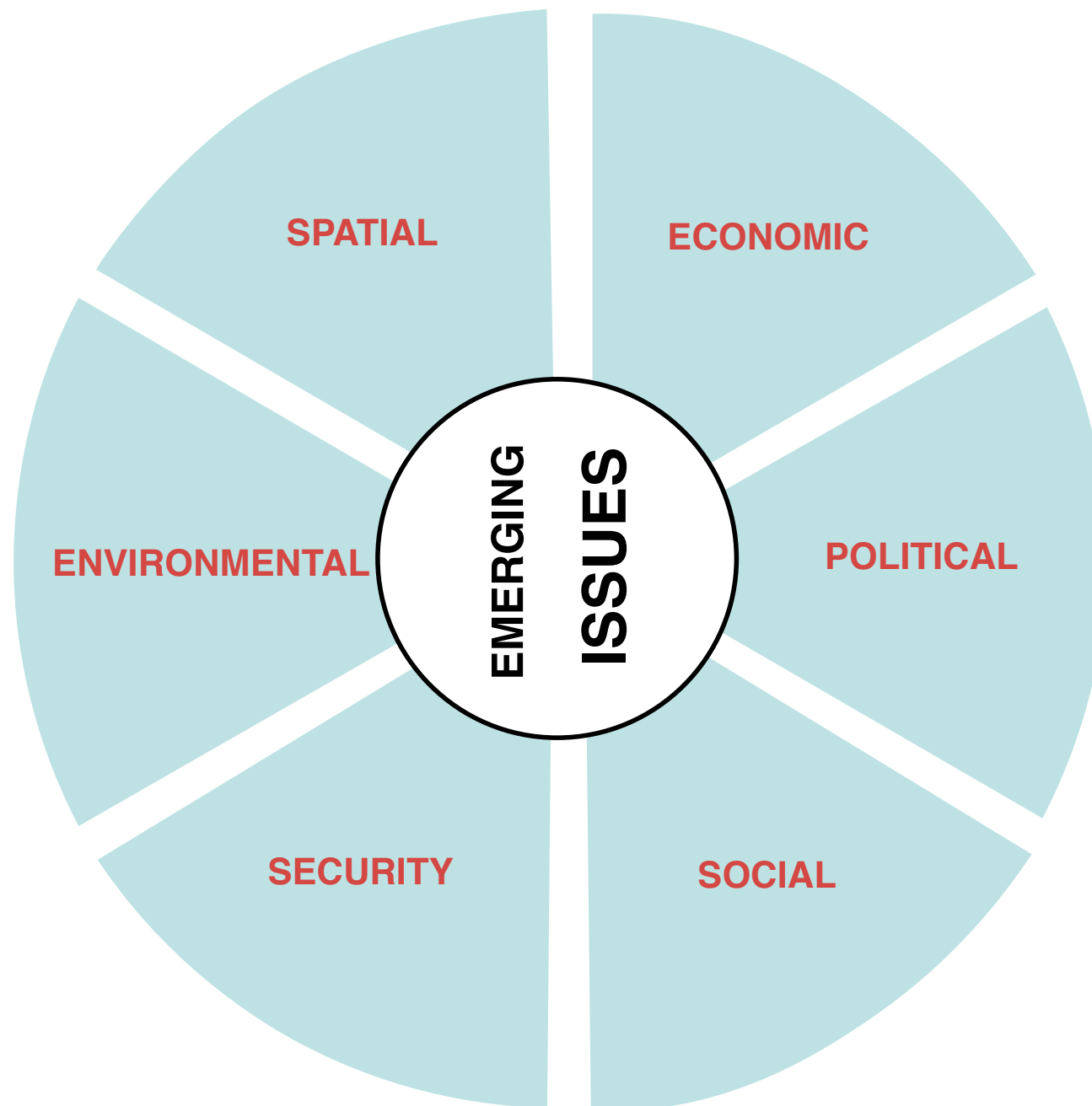


Fig 103. The members of Casa Kolacho. [Casa Kolacho, 2018]

- substandard design of public space
- low level of public amenities
- substandard infrastructure
- vacant lots / buildings
- poor walkability
- lack of inclusive public spaces
- deficit of green areas
- lack of orientation
- lack of urban furniture
- missing centrality
- invisible borders

- vulnerability
- lack of resilience
- contamination
- waste management
- land degradation
- air & water pollution

- crime & insecurity
- marginalisation
- discrimination
- lack of cohesion
- lack of participation
- abandonment at night
- high rate of violence & homicides (rate went up since 2018)



- income inequalities
 - poverty
 - unemployment
- lack of commercial offer
- substandard touristic offer
- shortage on job opportunities
- no diversity of economic sectors

- power relations
- social tensions
- peace agreement
- lack of governmental presence
- deficient public health care

- spatial marginalisation & exclusion
 - zoning & social homogeneity
 - poor social mobility
- uneven access to public goods
- poor living conditions
- lack of "active" spaces
- lack of public events

Fig 104. Emerging issues within Comuna 13, represented through 6 levels: economic, political, social, security, environmental and spatial

PHOTOESSAY

Comuna 13: (B)ordering Spaces

Fig 105. Colorful Houses inside barrio
La Independencia 1, Comuna 13
[Photo taken by the author, 2017]





Fig 106-108. Scenes of the living and housing conditions in different areas in the Comuna 13. (Fig 106-107.) barrio Independencia 1 & 2, (Fig 108.) barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]





Fig 109-111. Scenes from everyday life.
Infrastructure, Mobility and
Activities in Comuna 13.
(Fig 109.) barrio San Javier 1,
(Fig 110.) barrio La Independencia 2,
(Fig 111.) barrio XX de Julio
[Photos taken by the author, 2017]



Fig 112-114. Scenes from everyday life.
Using the public space in Comuna 13.
(Fig 112.) barrio El Socorro,
(Fig 113-114.) barrio La Independencia 1,
[Photos taken by the author, 2017]



3817

Fig 115. "Happy" as a statement written on the house wall. barrio XX de Julio. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

4

**PLACE-MAKING
DESIGN
STRATEGY FOR
BARRIO NUEVOS
CONQUISTADORES**

Problem-solving through
urban design and
implementation

4.1 A Manifesto for Place-Making Design Strategy

What is the secret substance that gives the city this feeling of vitality and vibrancy? How the cities can be transformed into inclusive spaces full with diversity and programme, that make a regular, local citizen, a tourist or a stranger to feel good inside the city's urban core and spend some quality time? In the city of Medellín, and especially in its informal settlements where life is constructed on day-to-day basis, the most important element of the city is the street. The great Jane Jacobs highlights this fact in the bible of quality public life in cities - "The Death and Life of Great American Cities". She notes: **"Think of a city and what comes to mind? It is streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull.**

Jacobs, J.
"The Death and Life of Great American Cities", 1961

I walked a lot of streets in Comuna 13 during my stay there. Good streets, bad streets, dangerous streets, safe streets. Streets with dead-ends and streets that transform into the unknown. But all of them have the same characteristic: lack of action. Lack of urban typology and urban diversity. And lack of safety. I would argue that the lack of safety is somehow actively produced by the lack of activities and people not being present into the public life in the Comuna. These people have been forcibly pushed to act so, but it is about time for them to take over their right to the city they have, and to start engaging into activities and initiatives that can establish more secure and healthy environment for them and their children. Some of the analysis that I have conducted, led me to the conclusion that the great problem that nobody wants to talk about, the issue of invisible borders, urban violence and public insecurity is to be seen all over the Comuna. We can choose any piece of land inside the

Comuna and find the same stories, same issues and same fears.

The Place-Making Design Strategy adjoined with the Urban Toolbox are seen as a place - making manual for negotiating the invisible borders. Its replicability and easiness of adaptability within any context inside the territory of Comuna 13 is what it makes it noteworthy. Moreover, it can be a lesson for other Comunas and barrios all over the city of Medellín. The urban interventions proposed in the upcoming pages, first and foremost, have the ability to reduce the invisible borders within the barrio. By doing so, they have the capacity to transform street spaces, intersections, vacant lots and abandoned flat roofs, to reactivate in between spaces and enhance activity on sport courts. The greatest attribute used in these ideas is culture and people's life. I did not focus on designing buildings in this project. On the contrary, I focused on designing spaces full of communal life inside the barrio - so when people talk with local residents and listen to their dialects; when people live there and experience some very local customs; when people eat local food and drink local coffee or play the most loved local sport, people can feel that they belong in the city.

This publication is a manifesto to those that do not have a voice loud enough to take a stand against what is dishonouring them and take their right to the city. Led by such idea, my final objective is to create a core of safety filled up with diversity and activities that trigger pride, pleasure and joy to be part of the Comuna 13.

4.1.1 Placemaking: What if we built our communities around places?

From street design to plaza configuration to community inclusiveness placemaking is perceived as a principle that not only evolves around spaces in our cities, but goes even beyond - the human component that make our cities great. Having the power to nourish connection between people and the places they share, placemaking as process refers to the collaboration that communities undertake in order to shape their public life and therefore, maximise their shared values.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

More than just promoting better urban design, placemaking facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution. With community-based participation at its center, an effective placemaking process capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people's health, happiness, and well being.

Place making is surely not a new ideas. Although, as term and popularised practice it started to occur in the mid-1990s. The concept of placemaking traces its roots back in the 1960s, through the works of Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte who introduced the pioneering notion of designing cities for people, and not just putting the focus on the cities towards the car dependence and pure commercialism. Through her work, Jane Jacobs encouraged local citizens to take ownership over the streets of the city they live in, deliver through the famous idea of **“eyes on the street”**. She vowed to put the grounds of lively neighbourhoods through inviting public spaces full of diversity and programmes. To adjoin the concept of public life in cities of Jane Jacobs, William H. Whyte outlined the social life as a key elements of public spaces. He puts it in this book from 1980, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* the following:

Jane Jacobs, "The Death and Life of Great American Cities", 1961

William H. Whyte, "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces", 1980

I end then in praise of small spaces. The multiplier effect is tremendous. It is not just the number of people using them, but the larger number who pass by and enjoy them vicariously, or even the larger number who feel better about the city center for knowledge of them. For a city, such places are priceless, whatever the cost. They are built of a set of basics and they are right in front of our noses. If we will look.

Applying the wisdom of these (and other) urban pioneers, since 1975 the placemaking approach has started to gradually develop.

Key Principles of Place-making

The Place-making concept evolves around community revitalisation and their development towards more inclusive, vibrant places full of public life that can influence the physical, social, emotional, and ecological health of individuals and communities everywhere. **Just as community input is essential to the placemaking process, it is equally important to have a mutual understanding of the ways in which great places foster successful social networks and benefit multiple stakeholders and initiatives at once.**

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)

Seen from a stakeholder point of view, one of the benefits of the creative place-making process is that it supports a cross-sector partnership. Public, private, non-governmental organisations merge together in order to work together. Another one, very important attribute of the place-making is that all these stakeholders involved together need to work through cross-discipline prism, starting from housing and transportation all the way to arts and cultural institutions and individuals. This type of multi-stakeholder, cross-discipline approach is seen as one great leverage of the place-making concept because of the many players involved, and their diverse expertises. Making a place is not the same as constructing a building, designing a plaza, or developing a commercial zone. As more communities engage in placemaking and more professionals come to call their work “placemaking,” it is important to preserve the meaning and integrity of the process. A great public space cannot be measured by its physical attributes alone; it must also serve people as a vital community resource in which function always trumps form. When people of all ages, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds cannot only access and enjoy a place, but also play a key role in its identity, creation, and maintenance, that is when we see genuine placemaking in action. Placemaking belongs to everyone: its message and mission is bigger than any one person or organisation.

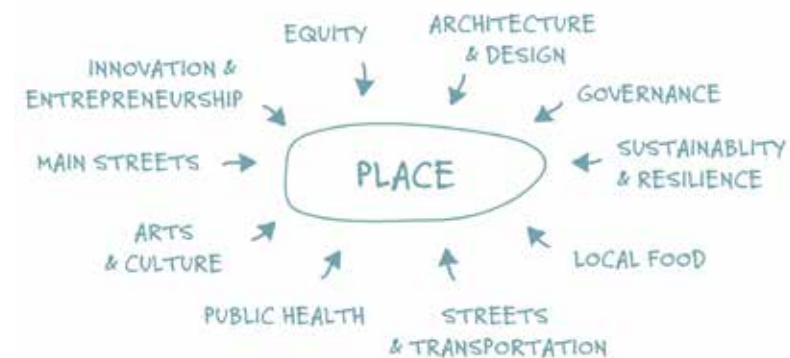


Fig 116. The core values of a great place. [PPS]

Placemaking is NOT

- #1. Top-down
- #2. Reactionary
- #3. Design-driven
- #4. A blanket solution or quick fix
- #5. Exclusionary
- #6. Car-centric
- #7. One-size-fits-all
- #8. Static
- #9. Discipline-driven
- #10. One-dimensional
- #11. Dependent on regulatory controls
- #12. A cost/benefit analysis
- #13. Project-focused

Placemaking IS

- #1. Community-driven
- #2. Visionary
- #3. Function before form
- #4. Adaptable
- #5. Inclusive
- #6. Focused on creating destinations
- #7. Context-specific
- #8. Dynamic
- #9. Trans-disciplinary
- #10. Transformative
- #11. Flexible
- #12. Collaborative
- #13. Sociable

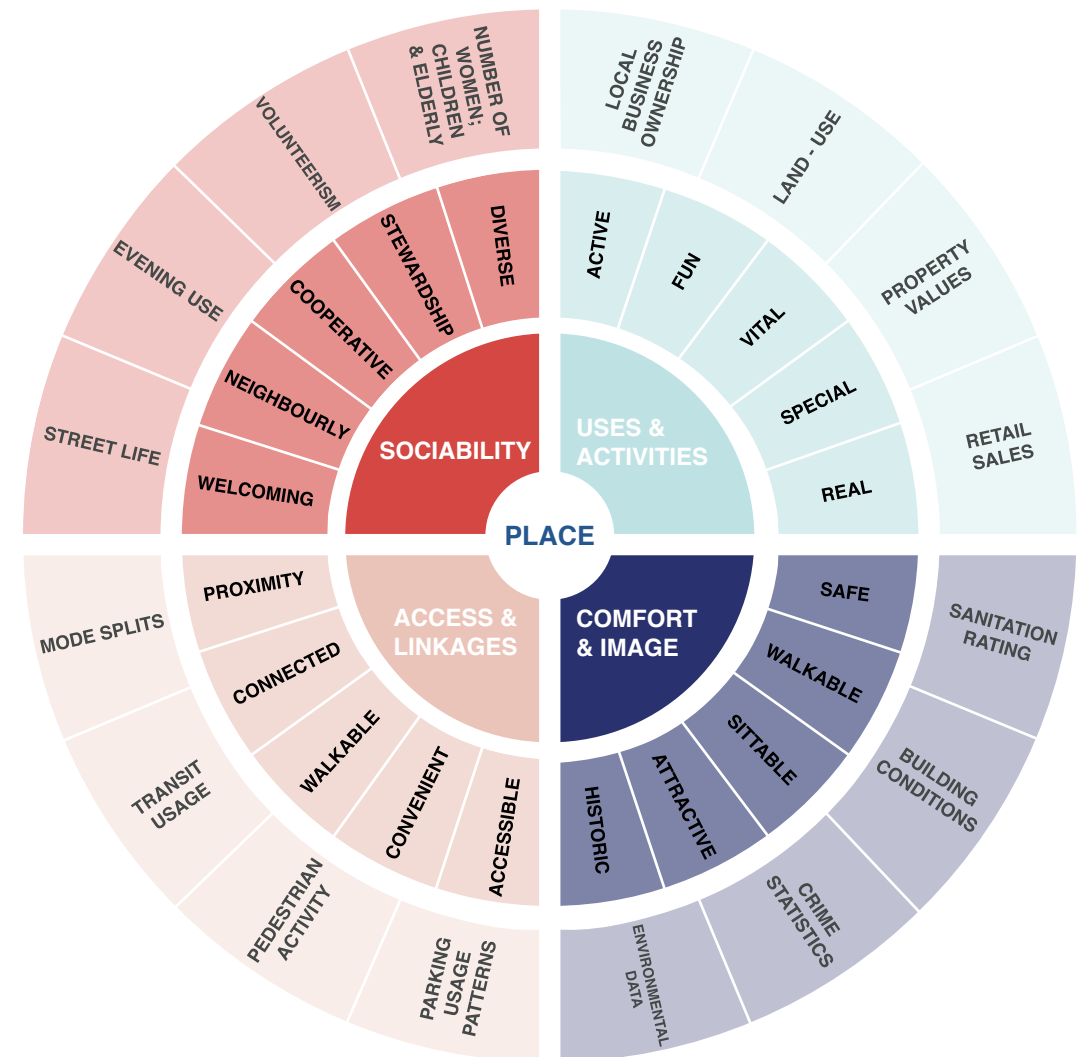


Fig 117. The Place Diagram
The Place Diagram is one of the tools PPS has developed to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data. [Adapted from: PPS]

CATALOGUE

When space becomes a place:
6 place-making design projects

1. Paseo Bandera

Spacemakers: Dasic Fernández, (Estudio Victoria), Andrea Salas (Carlsberg), and Miguel Mata, (Banco Santander)

Location: Santiago, Chile

Year: 2017

Typology: Street Renewal

The recovery of this public space includes a floor-level painting of 3,300 square meters, green areas, bike racks and spaces for work meetings. With this intervention, a characteristic space is recovered from the Historic District of Santiago that during the last years has been used mainly as parking, and is given to the neighbors and visitors of the commune. The proposal was visually innovative, but it was also attractive from a commercial standpoint: the Municipality of Santiago did not have to take any money out of its pocket. The entire project was financed through payments made by various brands to make their logos visible on the Paseo, where tens of thousands walk through each day.

The project evolves around three main spaces - *Social Connection* - a meeting zone, a connection between people, remote work, a sense of collaboration and a cowork with urban furniture that includes benches, high tables and bleachers. The second is an *Artistic space* with sustainable inspiration, where with the support of Carlsberg, the rational use of natural resources is promoted to improve the well-being, the quality of life of passers-by and the care of the environment. The last space, has a *patrimonial characteristic*, in which passers-by will find a place that seeks to rescue the cultural heritage of Chile.



Fig 118-120. Paseo Bandera: opened on December 21, 2017 and designed by Chilean visual artist Dasic Fernández, the entire 3298 m² pedestrian promenade sprawls across almost four blocks and three sections. [City Lab, *blvckimvges*, 2017]

2. Wawa Puklay

Spacemakers: Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Estudiantes de Arquitectura (CLEA), Students of Architecture and local community

Location: Coporaque, Peru

Year: 2013

Typology: Children's Playground

Wawa Puklay, or “children playing” in Quechua, is a temporary playground in the Colca Valley of Peru. Facilitated by Coordinadora Latinoamericana de Estudiantes de Arquitectura (CLEA), the project brought Latin American architecture students together with local communities to create a unique and dynamic gathering space, despite the area’s limited resources.

For two weeks in 2013, locals from the village of Coporaque worked with the students to design and implement a play space on an undeveloped site. With a small budget of \$1200, builders used repurposed materials found in and around the region. Armed with hand tools, the dozens of project participants raised tall, slender poles for children to climb up and jump between.

Bells placed atop the poles ring as children play, or as they sway in the wind—a creative touch that announces the presence of people in the area. Thatched slides and timber ladders act as jungle gyms, while numerous gardens make the once-barren space a pleasant destination. In all, Wawa Puklay shows how successful playgrounds do not require expensive equipment, just a devoted community with ample creativity.



Fig 121-122. Children exploring and enjoying at Wawa Puklay. [CLEA; *lealatinamerica.com*, 2013]

3. Multideportivo la Canchita

Spacemakers: PICO Colectivo, AGA Estudio

Location: Catia, Venezuela

Year: 2015 - 2016

Typology: Sports Court

The 1100 project system is based on articulated methodologies of organization, design, construction and management, of permanent open participation, adjusting to the needs, demands and organic capacities of the Canaima and Los Frailes communities in Catia.

They are seen as projects - agreements of activation and social coexistence, for local empowerment and the right to territory.

The intervention supports the consolidation of a space preserved by young people from the community for self-construction as a sports facility, prioritizing a more playful and recreational sense, detached from the competition model and high performance. A series of coupled and adapted surfaces that do not claim standard dimensions, on the other hand, respond to parameters similar to those of their surroundings: irregular morphology, accidental orientation, unconventional dispositions.

The Canchita Multisport is a reduced sports center for recreational and formative practices in sport, in common agreement, between the inhabitants of the Canaima and Los Frailes communities.

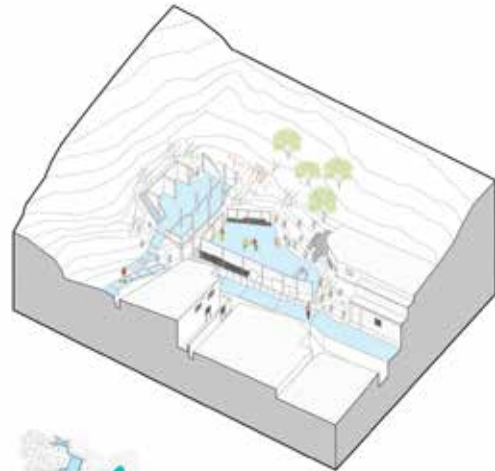


Fig 123-124. Multideportivo la Canchita: the project represents social coexistence, local empowerment and the right to territory, where architecture is a qualitative instrument that serves to formalise tangible aspects. [Diagram / Pictures PICO Colectivo, AGA Estudio, 2015/2016]

4. At the Walker's Pace: Plaza Cinco de Mayo

Spacemakers: Inter-American Development Bank, the Municipality and Via Plural

Location: Panama City, Panama

Year: 2018

Typology: Street Renewal

The temporary urban intervention, which lasted for a month, produced changes in citizen behavior, reorganized road planning, and allocated 70 percent of the intersection for pedestrians and left the remaining 30 percent for vehicles. The initiative was developed in conjunction with the municipality of the city, Ciudad Emergente, the National University of Panama and the Vía Plural organization.

This experiment actively involved citizens in the process of re-imagining of the urban space. From November 17 to December 15, Cinco de Mayo became a stage for over 200 artists who showed the diversity of Panama's talent. A multicultural dialogue composed of art, literature and a variety of musical and dance expressions, the intervention displayed the multiple possibilities that this public space offers as a place of confluence for artistic creation and diffusion, as well as for free expression, inclusion, and community building. The temporary experiment in Panama City served to demonstrate the importance of the human being as a central axis in the development of cities, and allow local authorities to make decisions about the future of the sector in the long term. The data collected during the four weeks of intervention show that access to more orderly, safe and pleasant streets, increase the quality of life of the citizen and reconcile it with their environment.



Fig 125-127. Street Renewal: different modes of transport could coexisting around art and culture in Panama City. [Inter-American Development Bank, 2018]

5. El Morro de Moravia

Spacemakers: Ministry of the Environment, local community

Location: Medellin, Colombia

Year: 2006-

Typology: Urban Garden

The hill of the neighborhood Moravia in the North zone of the Center of the city gathers in its interior part of the history of Medellín. In the hill were deposited from 1977 to 1984 the garbage of the city, land that later was occupied informally by displaced families from other sectors of Moravia, the city and the country.

By 2006, a government initiative had begun to transform the community and the former garbage dump was to be converted into a public space. First, residents of the dump were evicted and relocated to safe areas, then they began the process of decontaminating the mountain and converting into public gardens. Next came a series of small urban projects, new dwellings, and the opening of an educational and cultural building. All projects employ residents of the neighborhood, so the transformation can be the pride of those who live there. One stand-out project was a series of greenhouses atop the old garbage hill that employed single mothers from the community. The goal for the project is *"Moravia florece para la vida"*, or that Moravia should *"blossom into life"*. The result of government projects and work by locals seems to indicate that Moravia is indeed blossoming, quite literally. Today, locals have planted more than 50,000 plants of 47 species.



Fig 128-130. A sector of the old invasion district Moravia, today a public garden. [Medellin Convention, 2017]

6. Graffitour La 13

Spacemakers: Casa Kolacho, local and international artists

Location: Medellin, Colombia

Year: 2014

Typology: Street, Public Art

Graffiti and rap tell the story of a social transformation, thanks to Graffitour, the initiative of the young artists gathered at Casa Kolacho.

The Graffitour is a historical, aesthetic and political tour designed and executed in the Comuna 13 of Medellin, some street artists of the Hip Hop movement of that area of the city. Through graffiti, the stories that move and inspire hope and the search for better living conditions for the community are revealed and how the transformation of urban furniture such as Escaleras Eléctricas and Metro Cable has changed aesthetics and quality of life of the inhabitants of this sector of the city.

The Graffitour brings to its visitors works of art embodied in the walls of the houses of the sector and dance immersed in rhythms such as hip hop and break dance. In addition, you can contemplate a reconstructed neighborhood with the aim of integrating the community and improving their quality of life, with icons such as the escalators that connect the Independencia I and II neighborhoods.



Fig 131-133. Colourful graffiti in Comuna 13 are designed as part of the public spaces and everyday infrastructure. [Pictures taken by the Author, 2017]

4.2 SITE OF NEGOTIATION

barrio Nuevos Conquistadores

4.2 Site of Negotiation: Barrio Nuevos Conquistadores

Nuevos Conquistadores is one of the 19 official barrios of Comuna 13. It is positioned in the most western parts of the Comuna, sharing its formal borders with barrios El Salado in the North, Las Independencias in the East and El Corazon in the South part. The population is represented with **12,700 people, and it is estimated to be the 4th most populated barrio in Comuna 13 right after Independencias, Antonio Nariño and Juan XXIII.**

Basically, it would be very easy to choose any other barrio in Comuna 13 where one can show how through place-making a neighbourhood can become more healthy environment to live in. I decided to choose barrio Nuevos Conquistadores because once you visit it, it leaves the impression of being forgotten by the state, put underneath the carpet of social urbanism without being paid any kind of attention to supporting its urban culture and public life as some of the very important components that can add to the quality of life to its residents. Nuevos Conquistadores is characterised by an incomplete and inadequate urban development. In this node in the Comuna there is a high homogeneity in the perception of its state of development. The issues of **safety, environment, citizen participation, high risk areas, mobility and transportation are the components on which greater concern is expressed.** Furthermore, the issues of environment, culture, public space and human rights are the components that constitute the aspects that require the most attention. Considered topics of interest are coexistence, organisational strength and health. To the inhabitants surveyed, they express the need for greater coverage in programs, projects and interventions that guarantee attention to these issues. Even though barrio Nuevos Conquistadores has always been the node of many gang clashes throughout the years, there has been measured a sizeable drop of violence and homicides. The story turns over to the big bad history of bloodshed in 2017, when a lot of the gangs operating within the Comuna turned the low-income barrios of the neighbourhood into battlefield, one more time.

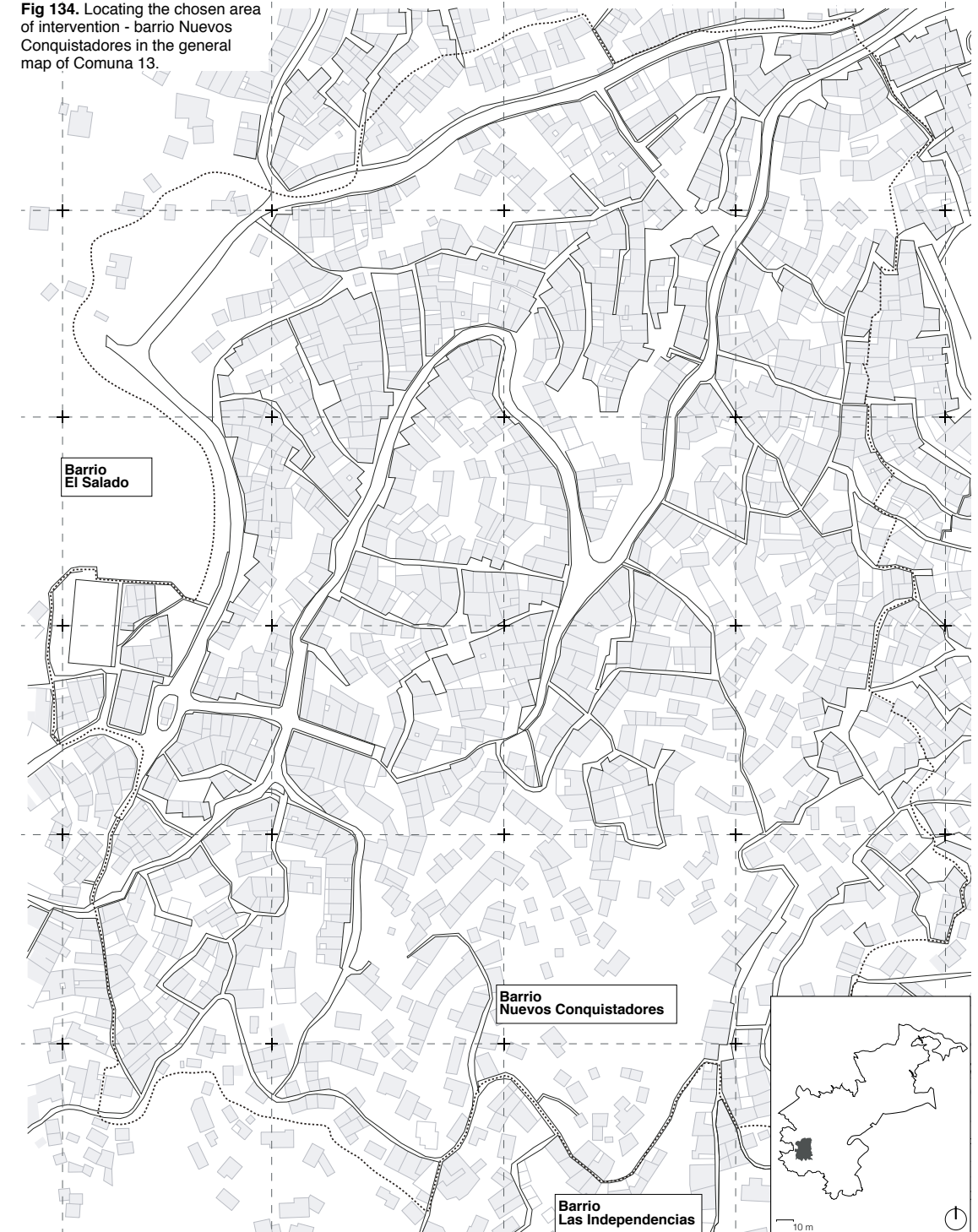
Barrio Nuevos Conquistadores is included within the category of dispersion, which is characterised by those settlements that occupy the territory normally of suburban character or of periphery under "traditional models, pirate or invasive urbanisation. These are places that generally have large abandoned lots, retreats of streams or old deposits of rubble and garbage.

Restrepo, J.R.
MEDELLÍN: Fronteras de
discriminación y espacios de
guerra

Extracted from interviews with
local residents, conducted by the
author in 2017

Local Development Plan with data
PAAL Comuna 13 San Javier.
Medellin, Comuna 13 - San
Javier.
DAP - CISP, 2014-2015

Fig 134. Locating the chosen area
of intervention - barrio Nuevos
Conquistadores in the general
map of Comuna 13.



During the author's stay in Medellín in 2017, several interviews were conducted as well as a series of surveys that explored the scale safety and security in the Comuna 13, and especially in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. Over 50 people took part in the surveys.

The information gathered during the site visits that carried out with the participating community in 2017, show the following persistent problems in terms of safety:

- Increase in juvenile delinquency
- Lack of institutional presence in the barrio that guarantees the integral solution around the lack of security
- Increase of the insecurity reflected in the increase of robberies, extortion to merchants, and transporters
- Increase and threat of cases of intra-urban forced displacement, fostered by the action of criminal gangs

The possibilities of use of natural spaces such as geographical landmarks, tutelary hills, maintenance of ordering and secondary streams and panoramic viewpoints are highly limited. In a like manner, there is a noticeable demand for having more area of public spaces (squares, parks, green areas, neighbourhood centres and new areas of new centrality, among others). Therefore, the need for an improvement that aims to comprehensively address the territorial, environmental, sociocultural and socioeconomic imbalances in the city and achieve increasement of integrative levels of spatial interventions, environmental sustainability, improvement of the quality of life of the residents, coexistence and citizen security are of crucial importance needed to happen.

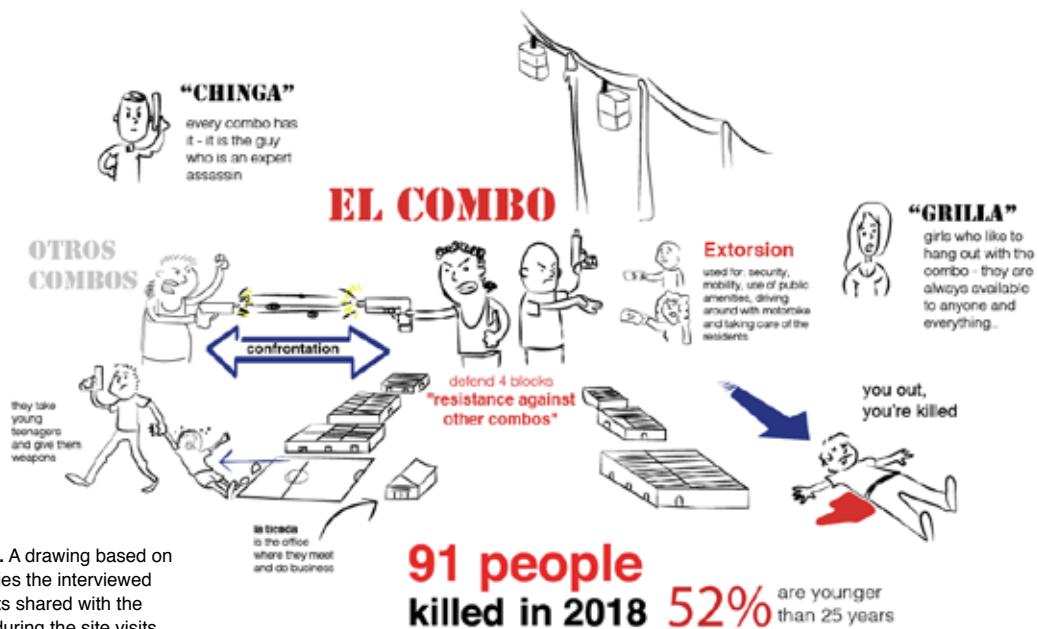


Fig 135. A drawing based on the stories the interviewed residents shared with the author during the site visits of Comuna 13 in 2017

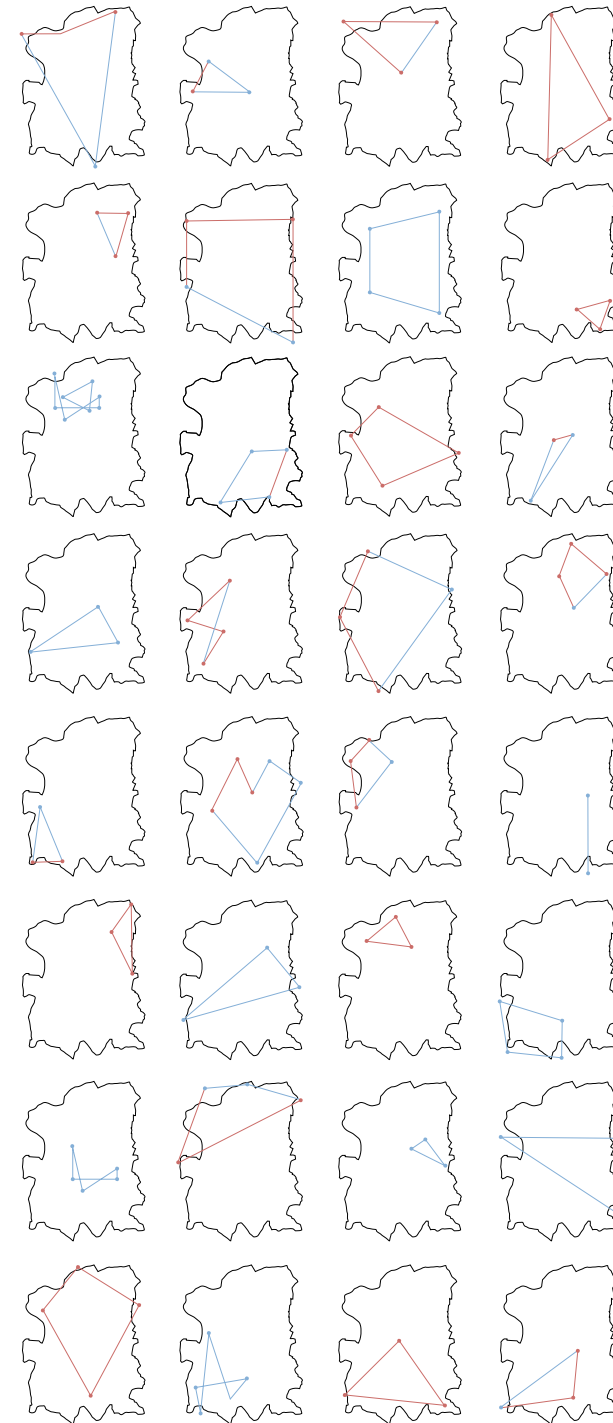


Fig 136. Results from a survey and cognitive mapping with the residents of barrio Nuevos Conquistadores.

In this page are shown the answers from the residents from barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. 18 men and 12 women from various ages were interviewed. Their answers were drawn on these maps that later were digitalised. Each segment represents a path between two locations that the individual is visiting ever day in his/her neighbourhood. The red colour indicates that a person felt unsafe walking along the path, while the blue collar indicates that a person felt safe while walking between the two locations in the neighbourhood.

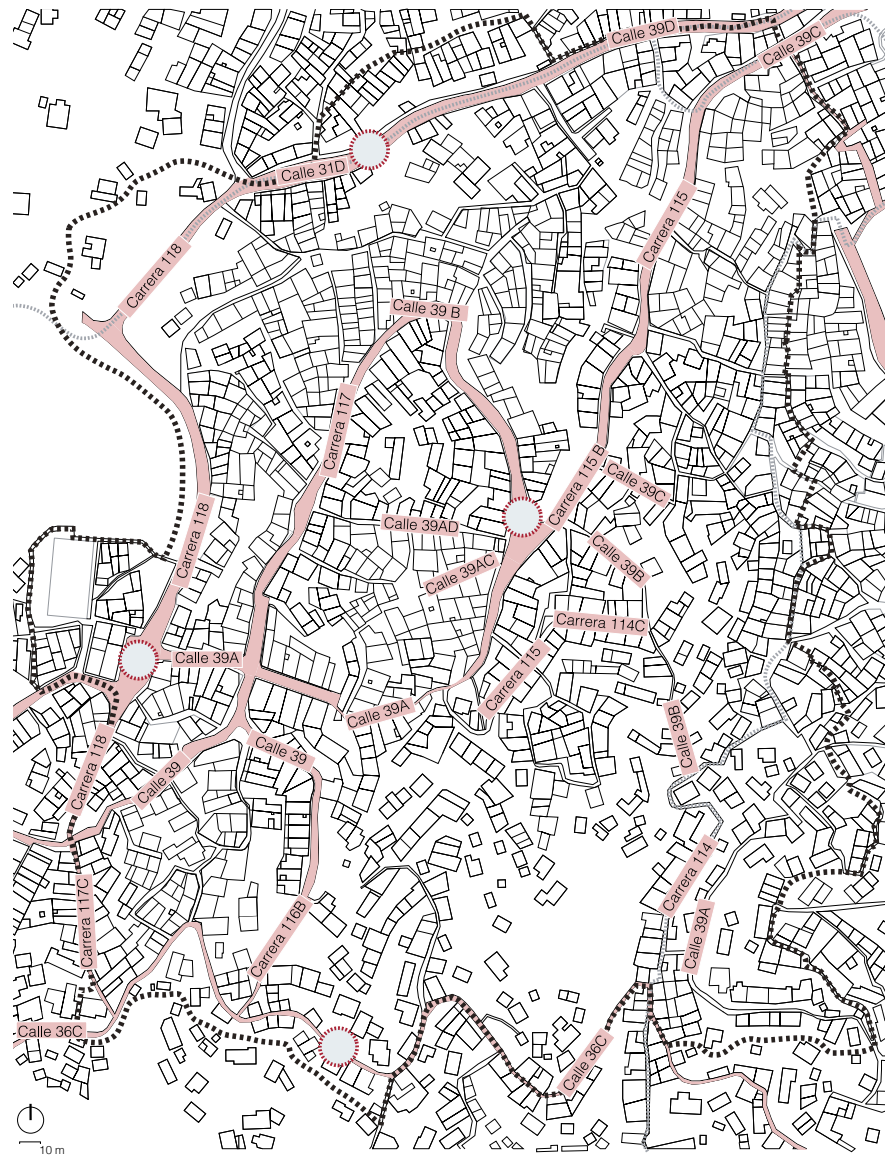
Overall, men move much more freely within barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. Men of various age reported that the even the level of insecurity in the neighbourhood is pretty much high, they always chose the streets that feel more safe. Young men, in particular, identified few unsafe areas, which implies a low perception of insecurity of this age group. However, they stated that they constantly change their routes as a conscious strategy to enhance personal security and to avoid combo members who often targets youth but also elderly people that have any kind of small economic activity. Additionally, older men added that to enhance individual safety it is better to use the main road rather than side streets.

Overall, women travelled within and outside the settlement less than men. Women of all ages reported planning their routes from one point to another in advance to avoid areas perceived as unsafe. Women mobility patterns are dynamic. They change their routes constantly as a security precaution to avoid areas perceived as insecure. They also reported that to enhance their security they walk where the streetlights are and along the main roads. Young women identified their homes as the places they felt most safe.

The survey and the mapping were done in 2017, during author's stay in Medellín, Colombia.

CATALOGUE

Urban analysis:
barrio Nuevos Conquistadores

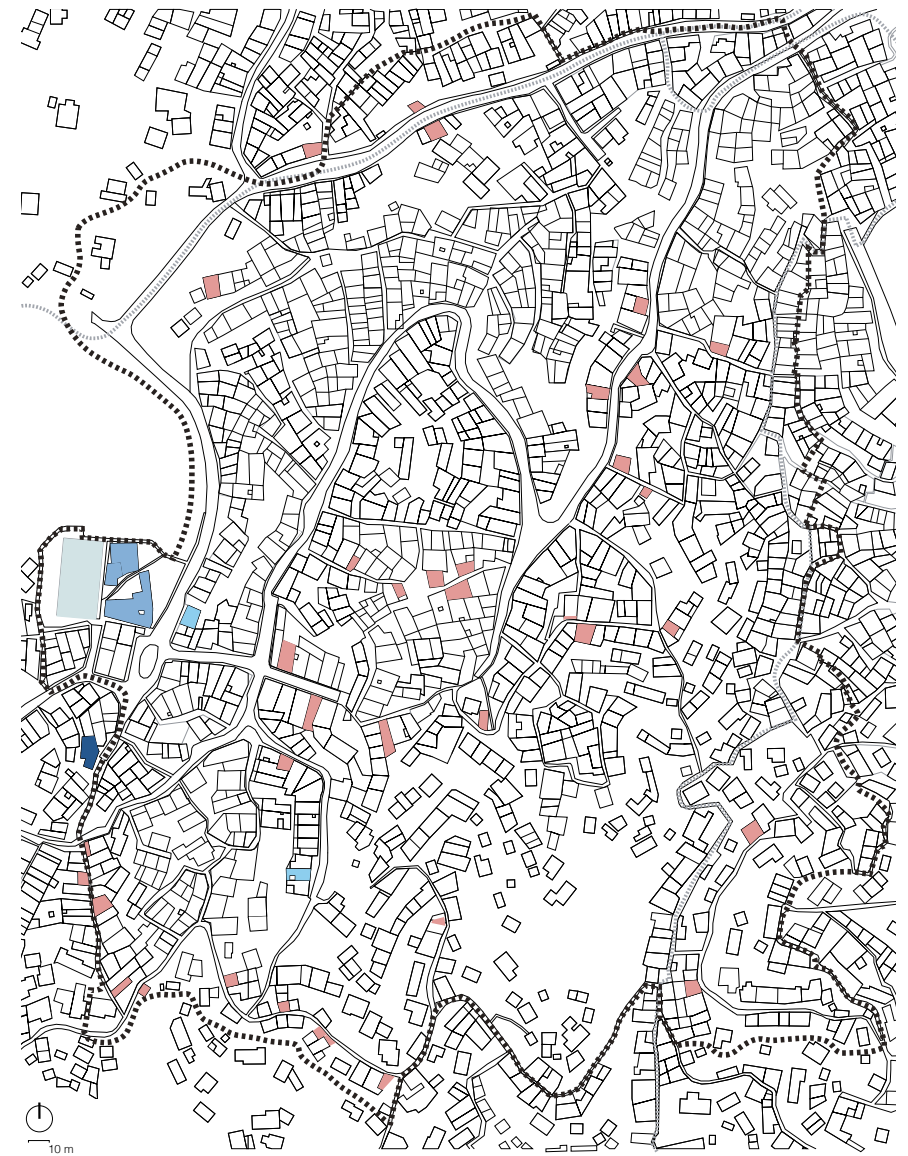


Mobility & Orientation

This mapping shows the current situation of the infrastructure in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. Streets are tiny, there is not good connection with the public mobility. Orientation is also an issues. As a foreigner is very easy to get lost and not manage to find your way out. Additionally, the problem of the accessibility of the high slopes is very evident.

Fig 137. Mobility in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- primary streets of use
- Calle 36 street name
- bus stop
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention



Land Use

This mapping shows the image of land use in barrio Nuevo Conquistadores. It is evident that there is not much offer of various activities and programmes within its official boundaries, and the main source of daily activities is focused on the streets and in front of the *tiendas* (spanish word for grocery shop).

Fig 138. Land Use in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- commercial use
- health institution
- sports facilities
- cultural facilities
- religious buildings

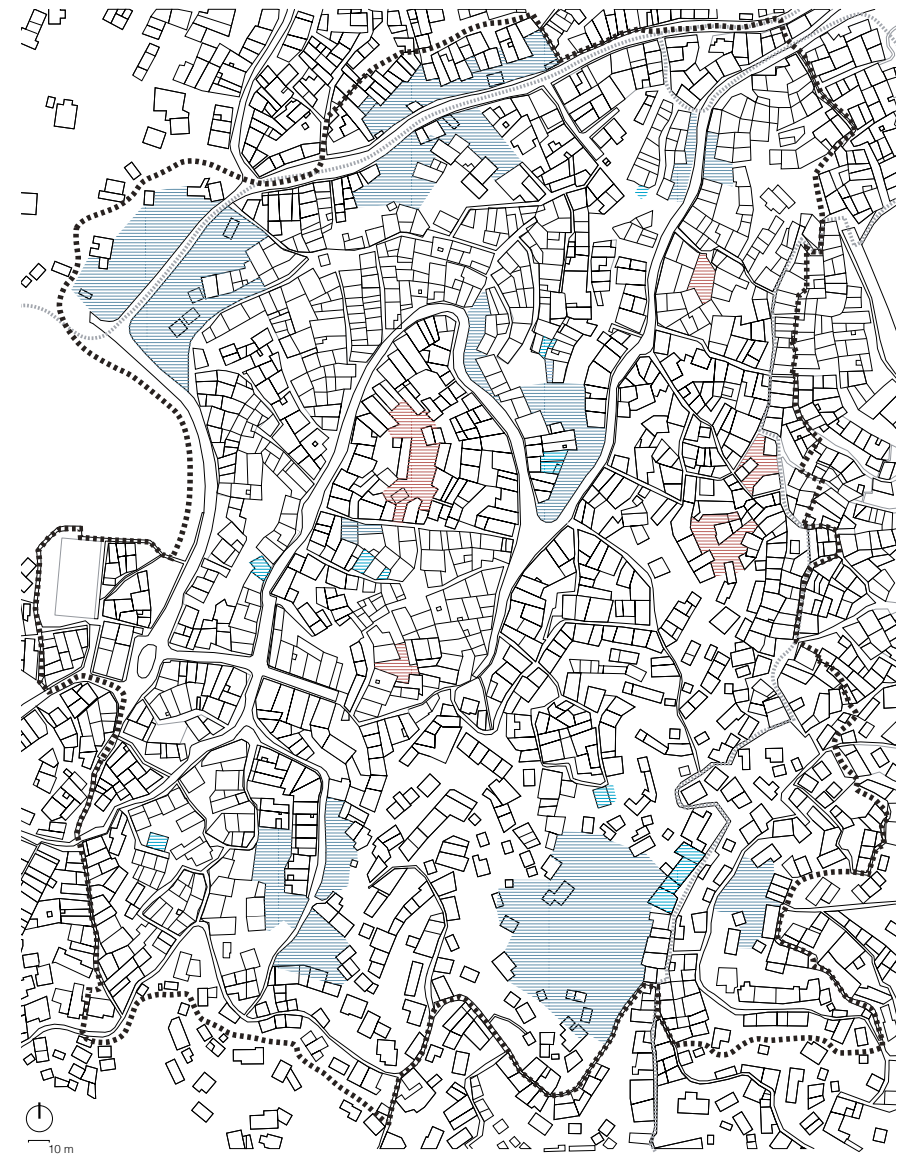


Places of everyday use

Many residents of the barrio will highlight that the places of everyday use are mainly two: La Cancha (the sports court) and La Calle (The street). The church is also an important hotspot as everyday space and la tienda is place where most of social exchange between the community occurs.

Fig 139. Places of everyday use in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- high user density
- medium user density
- low user density
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

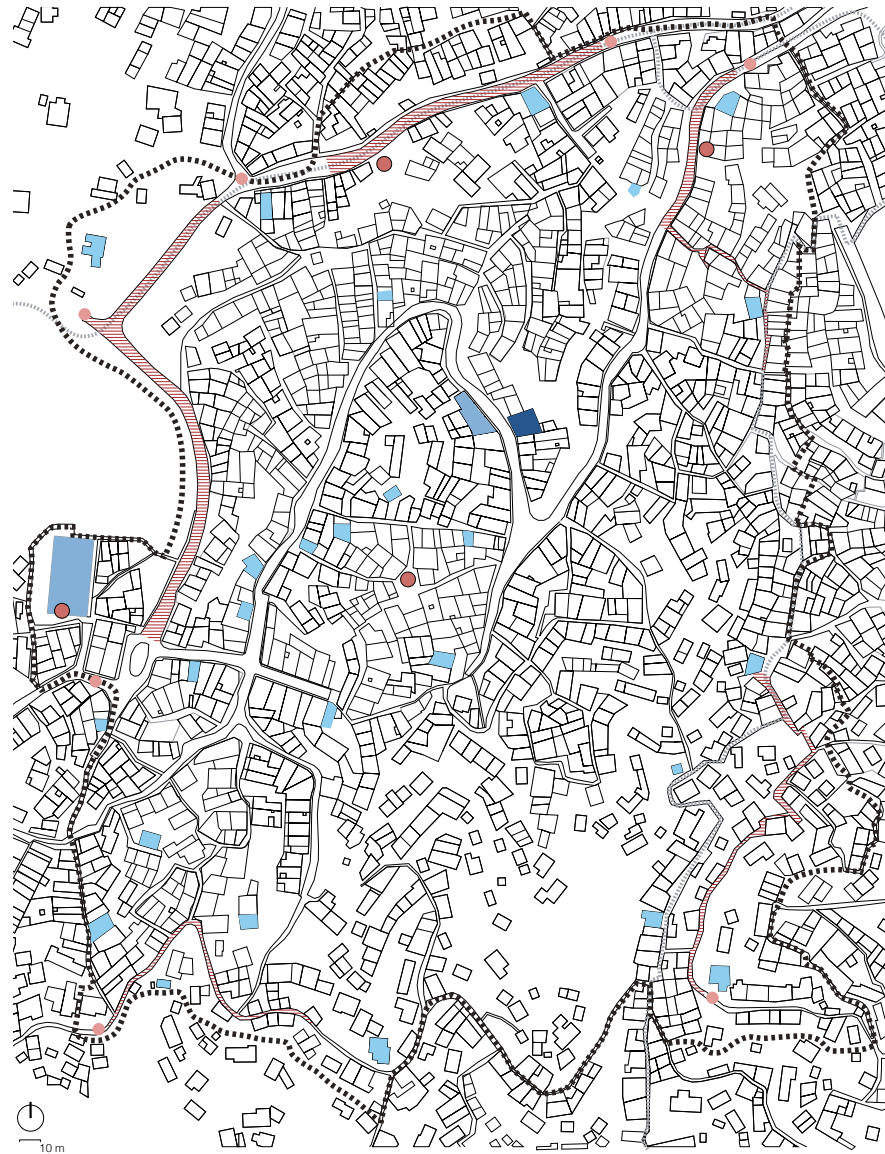


Vacant Spaces

The abandonment of many spaces and places within this barrio is quite evident. No public spaces, many vacant lots, no activities, many abandoned houses that are the result of forced displacement. Anyhow the circumstances, these places have the potential to become inclusive active public spaces that can rise the standard of the life quality.

Fig 140. Vacancy in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- vacant lots
- vacant in-between spaces
- ▨ vacant buildings
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

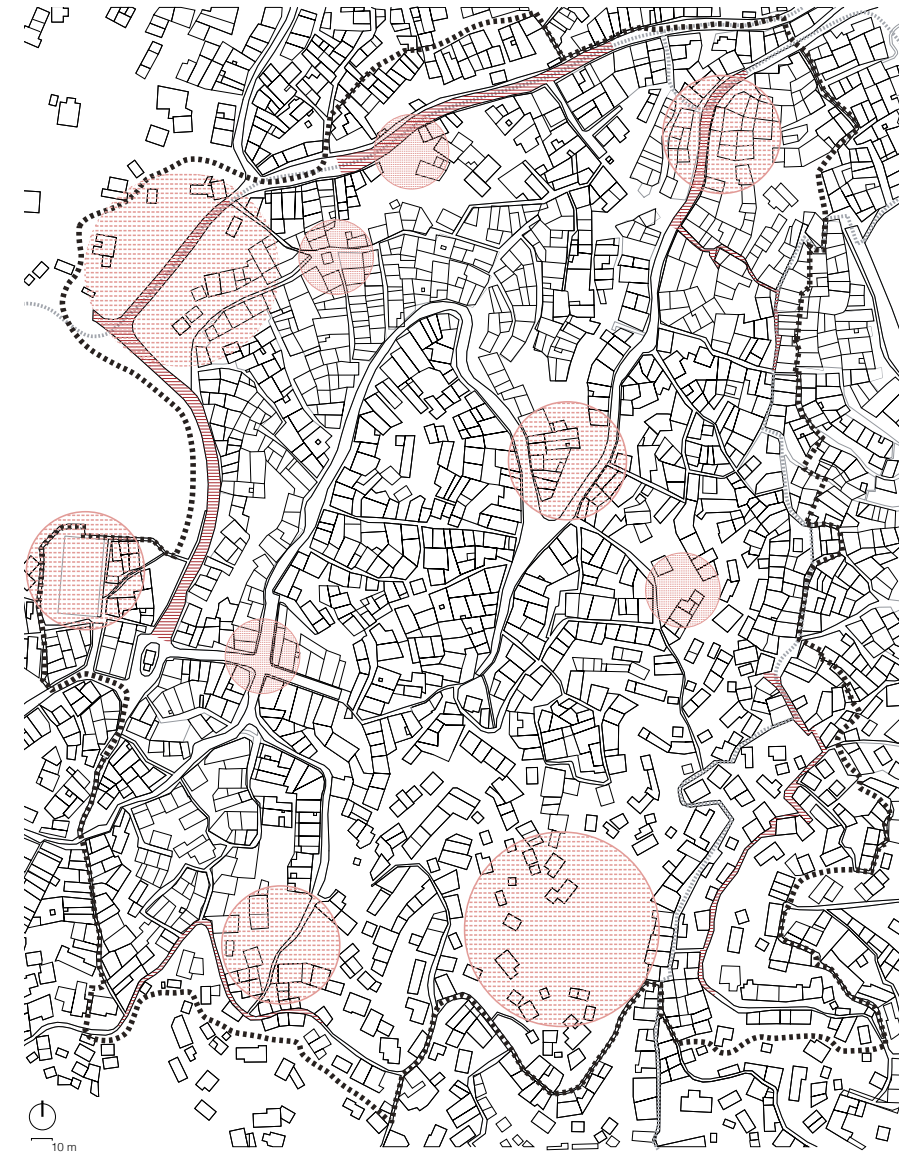


Invisible Borders

The invisible borders are quite strongly evident here. They are framing the whole territory of the chosen area of intervention, and limiting everyday mobility and activities. This is due to the lack of state presence here, as well as deficit of public activities. The map also shows how the combo members are dispersed within the bordered territory, and where are their strategic points.

Fig 141. Invisible Borders in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- invisible borders
- entry points
- places of homicides
- spaces of "business" exchange
- homes of the gang members
- home of the gang leader
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

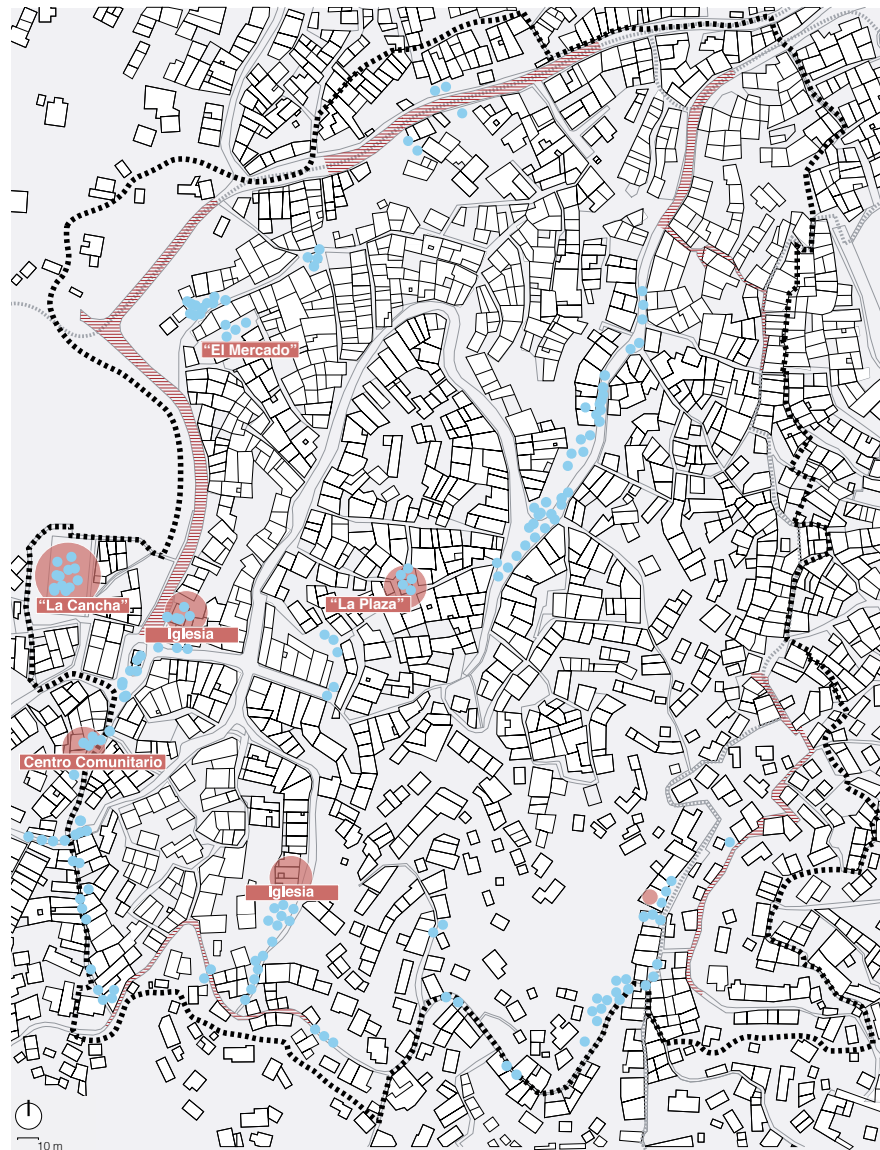


Spatial Potentials

This map shows the spatial potentials within the chosen area of intervention. The street is one of the first potentials that can be transformed into more inclusive, vibrant space that can offer diverse activities. The intersections, provisional public spaces and sport courts are also spaces of great potentials that can bring more quality to the everyday life and reduce the impact of the invisible border.

Fig 142. Spatial Potentials in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- places of spatial potential
- invisible borders as potential
- high - low user density
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention



Daytime Movement

In my efforts to determine safe and unsafe areas of Nuevos Conquistadores during night and daytime - as perceived by the residents, I developed a map on which the residents put pins on the places they visit during daytime. Overall, the movement during daytime is more frequent and people are enjoying more activities compared to their nighttime movement.

Fig 143. Daytime movement in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- invisible borders
- "meeting points" with high - low user density
- movement density
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention



Night-time Movement

Opposite on the daytime movement, the nighttime movement is pretty much restricted within the area of where people live, which basically disallows their mobility around the neighbourhood. Places of get-together are the local tiendas, and the street spaces in front of resident's houses.

Fig 144. Night-time movement in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018

- invisible borders
- "meeting points" with high - low user density
- movement density
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

PHOTOESSAY

barrio Nuevos Conquistadores



Fig 145-146. Street as generator of movements and social interactions; Two different situations on street level in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores in Comuna 13. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]





Fig 147-149. Representation of the substandard conditions of infrastructure in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]





Fig 150. Scene of everyday life in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

**The rich streetlife
is no frill. It is
the expansion of
the most ancient
function of the city
- a place for people
to come together.**

- William H. Whyte

4.3 PLACE- MAKING DESIGN STRATEGY

Negotiating invisible borders
in Barrio Nuevos Conquistadores

4.3.1 Place-Making Design Strategy Framework

The starting point in this final chapter is the introduction of the design framework within which I have decided to generate this project. The design framework is constituted on three units: discovery, process and implementation, each one of them consisting further concrete actions.

The design framework is imagined as a manual needed in order to develop the design project, to define the required goals and fulfil targeted outcomes.

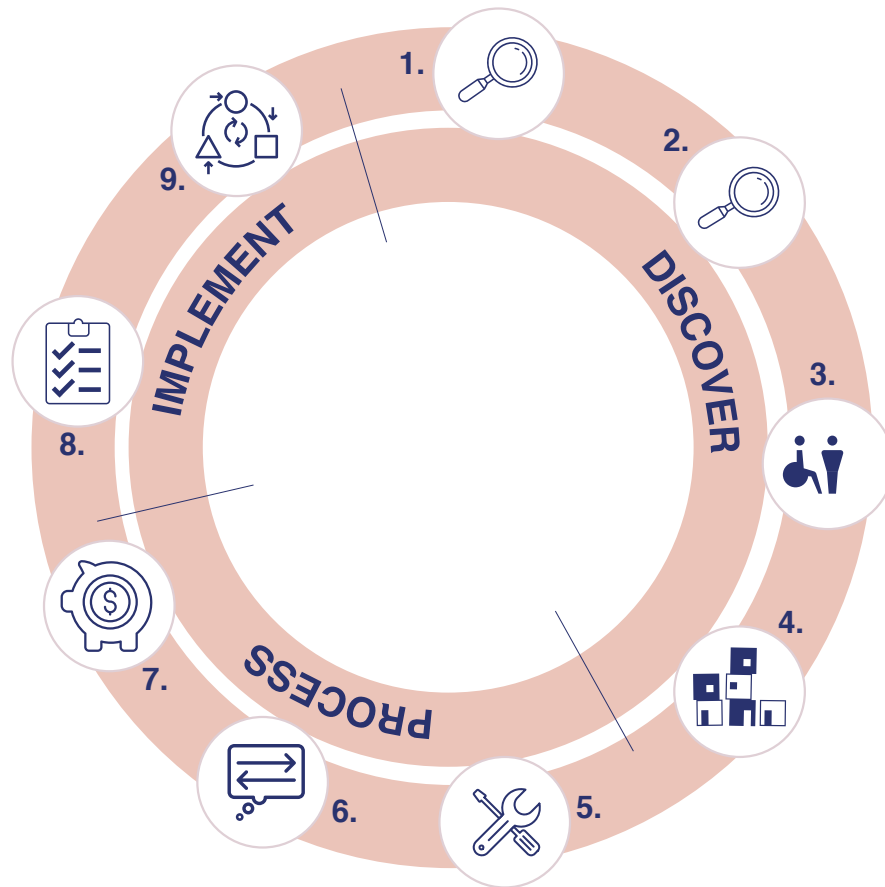


Fig 151. The Place-Making Design Strategy Framework: constituted of three steps that are followed by various action in order to get from defining the issue to finding the solution.

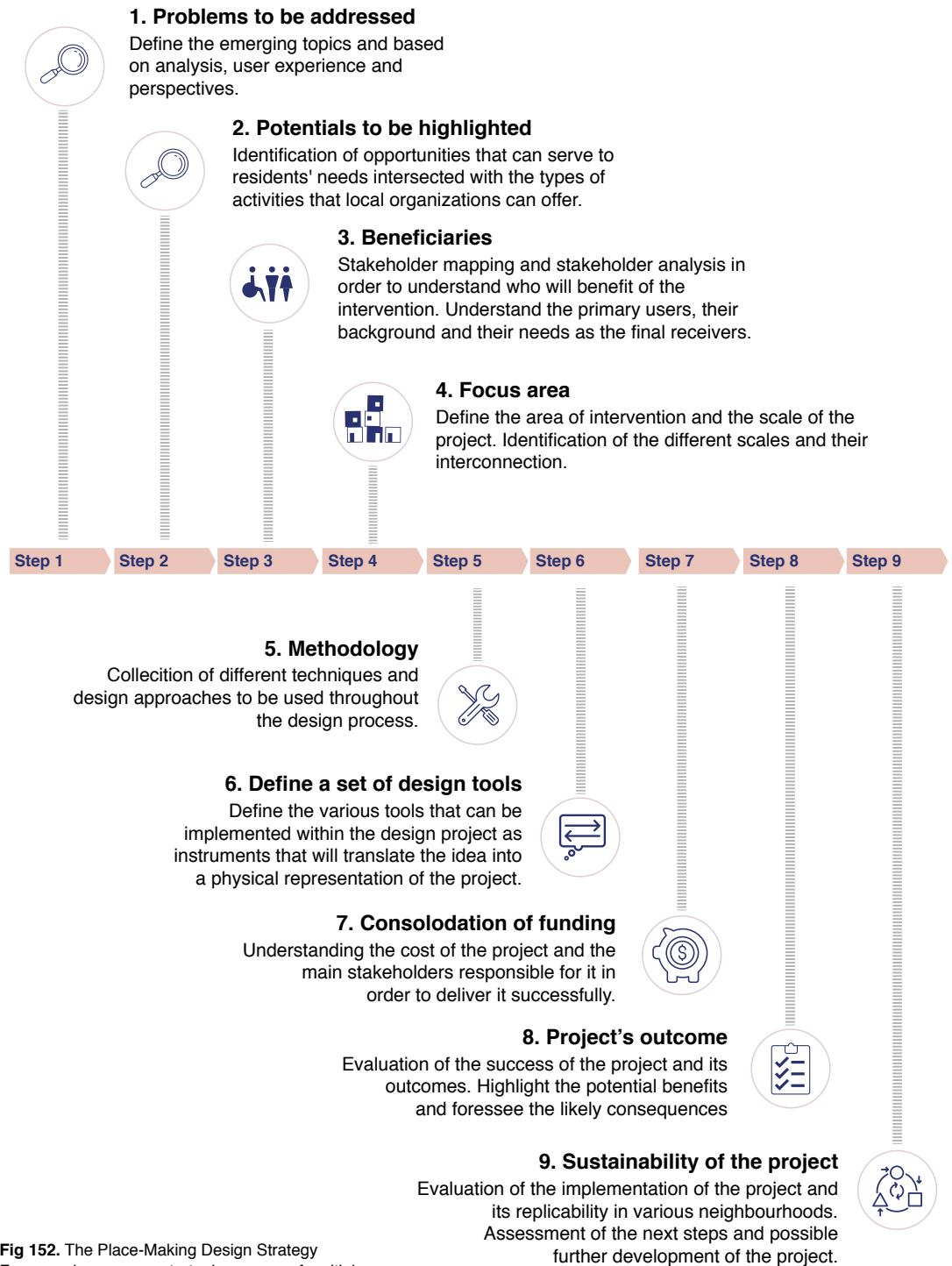


Fig 152. The Place-Making Design Strategy Framework seen as a strategic process of multiple activities, constituted of 9 steps.

4.3.2 Operating Scales of Intervention

The scales of the interventions are foreseen as two interconnected layers - mezzo and micro. Each one of them represents a different level of influence first and foremost, and then, a level of physical appearance of a particular intervention.

The two levels of interventions are not imagined as linear processes, but rather as continuous, circular transitions that are able to constantly shift between the different scales and have the ability to create resilience of the design project that address the emerging issues of the chosen area of intervention in terms of spatial, social, economic, environment, security and political perspectives.

The development of particular spatial prototype interventions can have an impact on a third, city scale that can enable macro outreach towards quality of urban life. There is also the possibility of mixing of these different scales of interventions. In this sense, the impact of each one of these can easily be transformed from micro to macro scale based on the opportunities that the chosen area of intervention is offering. In this regard, for example, a project that would be done in single barrio in Comuna 13, based on the network of social actors and various NGOs, community organisations and different public facilities can have a macro scale impact for the community. Having in mind the scale of the problem addressed to be solved, it is important to create an adaptable strategy of operating between the spatial interventions that can make them replicable in various contexts around the city.

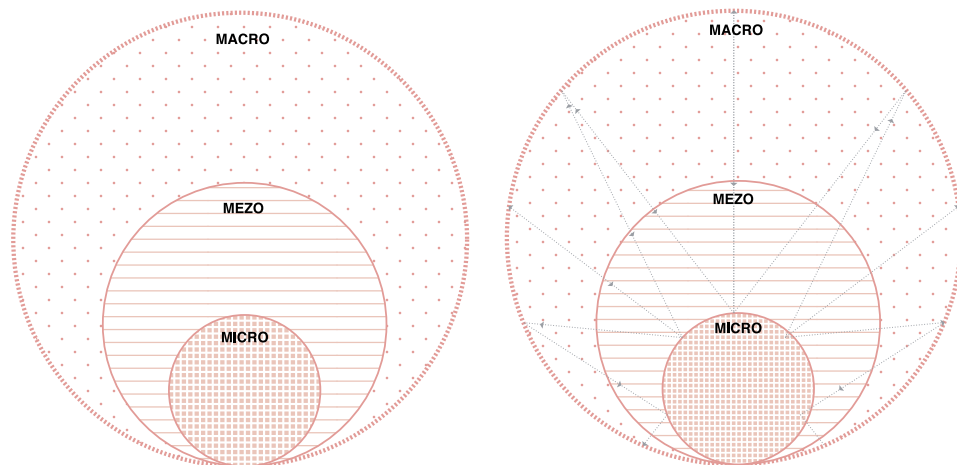


Fig 153. Three scales of intervention that are used in the strategy with mutual correlation

4.3.3. Correlation of actors and networks

For a successful design process, it is important to include actors on three various levels - the city (macro), the comuna (mezzo) and the barrio (micro).

Understanding the importance of the network correlation of stakeholders and various actors that possibly need to be involved within the whole design process. Overlapping of stakeholders in different levels, their interest and considering the importance of the network between them, might be important for future development of the project, its design evolution, funding opportunities that create stronger relationships and allow more collaborative interconnection between them.

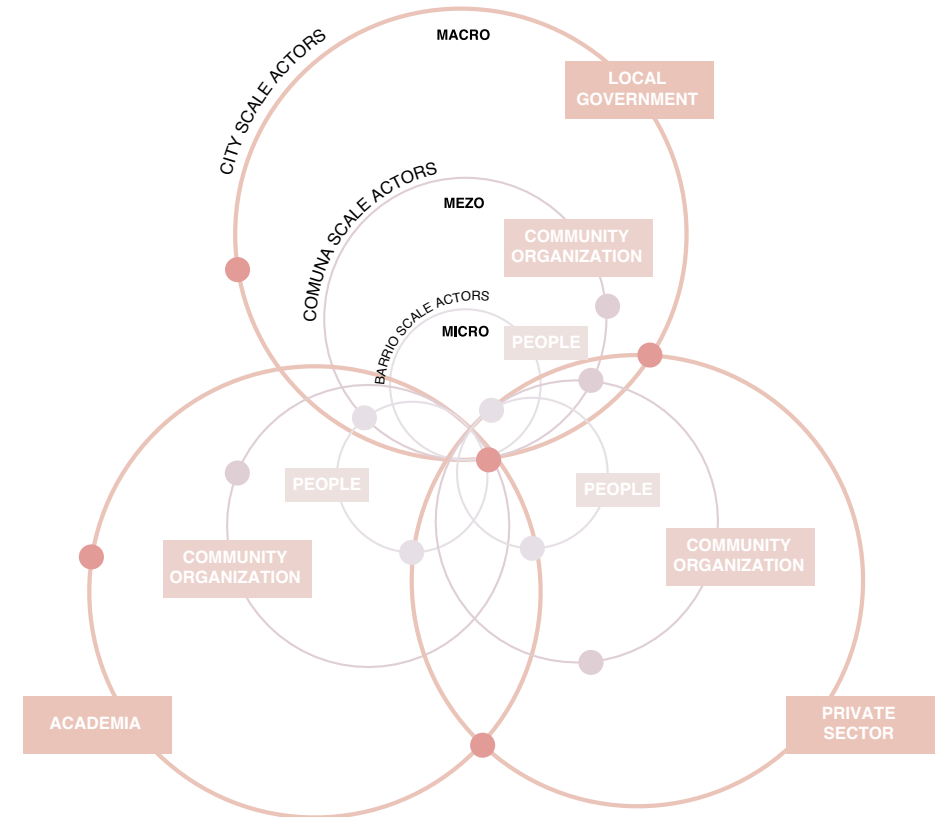


Fig 154. Actors and networks' correlation and their possible overlapping

4.3.4 Urban Goals

The 6 categories of urban rules presented within these pages here, are the basis for the upcoming design strategy developed into the upcoming pages of this publication. Each one of these urban rules presents a collection of multiple actions that need to be taken into account in order to achieve them. The design strategy is seen as a manual that could help the way into negotiating the invisible borders of everyday spaces in Comuna 13. Each one of these rules is important to be taken into consideration in order to create a neighbourhood safe and vibrant neighbourhood.

#1 Goal: Economic

- Create diverse commercial offer
- Create more job opportunities
- Offer possibilities for touristic activities
- Focus on local market production

#2 Goal: Political

- Strengthen the social relations between the community
- Include different social organisation within the process

#3 Goal: Spatial

- Design more inclusive public spaces
- Offer better standard of infrastructure, especially mobility
- Activate vacant lots and buildings
- Focus on providing better walkability
- Place urban furniture within the public spaces

#4 Goal: Environment

- Activities against contamination & pollution
- Urban agriculture & farming
- More green areas

#5 Goal: Security

- Educational programmes on security
- Provide street illumination
- Design signs for orientation
- The open, public spaces should be more inclusive

#6 Goal: Social

- Make even access to public goods possible
- Create active spaces
- More public events
- Community participation



Fig 155. The Urban Goals of the Place-Making Design Strategy

4.3.5 Place-Making Design Strategy A Manual for Negotiating the Invisible Borders

The design strategy is a set of applying the urban rules that are previously defined into the this chapter. The main goal is to give certain ideas and prototypes how the predefined potentials of the barrio can be upscaled through the quality of public life as well and how the invisible borders can be negotiated in order to create more safe and vibrant neighbourhood. Streets are the main demarking lines depicting the invisible borders inside the neighbourhood. This is way, the focal point of this design strategy is the street level. The urban strategy is seen as set of 3 main actions:

1. Define safer and lively streets

The streets will get new design, division of priority users, as well as materialisation. Further on, new urban furniture will be places on the places that are recognised as zones of community gathering. Most importantly, under this action is that the "no-go" areas will get the same treatment as well. New design filled with activities that trigger constant movement, urban furniture and street lightning. Finally, the lively streets will create network of economic, social and ecological aches that will boost the active life within the barrio.

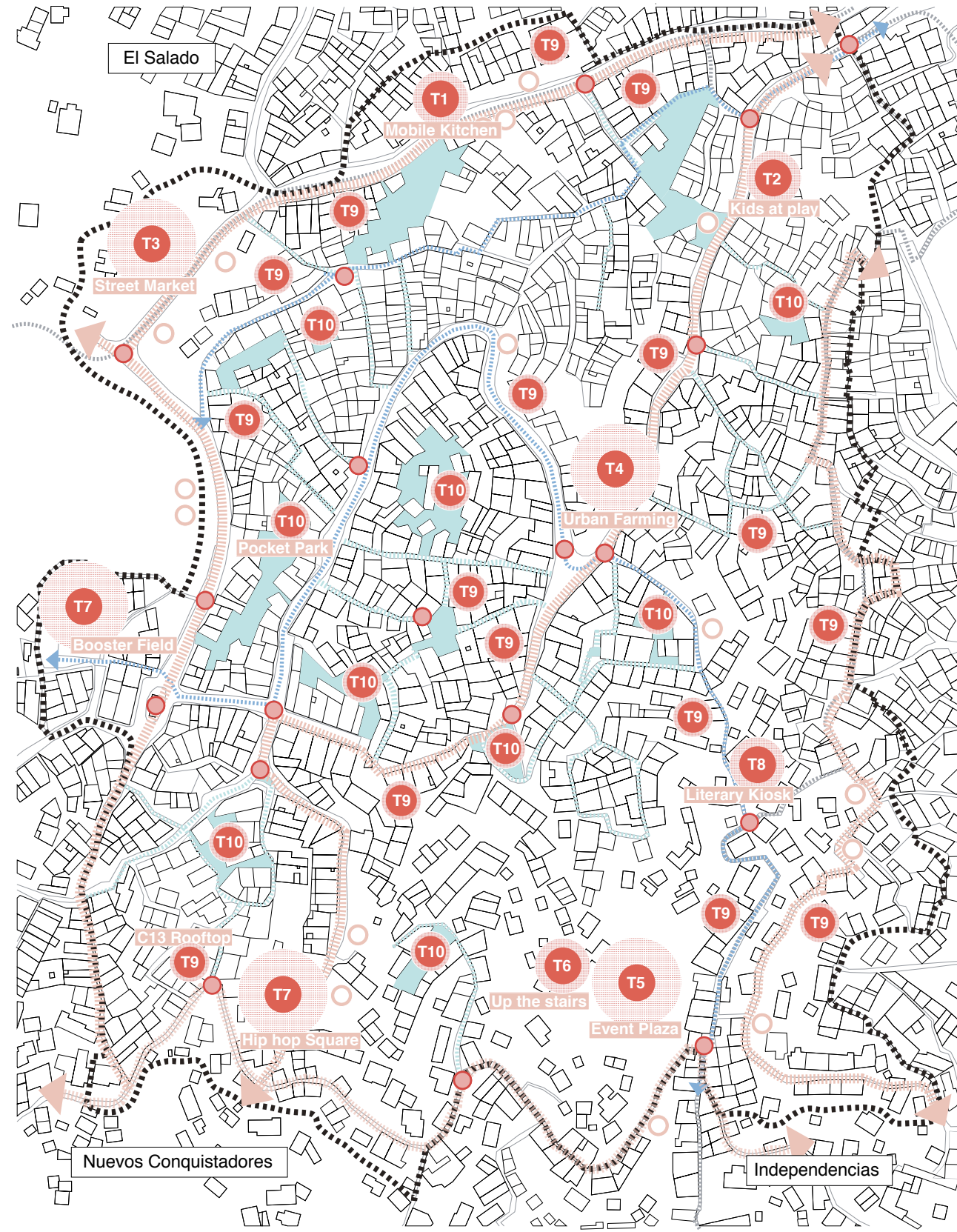
2. Create Pervasive Centralities

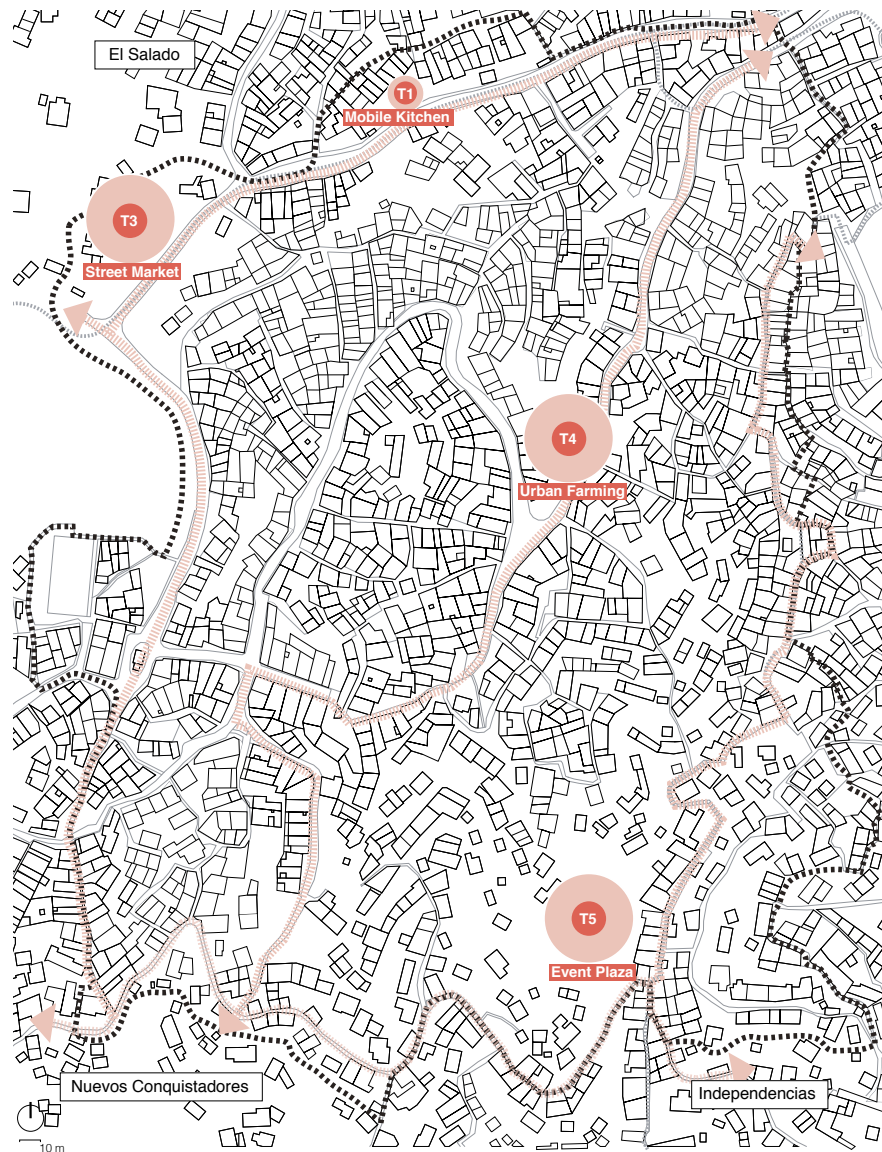
The idea behind the pervasive centralities is to create "attractors" that will infuse the neighbourhood with as much as possible diverse activities. This type of activity will trigger more inclusiveness and community engagement, but also, will attract visitors from outside the neighbourhood to come and spend some quality free time in this part of the city. The attractors are seen as permanent or temporary intervention in the open, public space.

3. Establish a network of civic spaces

Network of commons for ordinary, daily use such that represent a reminder of the importance of the quality of public life, such as urban furniture, street lightning and street signage that can make a link between the various attractors on the location as well as enhance the quality of the public life in the neighbourhood.

Fig 156. Place-Making Design Strategy for the barrio Nuevos Conquistadores





Economic Street

The economic street accommodates everything that one commercial street should have inside its infrastructure: wide sidewalks that turn to trading zone during the day that fills the neighbourhood with lots of activities and movement.

Fig 157. Proposed safe street #1: Economic street in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019

- ||||| proposed economic street
- proposed pervasive centralities - urban tools that trigger economic activities
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

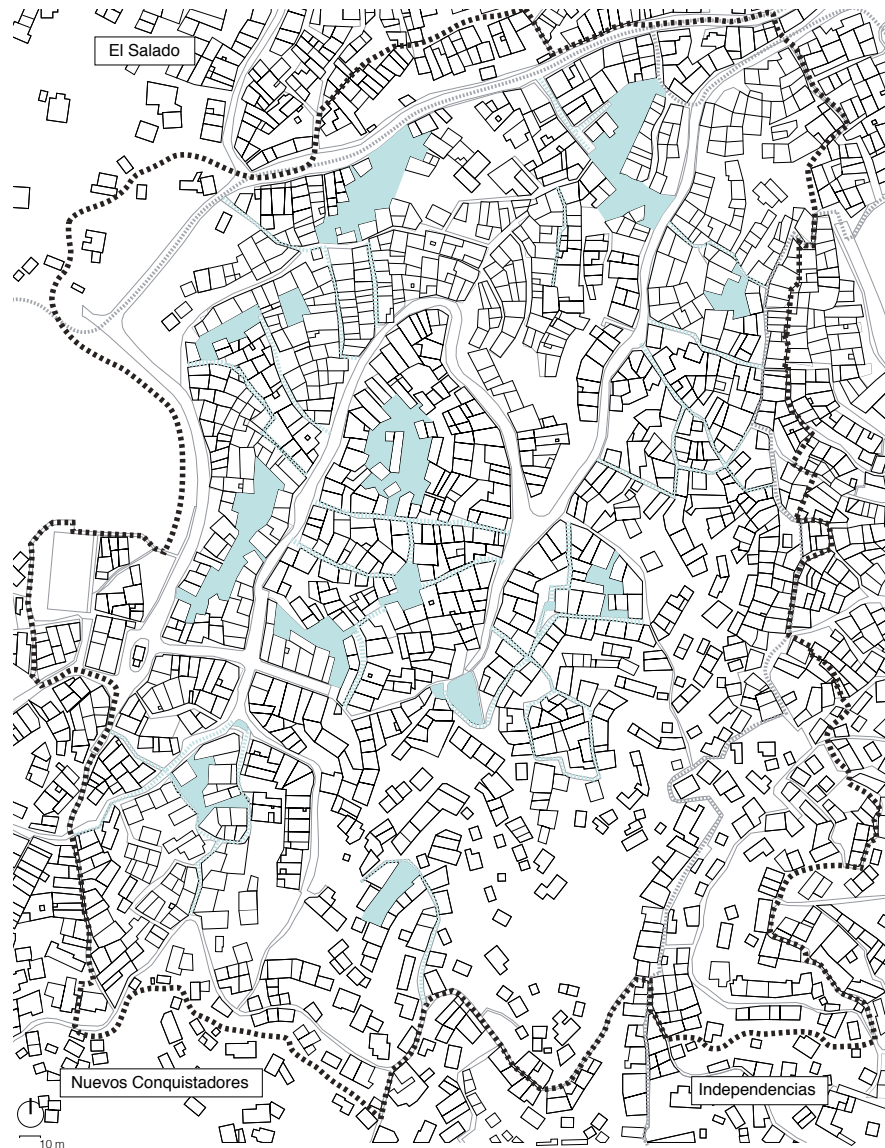


Social Street

The social street depicts street sections that are seen as public places that have the ability to bring people together. Encouraging "street-level" exchanges that can be relevant to local residents' daily lives and needs, it accommodates three main characteristics: socialisation, daily issues, care and regeneration of urban commons.

Fig 158. Proposed Proposed safe street #2: Social street in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019

- ||||| proposed social street
- proposed pervasive centralities - urban tools that trigger social activities
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

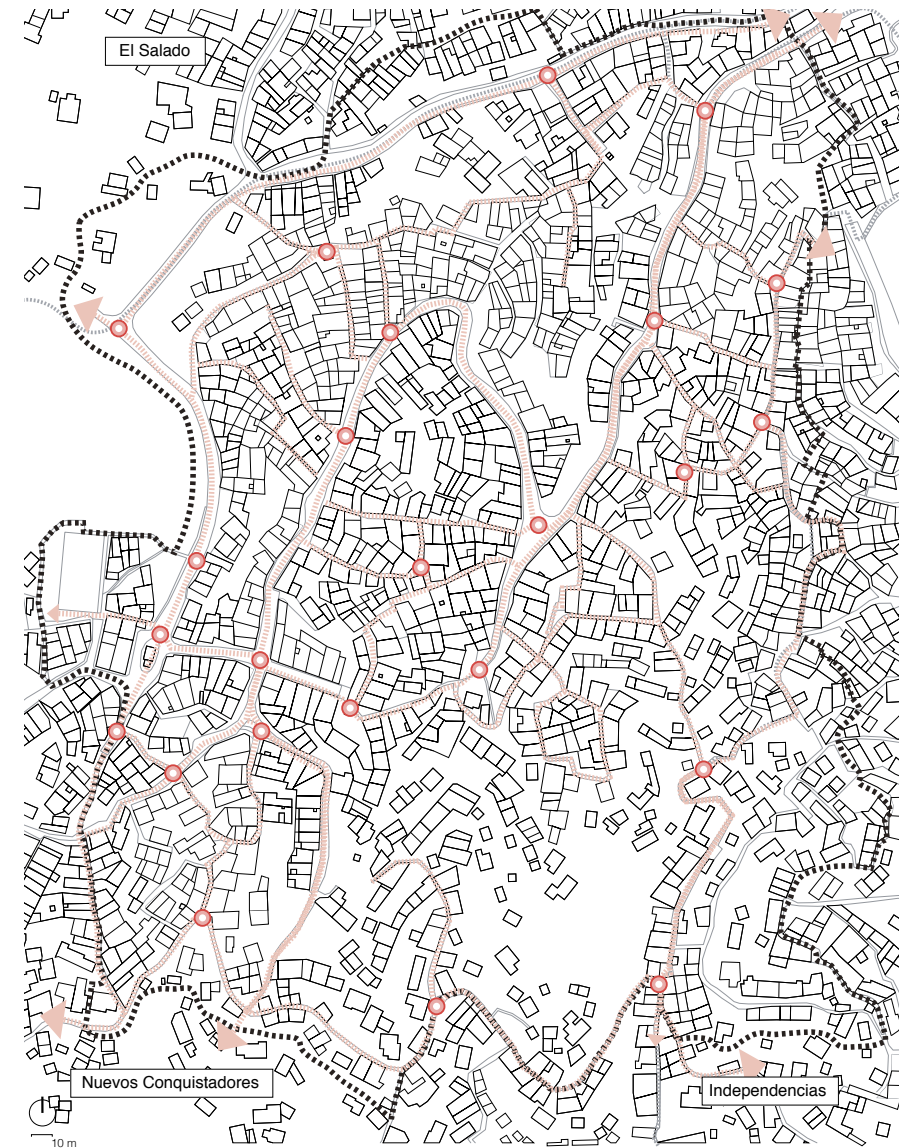


Ecological Street

The ecological streets are located along the streets that are connecting the economic with the social streets. These types of streets are imagined as add-ons to the various activities happening on street level in this design strategy.

Fig 159. Proposed safe street #3: ecological street in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019

- proposed ecological street
- proposed green areas (pocket parks)
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention



Nodes of safety

The streets are improved through the level of added city lightning as well as street signage, important to maintain orientation within the barrio. The addition of various activities on street level contribute towards reducing the insecurity on the streets. Through such interventions, the streets will unlock more safe and liveable environment for the community.

Fig 160. Proposed nodes of safety in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019

- safer and lively street - proposed street lightning
- proposed street signage
- borders to other barrios
- area of intervention

Safer and Lively Streets: The Economic Street

The **Economic Street** represent a network of commercial civic spaces filled up with various economic activities that can trigger vibrancy and diversity into the daily public life of the local residents. Publicity is a prerequisite of realising characteristic spatial functions of the economic street. As an important part of the urban public spatial system, urban characteristic commercial street is the space with convenient access and free activities. Thus, it's often in inner part of urban functions, with more concentrated cultures, frequent commercial activities and unique landscapes.

The economic street accommodates everything that one commercial street should have inside its infrastructure: wide sidewalks that turn to trading zone during the day that fills the neighbourhood with lots of activities and movement. The economic street has mini-markets known as *tiendas*, that turn out to be one of the gathering hotspots of local residents inside the Comuna 13. Except for their commercial attribute, they also represent a social space where local residents gather to play chess, watch the football game on TV, drink coffee, sing a song while drinking aguardiente or just chat about politics end everyday life. There is also an addition of stalls where local street vendors can present their products. Despite the commercial activities offered within the economic street, there is also the aspect of street design. Urban furniture and street illumination, as well as street signage that can easily communicate the way within the neighbourhood.

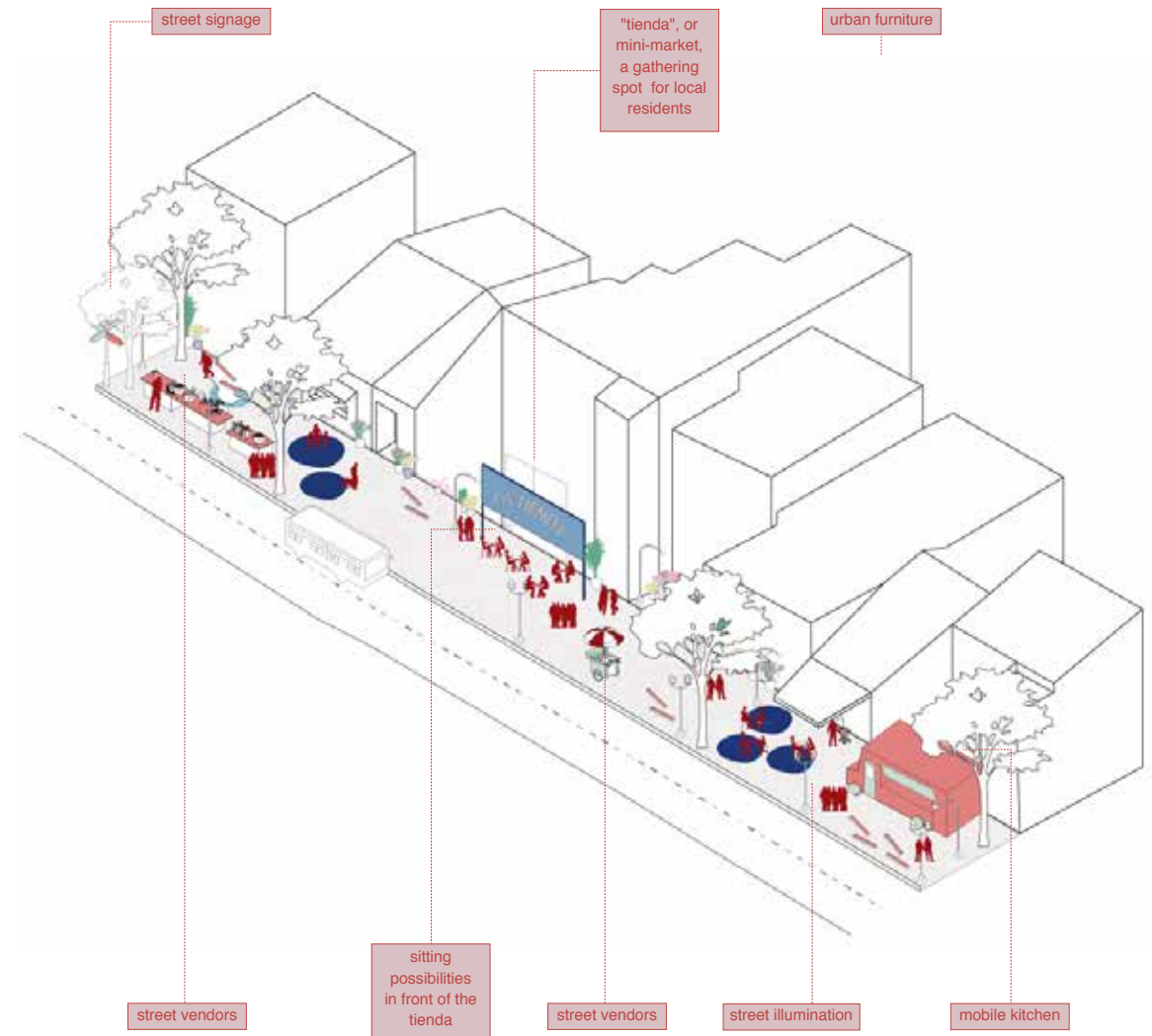


Fig 161. Safe Street #1: An axonometric representation of the Economic Axes from the Place-Making Design Strategy

Safer and Lively Streets: The Social Street

The **Social Street** is a form of neighbourhood communities, whose purpose is to promote socialisation between neighbours in the same street in order to build relationships, to interchange needs, to share expertise and knowledges, to implement common interest projects, with common benefits from a closer social interaction.

The social street depicts street sections that are seen as public places that have the ability to bring people together. Encouraging "street-level" exchanges that can be relevant to local residents' daily lives and needs, it accommodates three main characteristics:

- #1. Socialisation – many events occurring on the social street become a good occasion for socialisation: from breakfast to dinner, from movies to exhibitions, from sharing to swapping, there are many possible evolutions that can bring positive implications to the whole local community.
- #2. Daily issues – the social street makes possible to get in touch with neighbours, facilitating the solutions of daily problems just asking advice (who is the nearest doctor? how to find] a neighbour that can take care of my child?) and thus just benefiting from the power of the word-of-mouth among neighbours.
- #3. Care and regeneration of urban commons – one example is street cleaning or public parks maintenance, especially when there is a lack of efficiency on the part of the municipality.

All this range of activities is performed in a free way at two levels: as internal trade (*exclusion of do-ut-des*) but also as macro structure being Social Street as a model is absolutely free

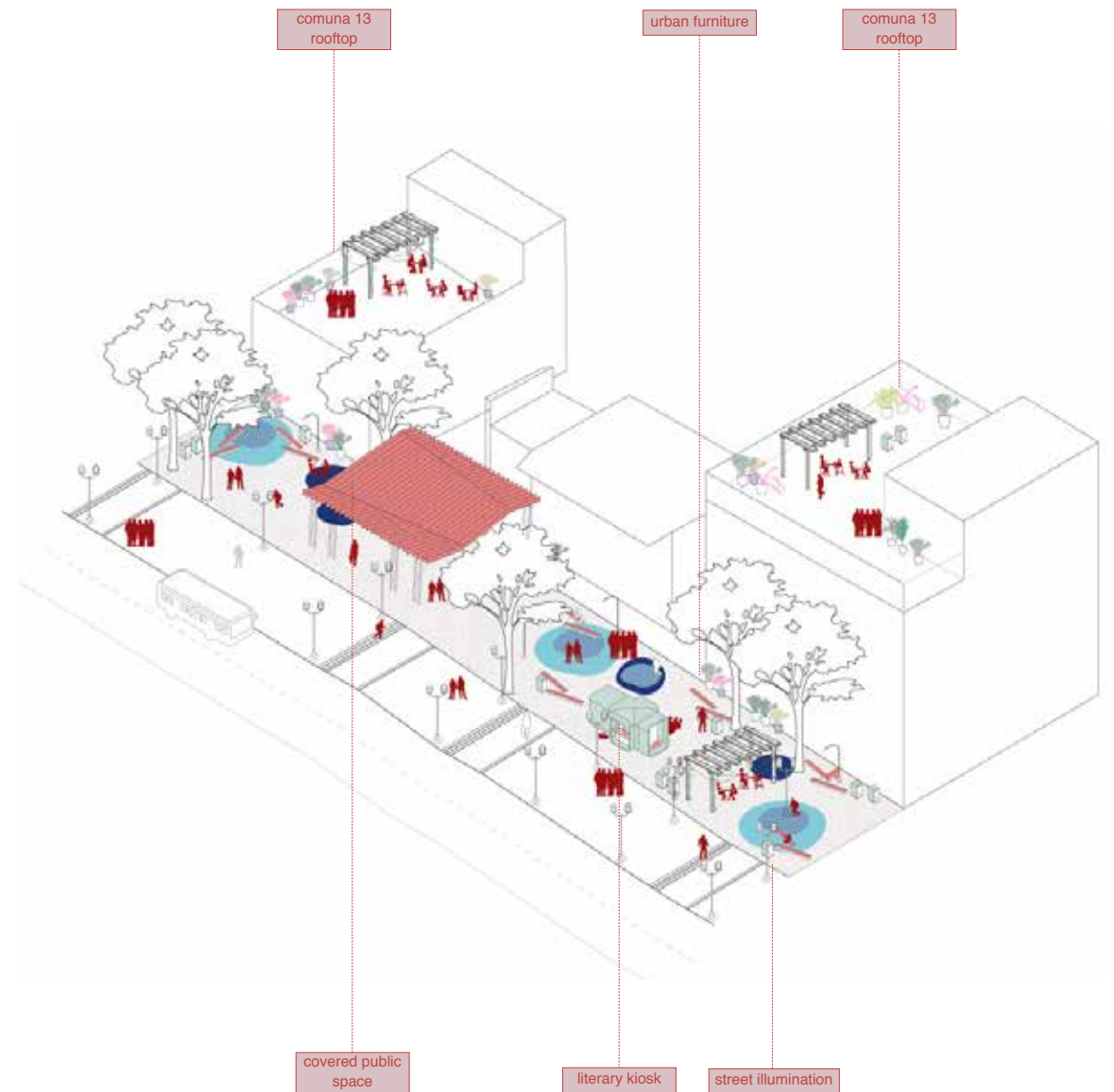


Fig 162. Safe Street #2: An axonometric representation of the Social Axes from the Place-Making Design Strategy

Safer and Lively Streets: The Ecological Street

The **Ecological Street** is part of healthy, equitable urban design that views streets as vital public spaces. Incorporating green elements into streets improves mental and physical health through better air quality, valuable shade, and beautification and contact with nature in areas where access to parks is limited. Ensure that the benefits of green stormwater infrastructure are provided equitably, especially in neighbourhoods that have historically borne disproportionate air and water pollution or that lack green space.

The ecological streets are located along the streets that are connecting the economic with the social streets. These types of streets are imagined as add-ons to the various activities happening on street level in this design strategy. They represent the ecological element of the design strategy and as such, contribute to the environmental aspects of it. They also improve air quality, mitigates the urban heat island effect, and increase species habitat, from small oases for birds and insects to the large water bodies that eventually receive stormwater runoff.

Apart from being environmentally important, these types of streets are also socially important since they also have a social component that accompanies the ecological one - design of the street spaces, urban furniture, pocket parks, rooftops, urban furniture and street illumination.

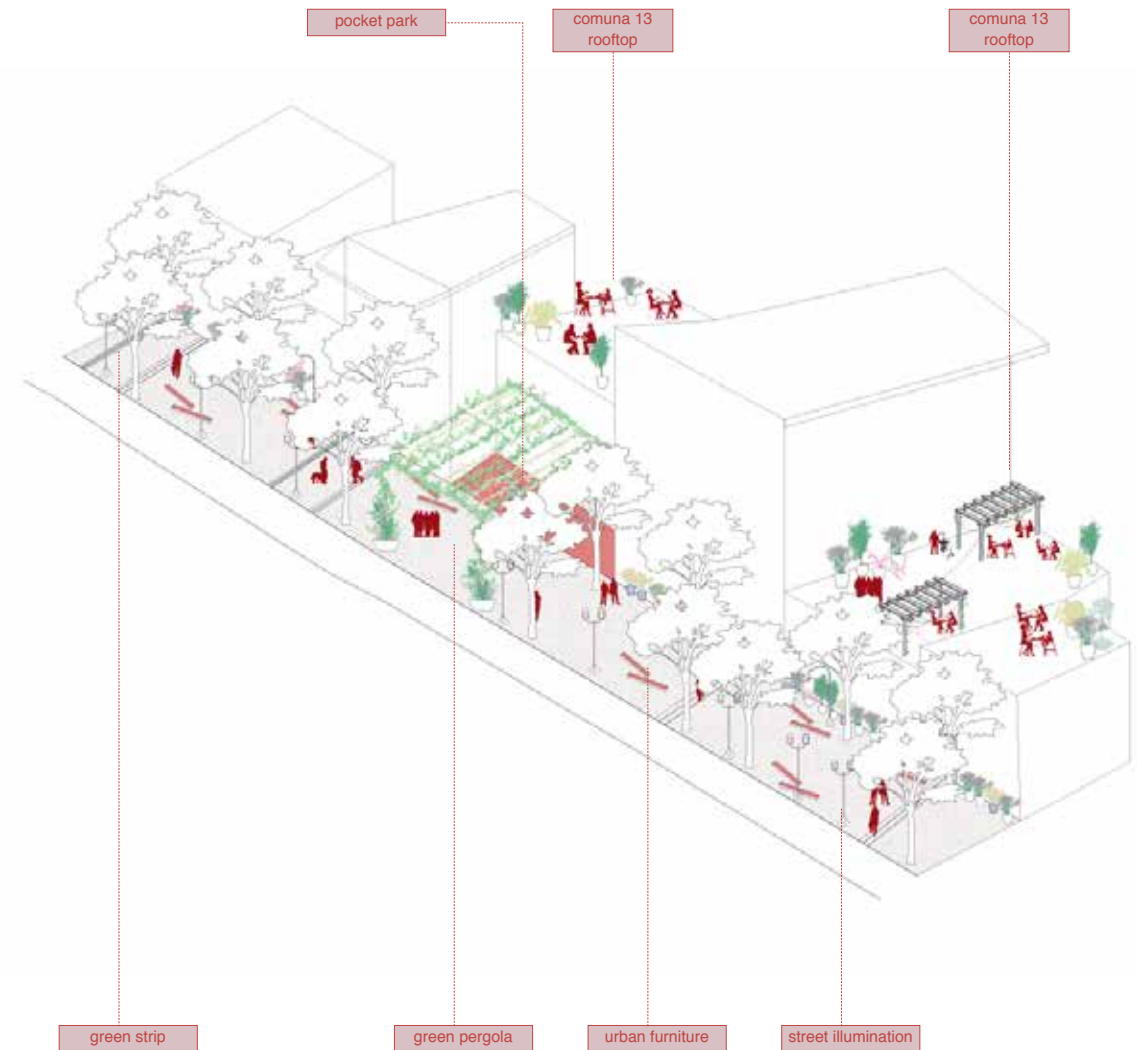


Fig 163. Safe Street #3: An axonometric representation of the Ecological Axes from the Place-Making Design Strategy

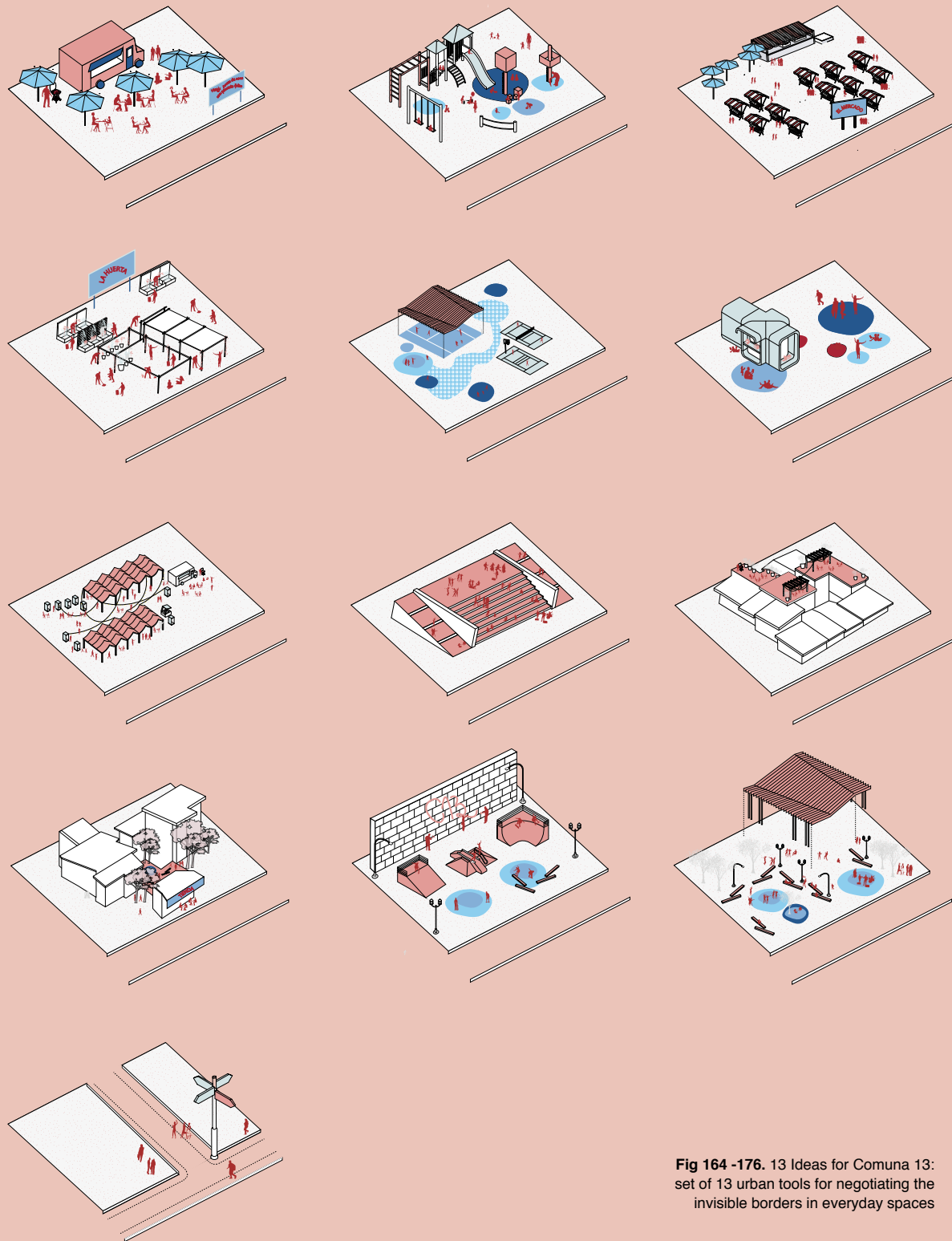


Fig 164 -176. 13 Ideas for Comuna 13:
set of 13 urban tools for negotiating the
invisible borders in everyday spaces

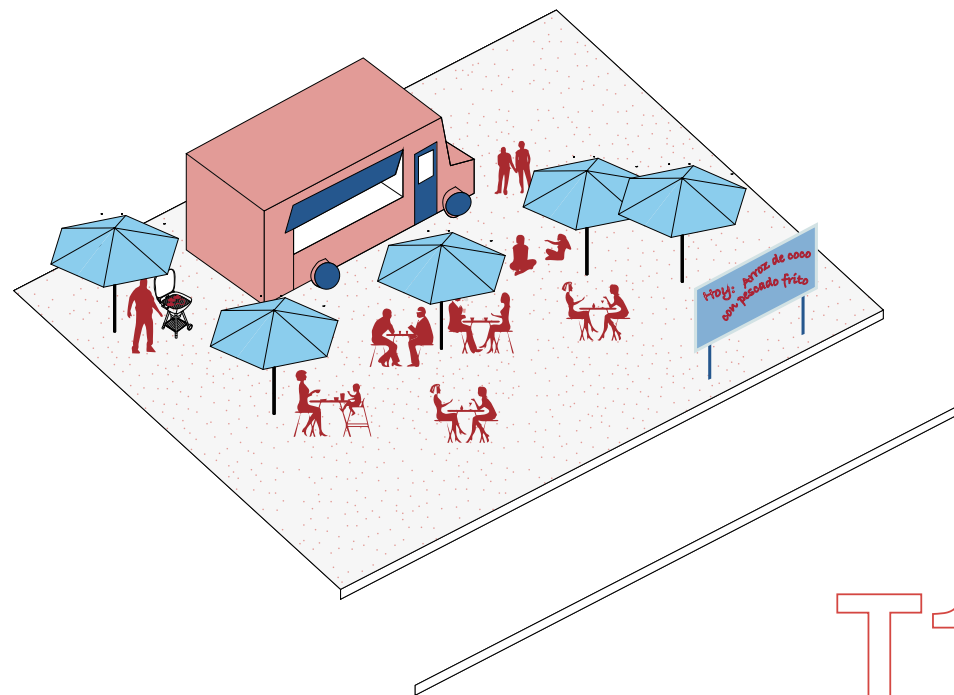
4.4 URBAN TOOLBOX

13 Ideas for Comuna 13

MOBILE KITCHEN

The **Mobile Kitchen** is a pop up activator that is strategically positioned at important gathering public spaces in the Comuna and offers local food cooked on the spot for affordable prizes. It can boost development of local economy and attract tourist. This type of naive micro intervention can have the ability to avoid stigmatisation of specie neighbourhoods as places that are labelled as no-go areas. Due to their manoeuvrability, the trucks would also have a greater capacity to collect surplus food from commercial kitchens that would otherwise go to waste.

Layer: economic
Scale: micro
Stakeholders: local residents, local reastaurants

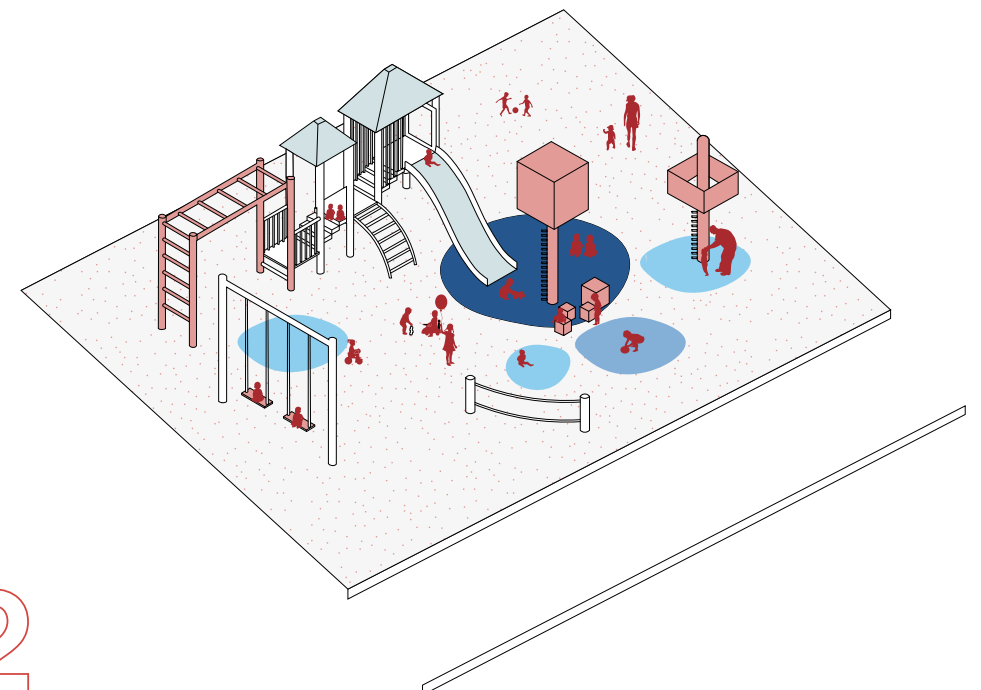


T1

KIDS AT PLAY

Children playgrounds inside low-income neighbourhoods have a crucial importance as public space activators, especially for families that are not able to afford private recreational activities. They have the ability to generate social and physical benefits for children's development and in the same time, they represent spaces for inter-generation interactions. The very small number of public facilities as well as open urban public spaces inside Comuna 13 means most families will not benefit because the distances involved are impractical. To expand the network in the neighbourhood, a series of publicly owned vacant lots could be transformed into playgrounds, because play does matter for all children.

Layer: social
Scale: mezzo
Stakeholders: parents with children, kindergartens, schools



T2

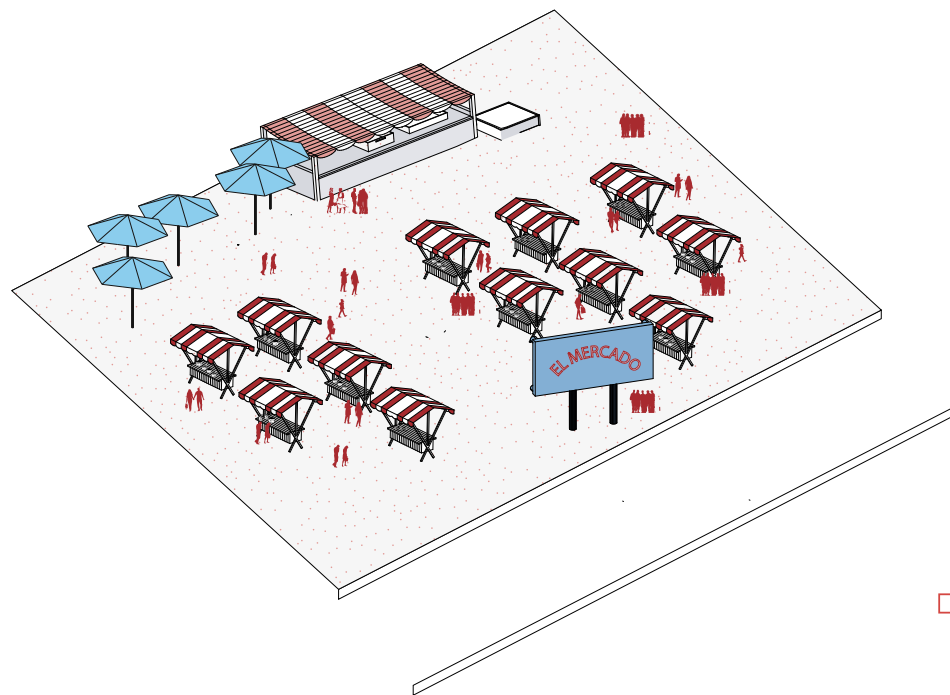
STREET MARKET

Food is crucial cultural connector for communities all over the world. And Colombians do really like to eat. The act of sharing local dish with each other represents an act of social interaction that aims towards acceptance and tolerance within the community. The informal street market is one of the main attributes known for the streets of Medellin. Inspired by this setting, this type of **street market** could boost the local economy of the neighbourhood, integrate various community groups in the comuna and even further, attract tourist visitors interested into the cultural diversity that the city has to offer. Due to its flexible design, the market is able to accommodate other uses at different times, such as various events that can activate the newly constructed market square and surrounding streets in the evening, when activity usually ceases after the adjacent central market closes.

Layer: economic, social

Scale: macro

Stakeholders: local vendors, local farmers, local residents, local restaurants, tourists



T3

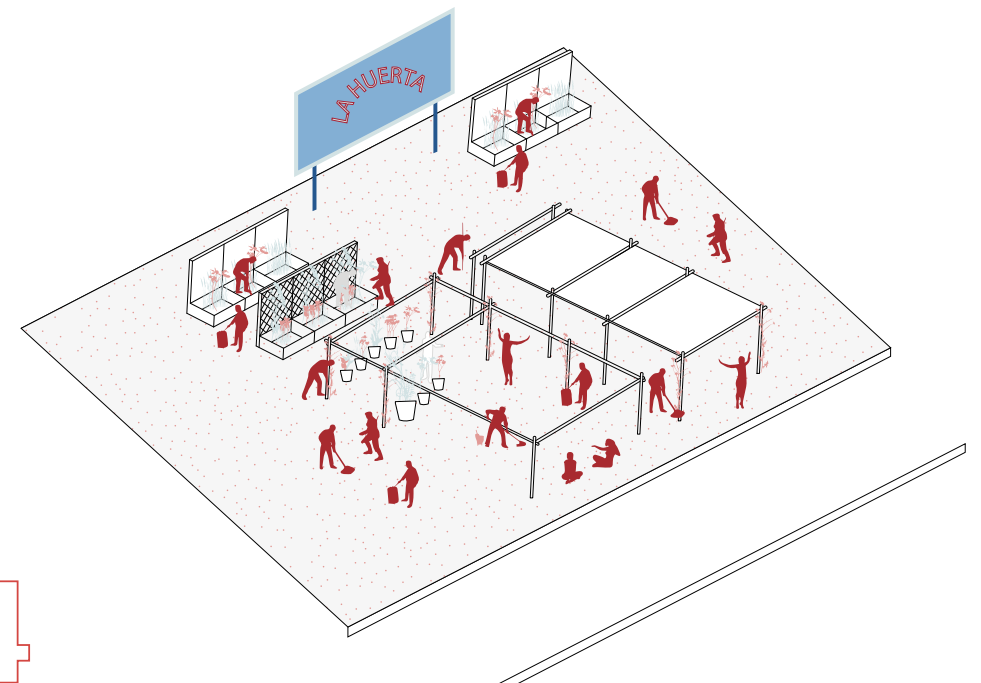
FRESH FROM THE BLOCK

Layer: social, ecological

Scale: macro

Stakeholders: local residents, local vendors, local farmers, community organizations

No action is too small, even if it is simply planing a tree in the corner of the street or just growing plants on the walls. Farming and agriculture in Medellin usually happens at the city limits. The idea of this intervention is to create a nearby, available urban spaces for agricultural use. This initiative is an example of urban agriculture where citizens seek out and repurpose unused urban pockets suitable for growing fresh products. Urban and sustainable agriculture is fundamental to reducing poverty. It triggers economic development and creates healthier environment for the citizens, by increasing the green spaces in the city. By providing infrastructure for urban agriculture, citizens can engage into creating nourishing habitat in the Comuna, boost community involvement, get jobs and create stronger bonds between each other.

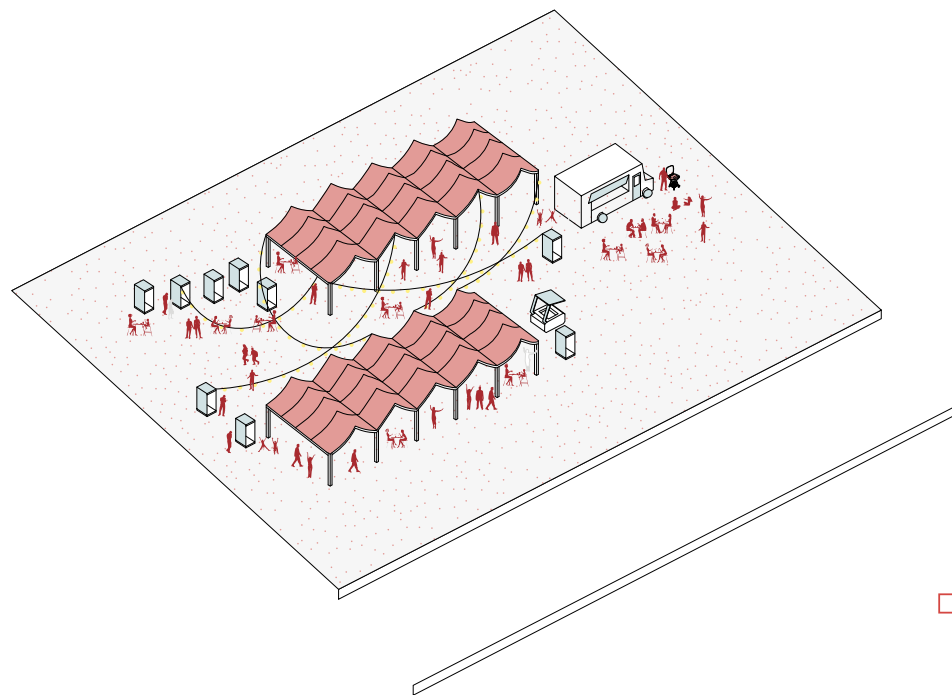


T4

EVENT PLAZA

Taking people in the center of the design is the most important factor in this action of urban borders' negotiation. The goal of the **event plaza** is to develop an open public square that is able to accommodate various activities that can boost dynamics in the community life. The event plaza will host events such as festivals, carnivals, concerts. It can be also used as a public square with no further use than meeting friends and family. The low-cost urban furniture as well as the various mobile equipments make it easy to construct the event plaza. There are exhibition stalls organised around the plaza perimeter that are dedicated for public art installations, graffiti art or any other type of artistic interventions, always keeping in mind the creative and cultural encouragement of the community.

Layer: social, economic
Scale: macro
Stakeholders: local residents, local restaurants, art centers, community organizations, tourists

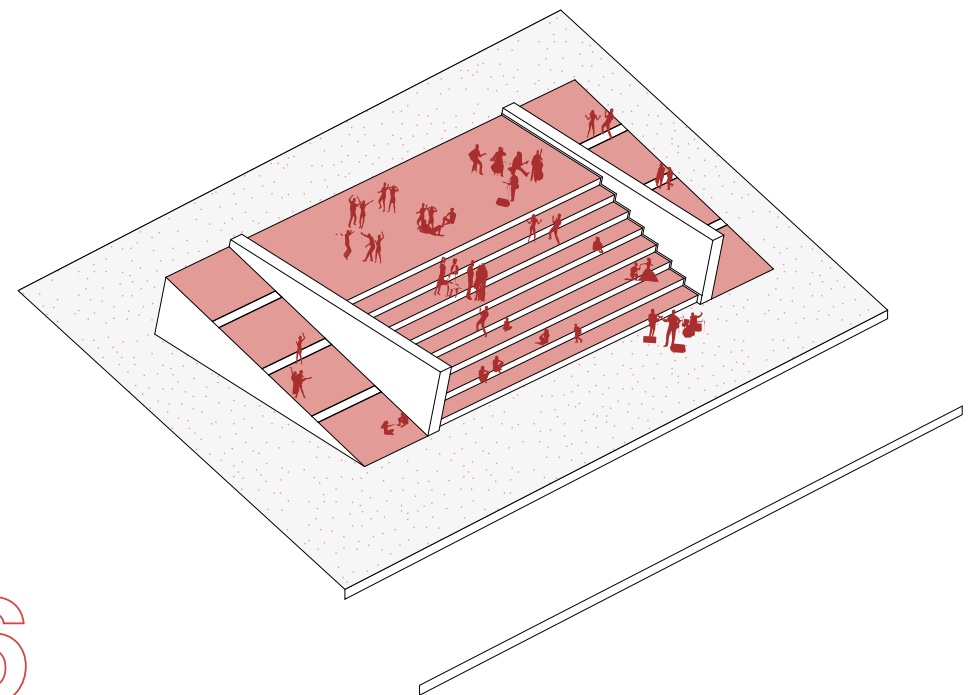


T5

UP THE STAIRS

Outdoor cultural activities play a dual role in strengthening community networks and reclaiming underused spaces. In Comuna 13, a proliferation of vacant lots has resulted in a fragmented urban fabric and pockets of insecurity. With minimal investments, these public stairs can be transformed into open-air theatres or pop-up cinemas projecting on to the exposed facades of adjusted buildings. Besides these places can also have a multidimensional purpose like hosting festivals, concerts or public art exhibitions. Finally, one can just simply rest and enjoy a good book in the sun or meet the friends. This prototype design represent an upgraded piece of low-cost, flexible, urban space acupuncture, boosting safety in its surrounding area through nighttime activities and added lightning.

Layer: social
Scale: micro
Stakeholders: local residents, tourists

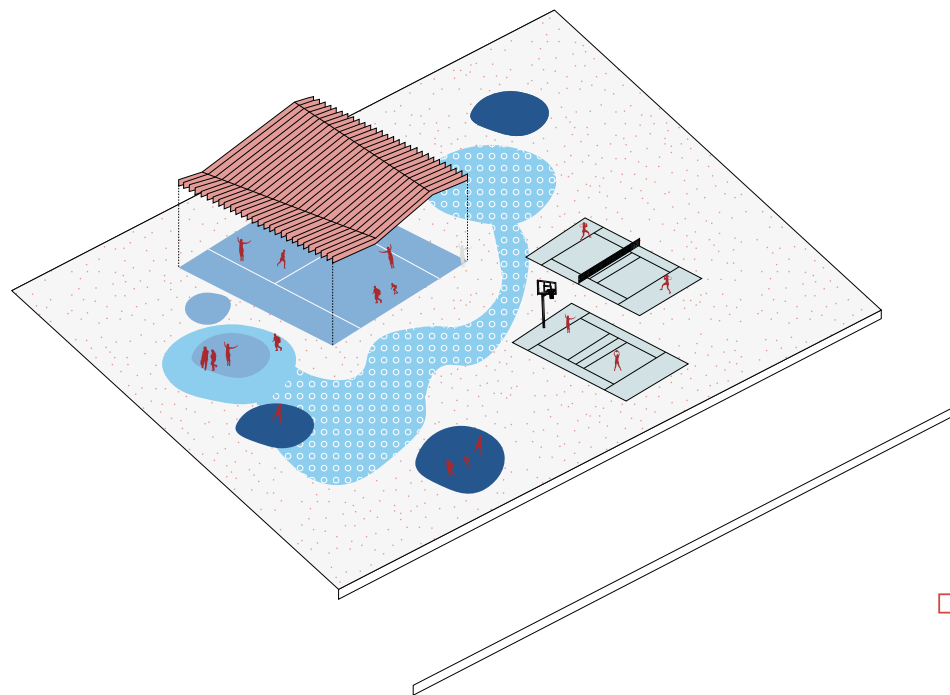


T6

BOOSTER FIELD

Despite the fact that sport is one of the central elements of Colombian culture and identity, there are very few facilities in this part of the city open to the public on a daily basis. Access to **recreational spaces** has the capacity to activate unused spaces while providing safe, inclusive environments for children and youth, as well as promote healthy lifestyles for residents of all ages. A single basketball court is chosen for this intervention. With the addition of a simple roof design and basic landscaping, this could be transformed into year-round, multifunctional playing spaces. The thought behind is to empower and inspire local communities to further repurpose smaller lots into courts field up with sport activities.

Layer: social
Scale: mezzo
Stakeholders: local residents, schools, community organizations

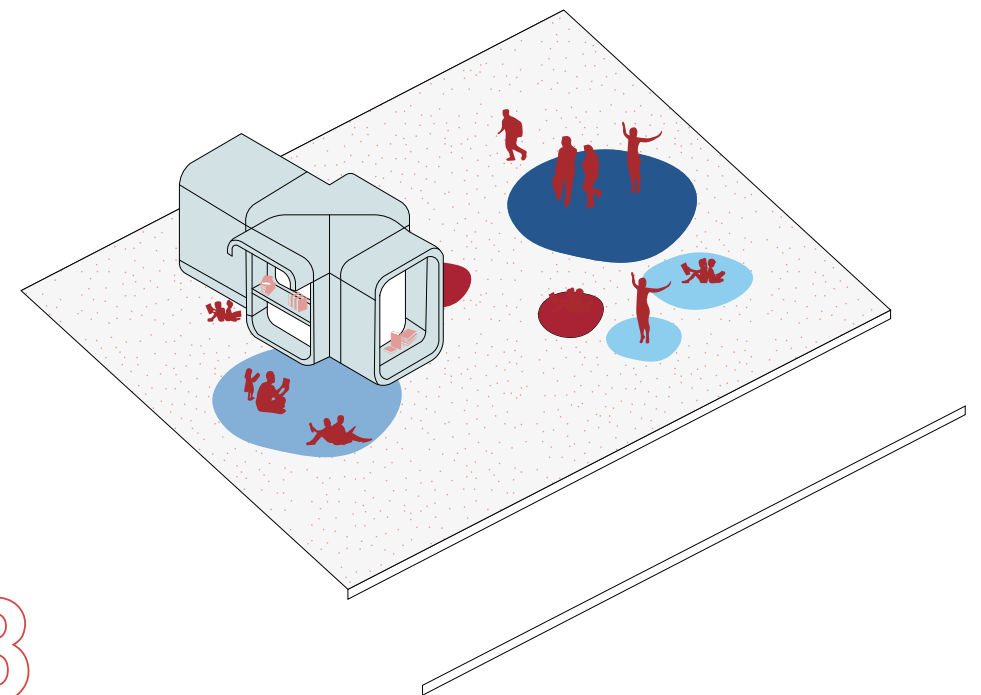


T7

LITERARY KISOK

Education is one of the most emerging issues to the communities that live on the outskirts of the city. There are more parents in Medellin that are not able to afford education to their children than the ones that are able to. The **literary kiosk** represents a pop up micro infrastructure placed into strategic vacant points in the neighbourhood and has the ability to offer informal types of education to the most underprivileged. It is open to everyone and costs nothing. In Tel Aviv, the Levinsky Park Garden Library has provided a social space for asylum seekers and migrant workers to interact in a nonthreatening environment that remains lit at night. In a similar vein, the literary kiosk could include both book storage and seating to encourage citizens to enjoy this open-air “reading room.”

Layer: social
Scale: micro
Stakeholders: local residents, schools

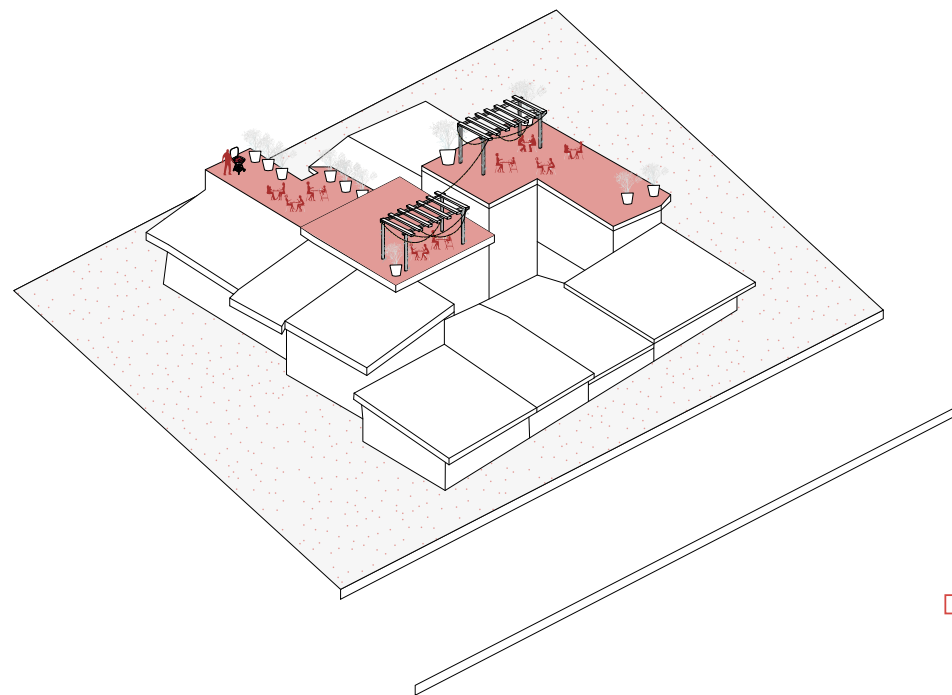


T8

C13 ROOFTOP

The potential of the flat rooftops of Comuna 13 are forgotten spaces, filled with old unused antennae, degrading materials, and empty voids. Even small-scale activities on the roofs of the single family houses can have the ability to transform these zones into reclaimed social spaces. By providing a basic infrastructure above the noise and activity of the street, these facilities would play a catalytic role in encouraging residents to reconcile of their rooftops as additional communal areas—that is, collective assets rather than no-man’s-lands. Such initiatives could also become the first step toward more expansive and sustainable rooftop farming initiatives that provide natural insulation and boost energy efficiency.

Layer: social, ecological, economic
Scale: mezzo
Stakeholders: local residents, local restaurants, community organizations

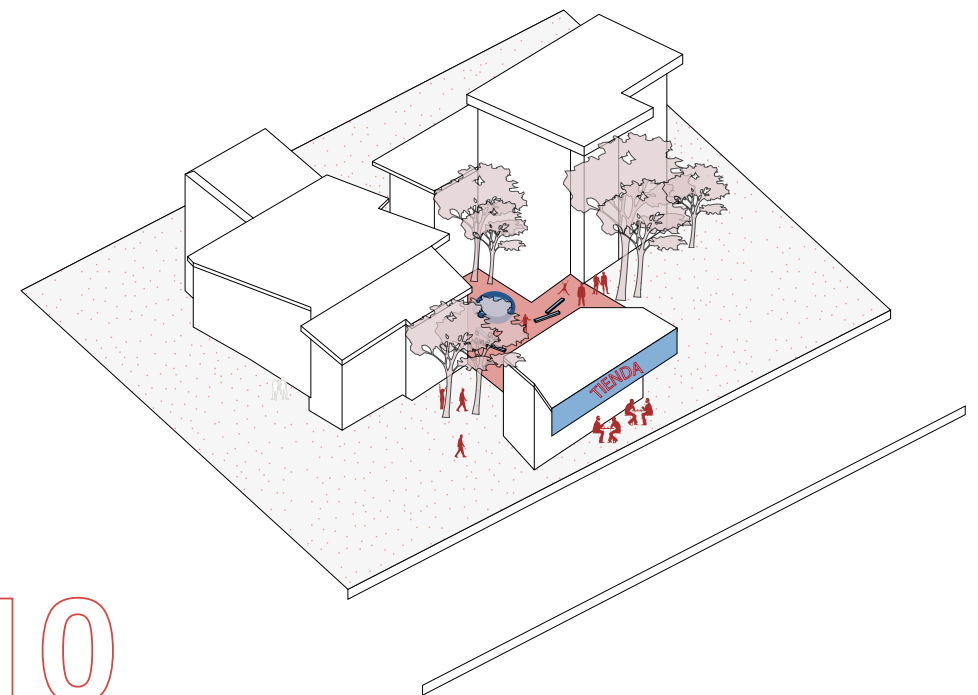


T9

POCKET PARK

Layer: social, ecological
Scale: micro
Stakeholders: local residents

There is a general absence of open outdoor spaces with special quality of public life within the entire territory of Comuna 13. An abundance of many smaller-scale empty spaces can be found in Comuna 13. Due to their irregular shape and ad hoc distribution, these areas exist largely as under-utilised voids. Cutting through these "closed spaces" to outside community to create new entry and exit points, as well as carving out low-cost bench seating, would be a simple way to realise the true potential of these sites as engaging neighbourhood green spaces. Similarly, minor improvements like the planting of additional trees and shrubs via a participatory community process would not only increase visual appeal and address issues of neglect, but also help shift expectations about future maintenance and upkeep by promoting local ownership.

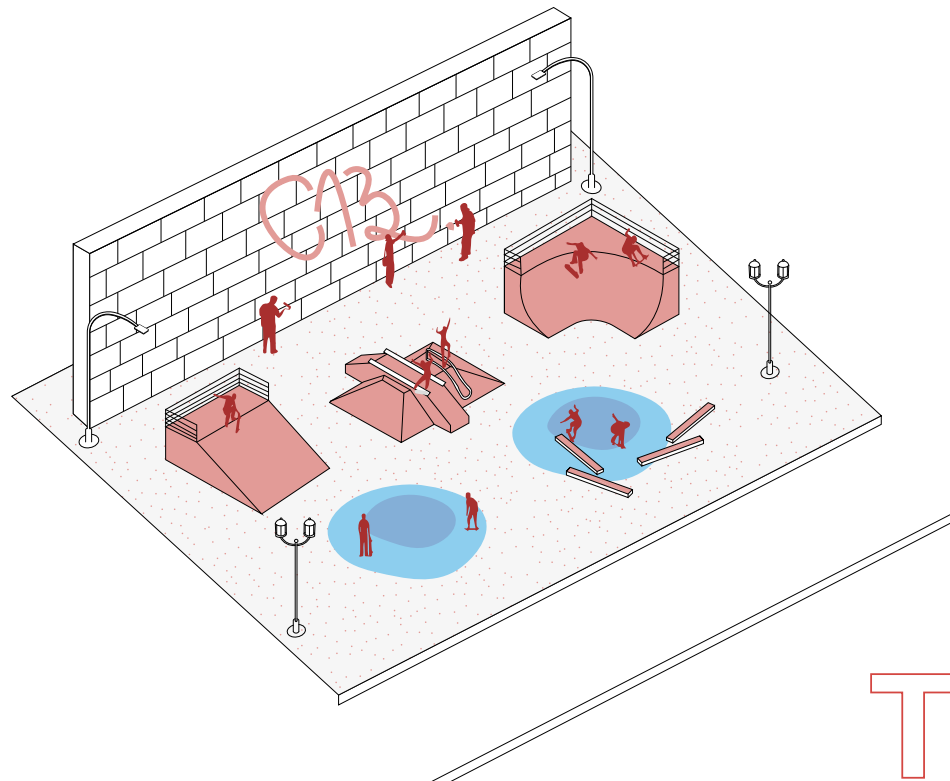


T10

HIP HOP SQUARE

Graffiti art has proven as a very successful tool in order to exhibit art into public space. Graffitiour is one of the most popular touristic attributes of Comuna 13. Hip hop as a lifestyle is an everyday common practice in Comuna 13. Most of the community leaders are representatives of the hip hop movement triggering the creative urge in children and teenagers, teaching them about the arts of this movement. **Plaza de hip hop** has an ability to unite children, resolve clashes between teenage groups while teaching them about various ways of investing creative energy that is beyond delinquency.

Layer: social
Scale: mezzo
Stakeholders: local residents, hip-hop community, tourists

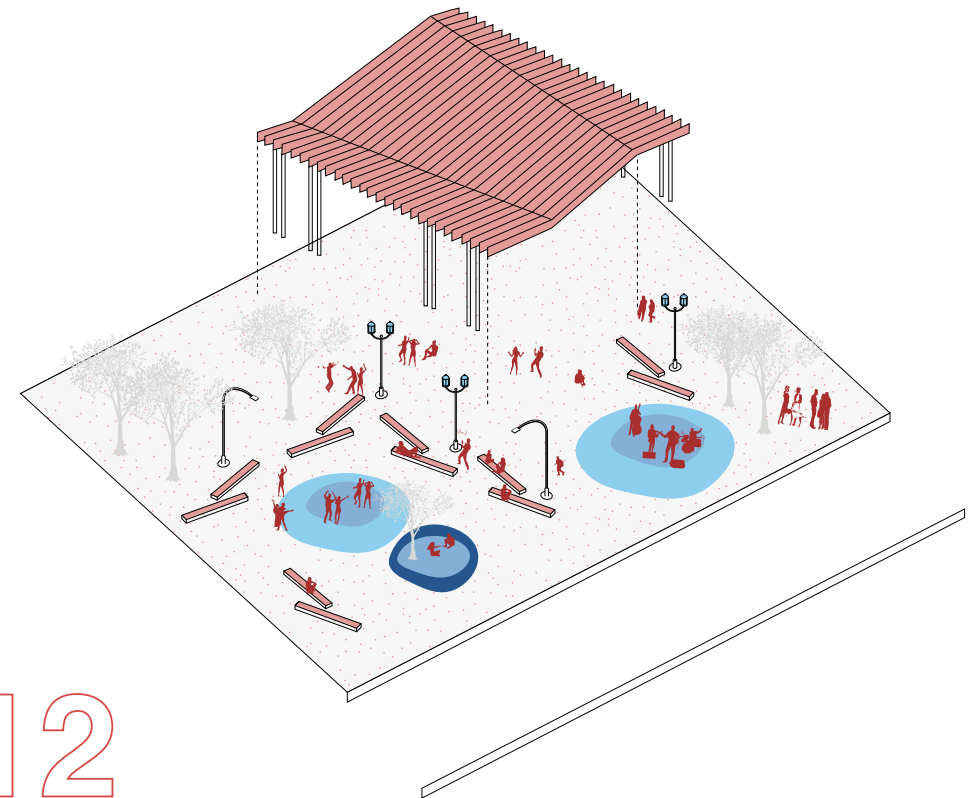


T11

NETWORK OF COMMONS

Layer: social, ecological
Scale: macro
Stakeholders: local residents

Pedestrian circulation and interaction shape the social life of neighbourhoods. Residents of Comuna 13 face a series of obstacles when moving through the neighbourhood, including sidewalk obstacles, narrow paths, damaged surfaces, and unsafe environments. At the same time, dead-end streets, leftover spaces, empty courtyards, and under-utilised areas proliferate and emerge even greater thereat for security. These issues could be managed with relatively low investments into new “network of commons,” which would consolidate and connect a range of stand-alone public space interventions. This intervention requires coordinated removal of physical boundaries at key points, like fences, and dividing walls.

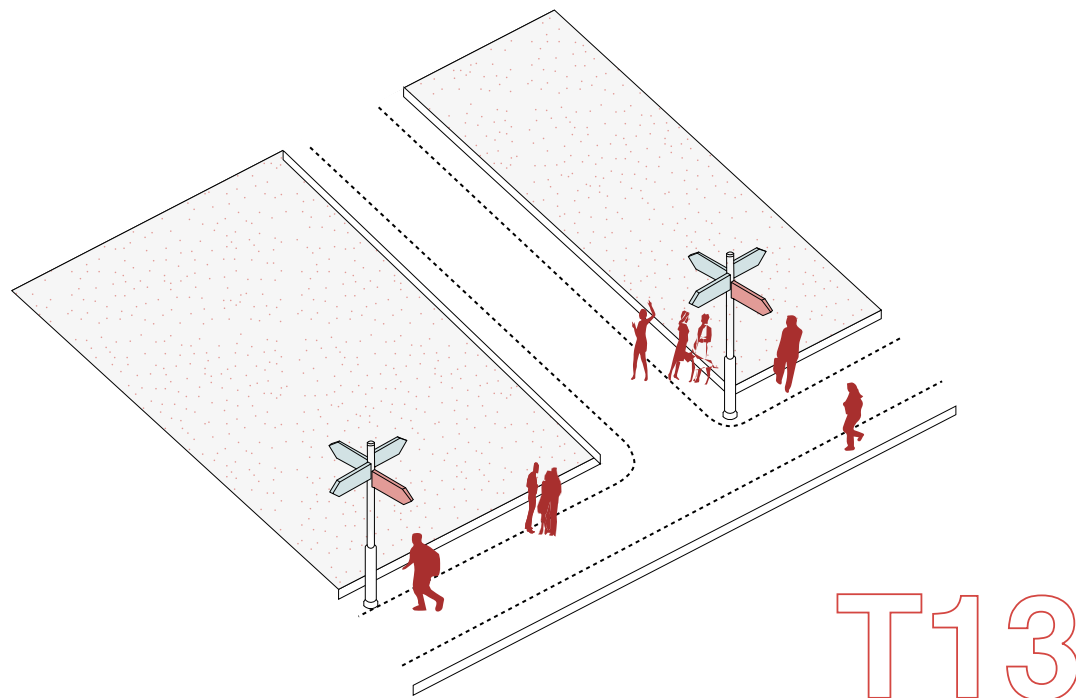


T12

WALK THIS WAY

Walking is healthy, free, and environmentally friendly. But it is a proven fact that walking is not one of the most wanted free-time activity in Comuna 13. Improving walkability helps to address escalating obesity rates as well as congestion, road safety, and other urban challenges. While certain strategies have proven successful globally in boosting walking, including traffic-calming measures in residential neighbourhoods and multimodal mobility systems that integrate pedestrian and public transport infrastructure, low-cost interventions can also be effective in encouraging residents to choose walking over alternative transport options. The purposed model represents an intelligent way-finding signage, and improvements of the street design which provides a constant physical reminder that a city is walkable, but even beyond that, safe.

Layer: social
Scale: micro
Stakeholders: local residents



The urban toolbox represents a set of concrete interventions that are the result of the urban strategy goals. These actions are aiming towards resolving the issue of invisible borders in a way that will transform the common spaces, bring more diversity, vibrancy and activities on everyday basis. Their replicability allows them to be easily adapted to every context within the city.

Evaluation of the urban toolbox

Each of the urban tools is analysed in its design, and its response towards the urban goals already established in this chapter as well as the emerging issues that the author attempts to address, especially in the manner of negotiating the urban borders that have been thoroughly discussed in this publication. Every urban tool is observed and scored individually according to its unique characteristics, programming, action and impact on 6 different levels - economic, political, spatial, environmental, security and social level, according to the set of urban goals.

Even though the results presented here seem to be fixed and numeric, because of the subjective nature of the scoring the author has visualised each urban tool's score as a radar plot rather than quantitative scores. In such manner, this approach highlights the "capacity potential" of every one urban tool within the scope of the main goals of the place-making design strategy.

In order to emphasise the difference between the urban tools and their "capacity potential" within the process of negotiation of the urban borders, each radar plot segment is scaled in size and coloured differently according to its score, from maximum to minimum value.

While some of the urban tools seem to have more success in one layer compared to others, it is difficult to measure the success of the individual urban tools towards each other, given the fact that they are expected to act as a cohesive system of multiple interventions.

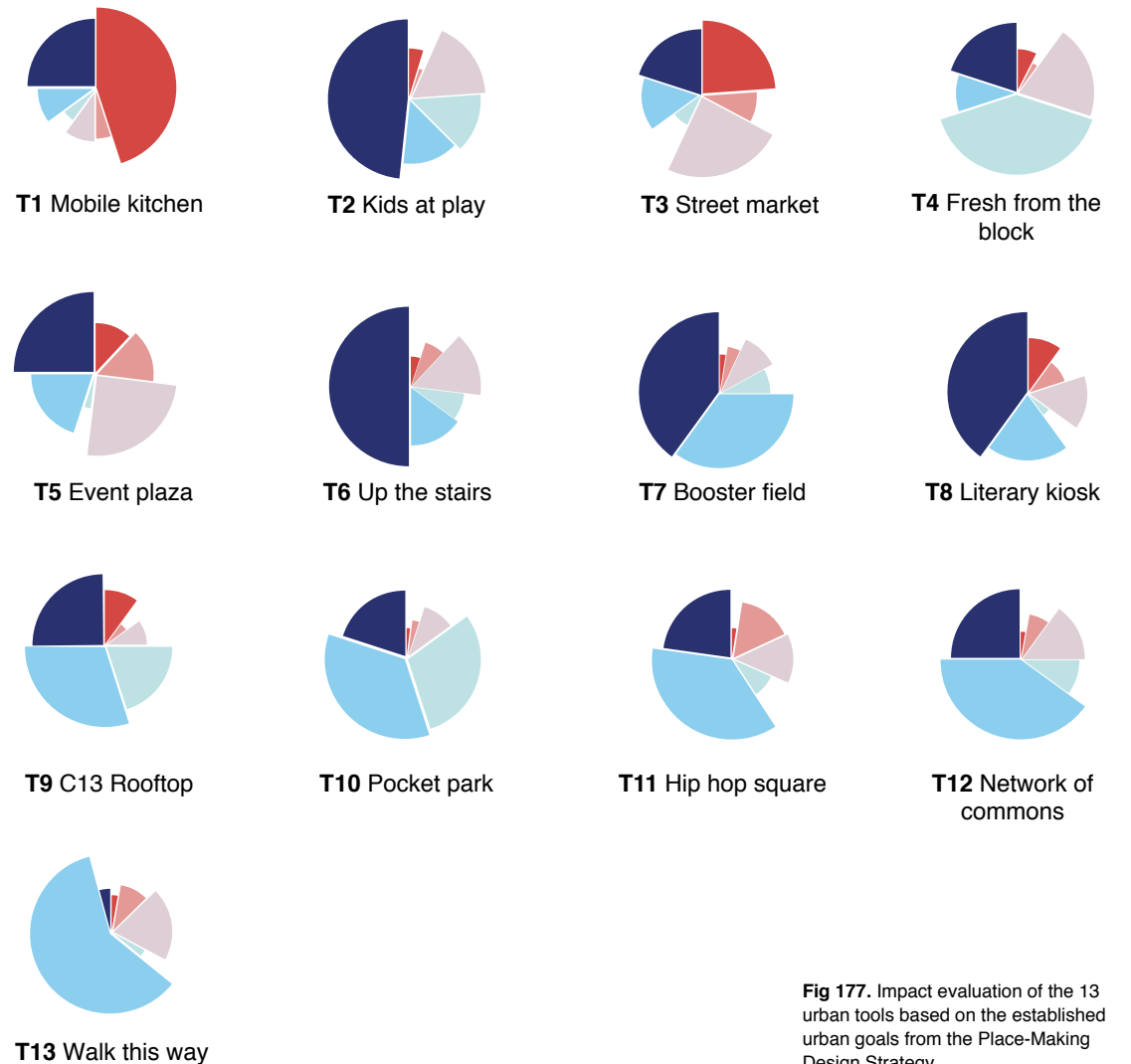
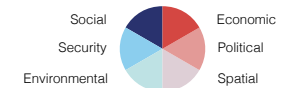


Fig 177. Impact evaluation of the 13 urban tools based on the established urban goals from the Place-Making Design Strategy

How to read:
Larger portions of the pie chart indicate stronger performance on the corresponding layer (urban goal)



4.5 PROCESS OF PLACE-MAKING DESIGN STRATEGY

4.5 Process of Place-Making Design Strategy

The process of the place-making urban strategy is constituted out of 5 phase, each one of them centred around several steps needed in order to execute it.

Phase #1

represents the initiation, or more precisely, the steer of the project and it is basically a set of activities that are needed in order to start the project moving forward. As first phase, it is important to execute it well, since it is the introduction of the whole idea that needs to be done through mediating between NGOs and Community Leaders.

Phase #2

aims towards the development of the idea - prototyping development, setting up testing zones in order to trigger community practice, organisation of open forums and exhibition where citizens can consume the idea.

Phase #3

focuses towards consolidation of funding, recognition of the crucial stakeholders and their involvement in the project.

Phase #4

continues directly after the execution of phase 3. Its focal point directs the project implementation. The first step is setting up the basic infrastructure of the whole place-making strategy. Once the infrastructure is set, the execution of the active axes is being undertaken. First are the commercial axis, then the ecological and finally the social ones. Immediately after the active axes are being implemented, they start to represent an apparatus that will generate the whole idea behind the place-making urban strategy. The axes represent a network of safe streets that represent the foundation needed to install the second goal of the strategy, and that is the creation of pervasive centralities. These represent the urban toolbox - 13 ideas for Comuna 13. Finally, the set-up of network of commons is being done, that leads towards complete implementation of the project.

Phase #5

is seen as the aftermath of the project. It is entitled to the monitoring of the impact of the project, its sustainability and its possible multiplication in various contexts not just within Comuna 13, but in numerous Comunas in the city.

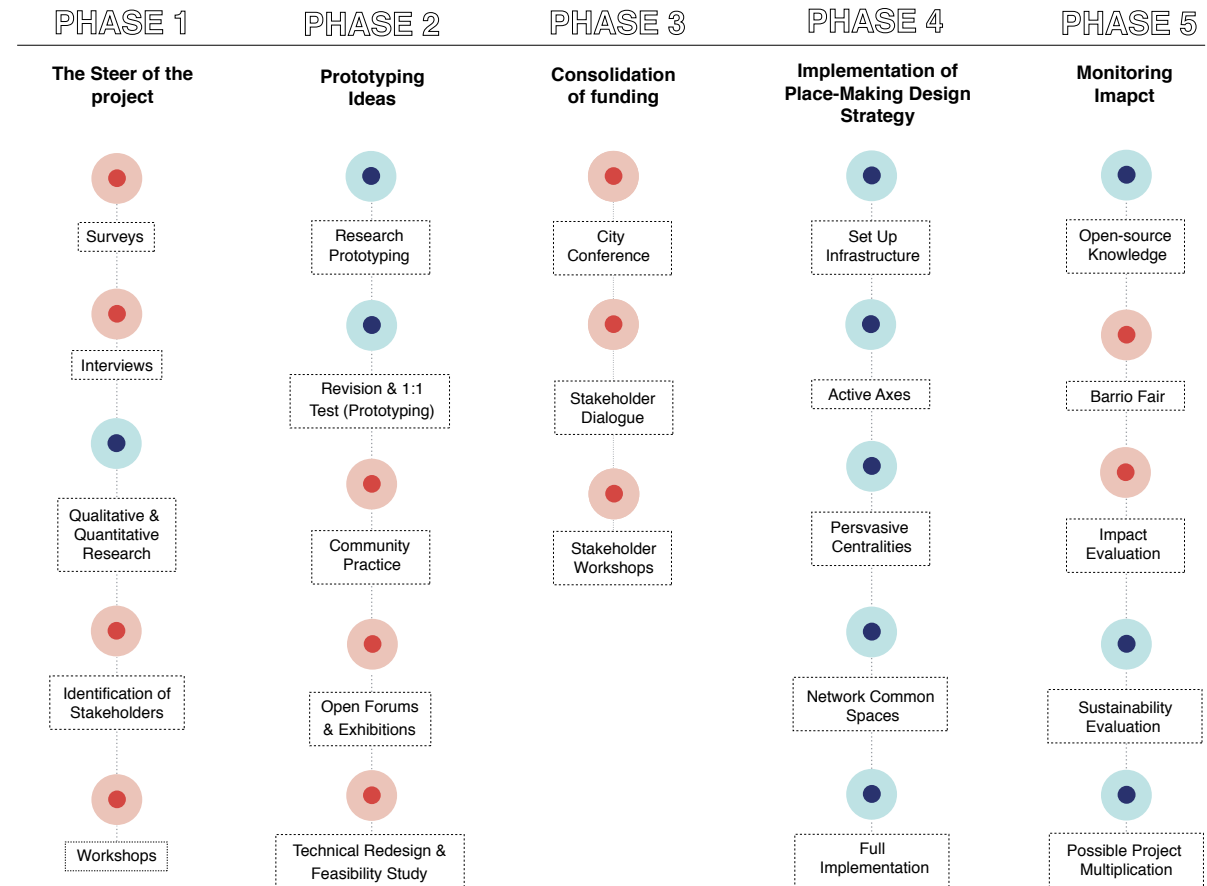


Fig 178. The five phases of the Place-Making Design Strategy and each step towards its fulfilment

- technical development
- social development

Placemaking is a people-centered approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Simply put, it involves looking at, listening to, and asking questions of the people who live, work and play in a particular space, to discover needs and aspirations. In order to determine the importance of the stakeholders in every of the five phrases of the place-making design strategy, there are some important key questions to consider in stakeholder outreach:

- Who is interested in having things change?
- Are they willing to participate in some way using their talents or funds?
- Are there any existing funds that could be used to make improvements or program the space?
- Are there existing organisations that could provide long-term management for the space?

Each one of the five phases comprehends involvement of various stakeholders that will be able to contribute towards the project on various levels. Once the stakeholders are identified, and they are onboard, the next step is to define their interconnectivity and contribution. For the purposes of this particular place-making design strategy for barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, I introduced the need for ongoing reevaluation and long-term improvements. This should be translated into special contribution toward the place-making design

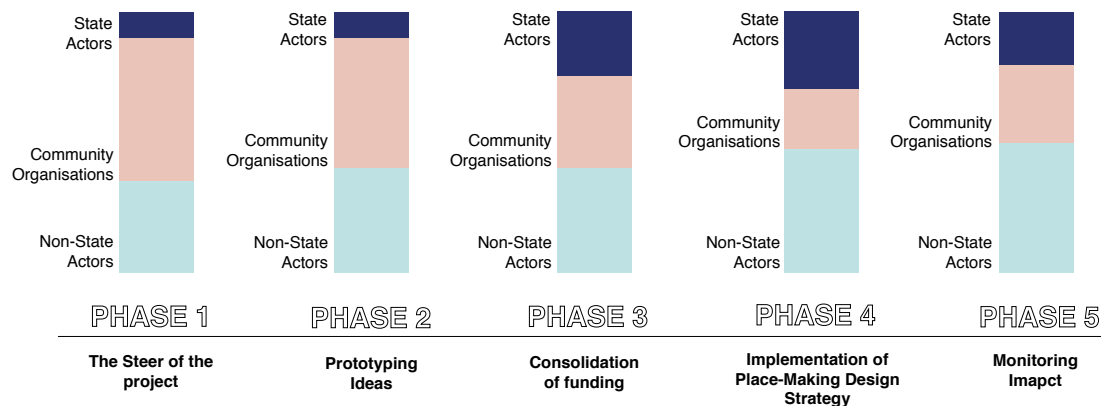


Fig 179. Involvement of the stakeholders within every of the 5 phase of the Place-making Design Strategy

strategy, of chosen individuals or groups of people belonging to the local community who will represent the group of placeholders of the project: Management & Event, Security, Creative and Maintaining.

With this input, the placeholders can continue to re-invent the space and pursue more long-term improvements, such as removing physical barriers, adding a ground-floor use to the blank wall of a building, or constructing additional structures for programming or storage. When needed, additional experts, consultants, and partners can help address specific remaining challenges.

Keeping stakeholders involved can also make or break the long-term life of a project. Ensuring that the vision for the space always mirrors the goals of the community is arguably the most crucial part of the process. Adapting the management plan in accordance with changing circumstances also ensures that the space is well-loved and well-used over time.

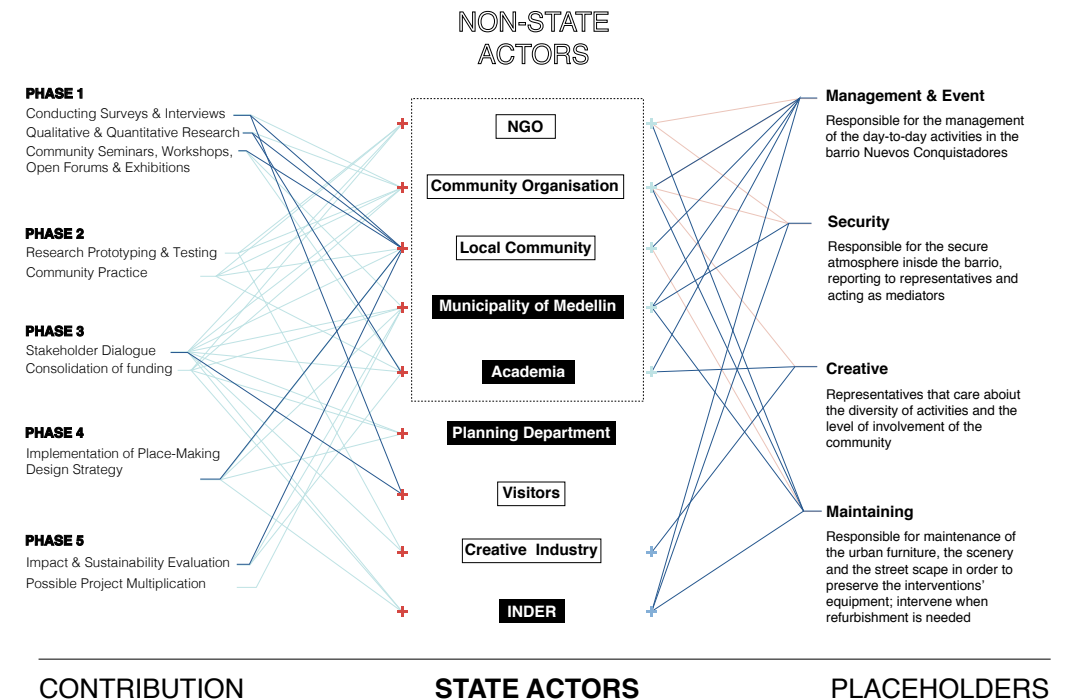


Fig 180. Relationships between the stakeholders important to fulfill the Place-Making Design Strategy

— direct contribution
— indirect contribution

PLACE-MAKING DESIGN STRATEGY

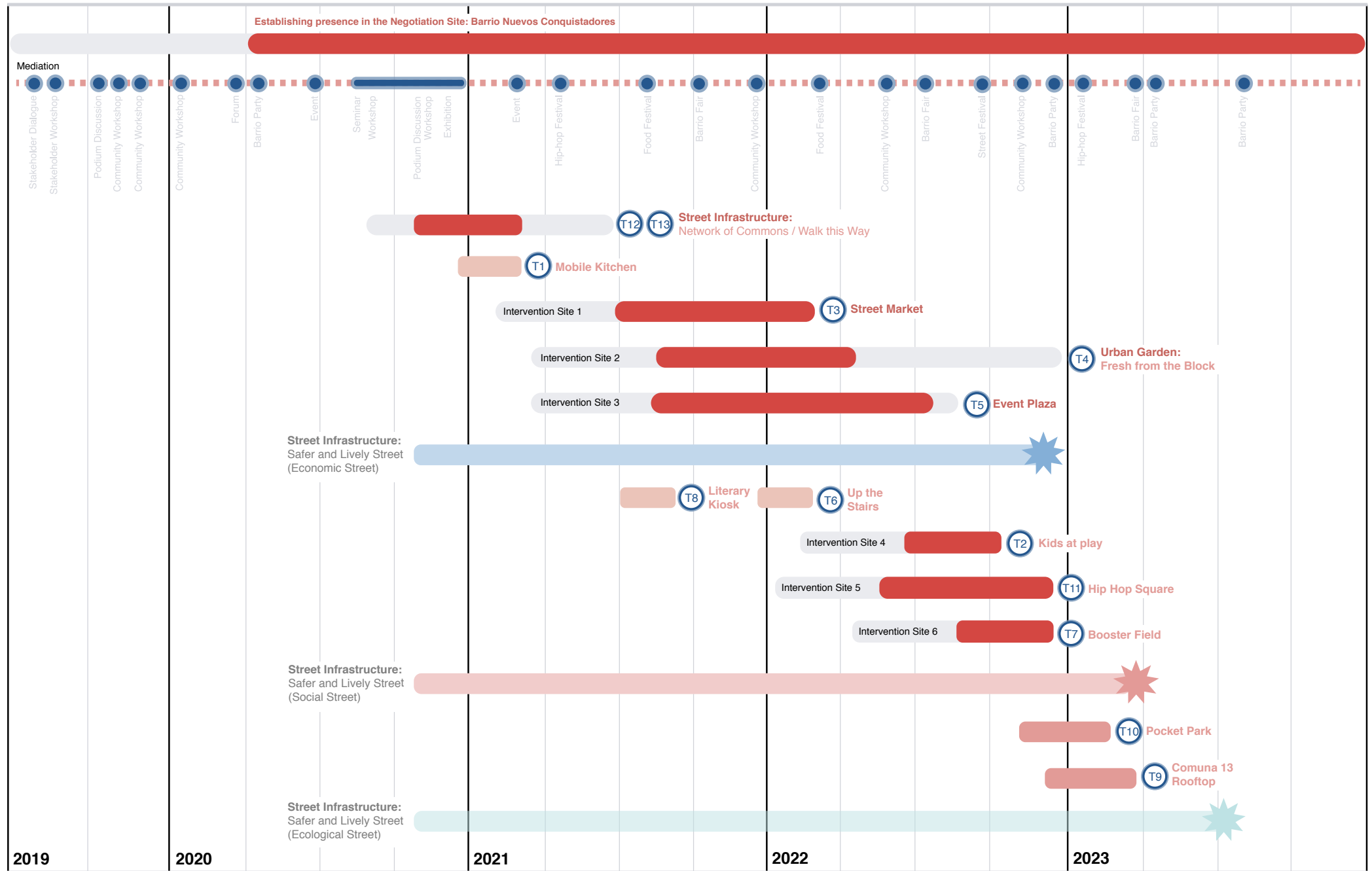


Fig 181. Timeline of execution of the Place-Making Design Strategy and the urban toolbox with the period 2019 - 2024

CATALOGUE

Place-making design
strategy scenarios

T3

STREET MARKET

Green market that sells local products. Permanent intervention that has dual dimension-after the working hours the market can transform into a plaza for various uses.

T1

MOBILE KITCHEN

It is a temporary pop-up intervention that is mobile is easily adaptable to every context, and therefore, has the ability to reactivate abandoned vacant spaces.

T4

FRESH FROM THE BLOCK

Urban agriculture as permanent intervention where everyone is able to grow their own products; Later on, the citizens have the possibility to sell these products at the green market.

T2

KIDS AT PLAY

Permanent intervention; This prototype can be easily replicated in various locations.

T10

POCKET PARK

Can have dual permanence and has the ability to reactivate vacant in-between spaces inside the neighbourhood.

T7

BOOSTER FIELD

Permanent intervention; multiuse sports field linked with each other through landscape design.

T8

LITERARY KIOSK

It is a temporary pop-up intervention that is mobile is easily adaptable to every context, and therefore, has the ability to reactivate abandoned vacant spaces.

T9

C13 ROOFTOP

Can have dual permanence and has the ability to activate the flat rooftops through various programmes from pop-up restaurants to green houses.

T5

EVENT PLAZA

The infrastructure itself from the event plaza is a permanent intervention - the programme offered is rather temporary; from local festivals to common gathering hotspot for the citizens.

T11

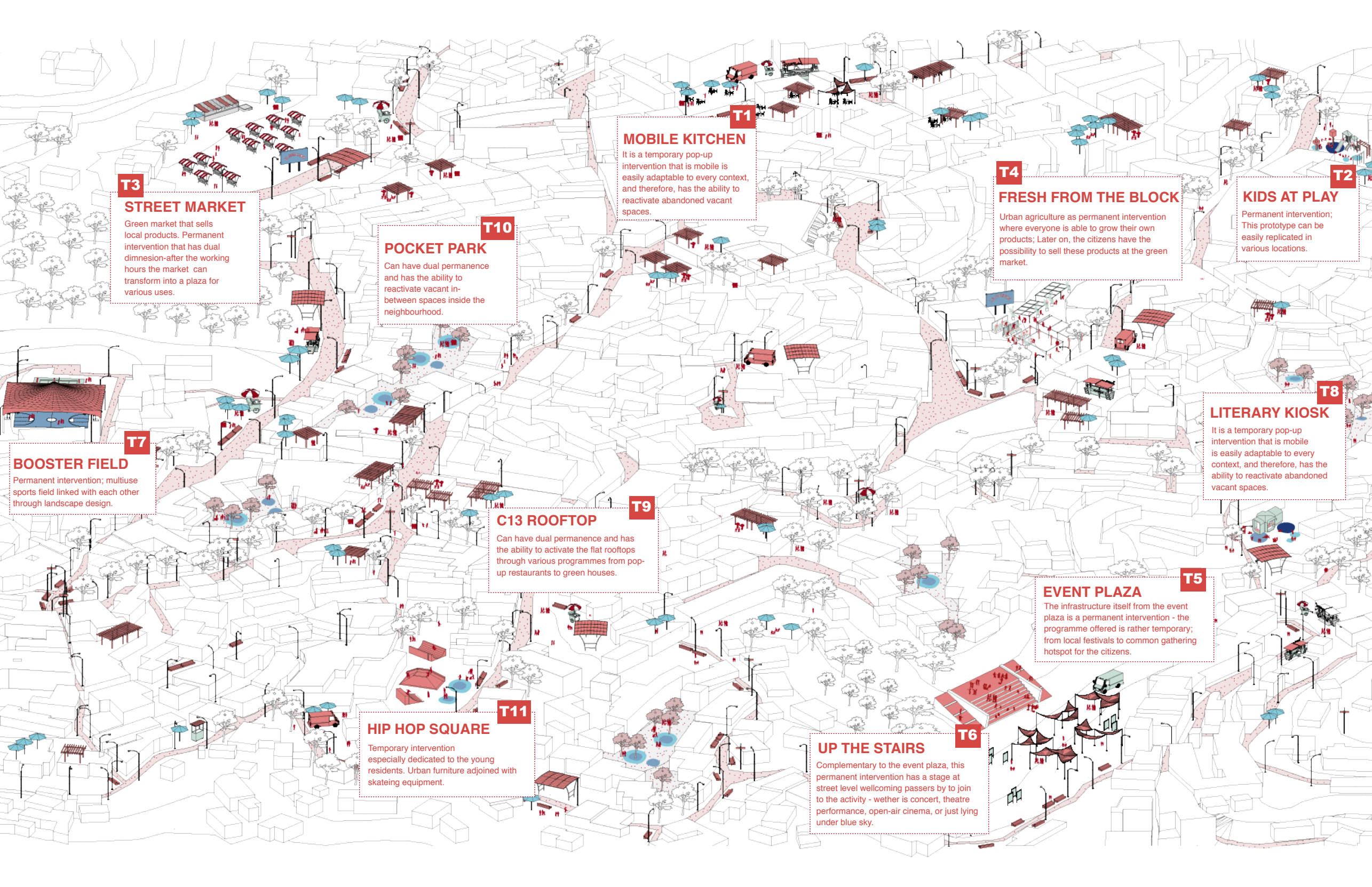
HIP HOP SQUARE

Temporary intervention especially dedicated to the young residents. Urban furniture adjoined with skateing equipment.

T6

UP THE STAIRS

Complementary to the event plaza, this permanent intervention has a stage at street level welcoming passers by to join to the activity - wether is concert, theatre performance, open-air cinema, or just lying under blue sky.



SCENARIO #1

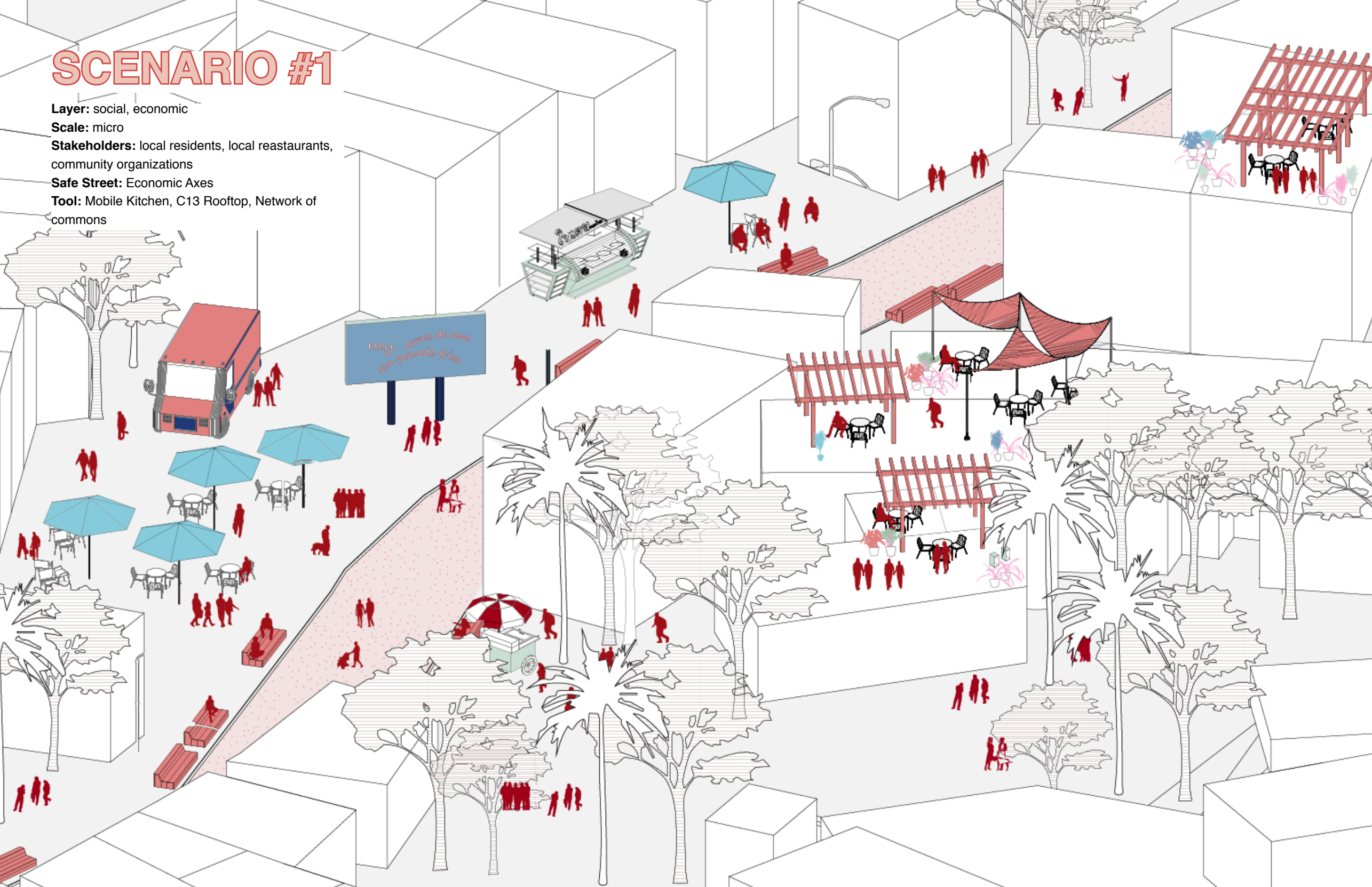
Layer: social, economic

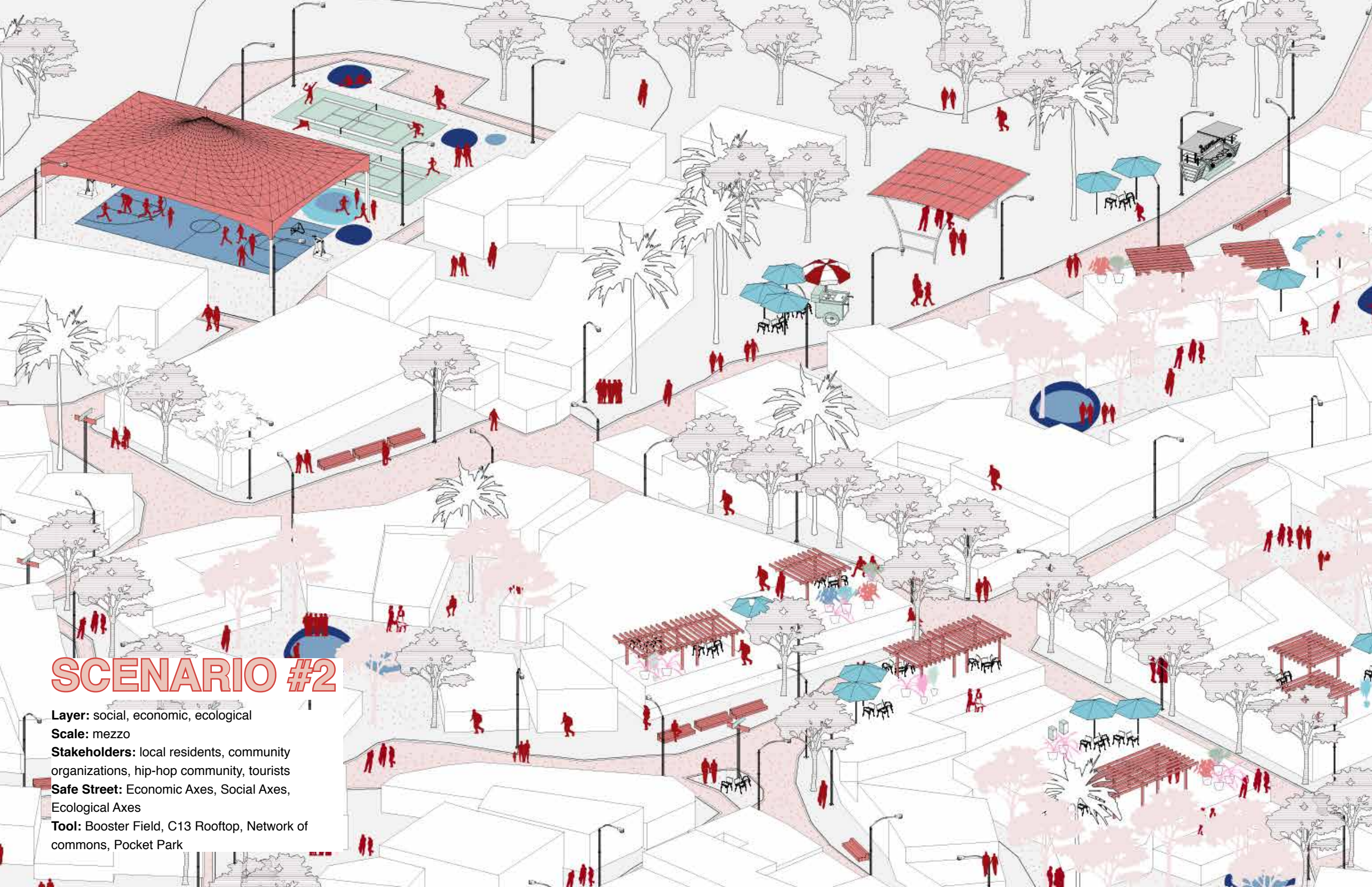
Scale: micro

Stakeholders: local residents, local restaurants, community organizations

Safe Street: Economic Axes

Tool: Mobile Kitchen, C13 Rooftop, Network of commons





SCENARIO #2

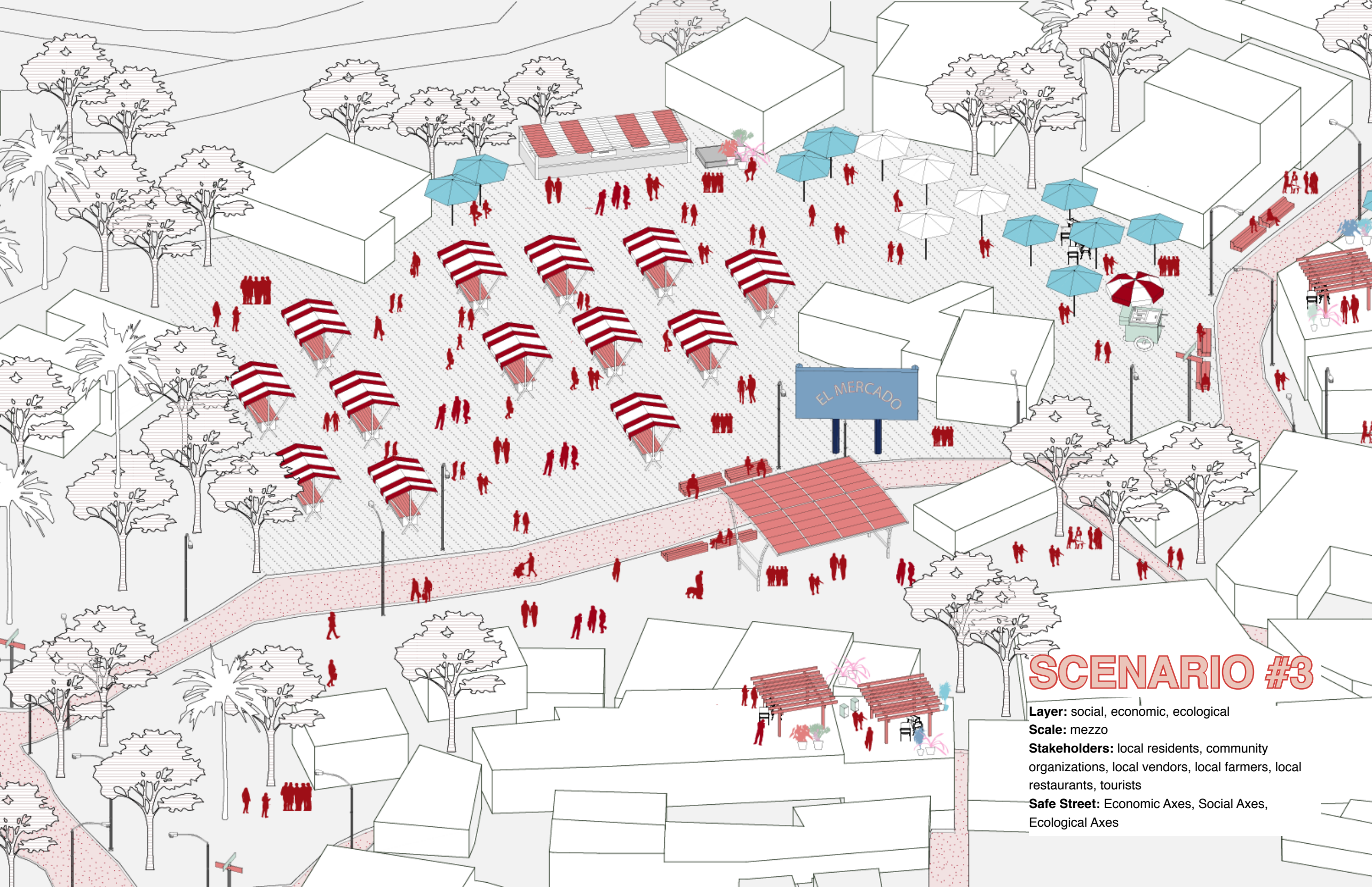
Layer: social, economic, ecological

Scale: mezzo

Stakeholders: local residents, community organizations, hip-hop community, tourists

Safe Street: Economic Axes, Social Axes, Ecological Axes

Tool: Booster Field, C13 Rooftop, Network of commons, Pocket Park



SCENARIO #3

Layer: social, economic, ecological

Scale: mezzo

Stakeholders: local residents, community organizations, local vendors, local farmers, local restaurants, tourists

Safe Street: Economic Axes, Social Axes, Ecological Axes

“A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other’s lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.”

— Wendell Berry

4.6 CONCLUSION

It is not possible to look at Medellín and not see two different cities. Focus on the problems alone and you risk the feeling of drowning beneath the deluge. Equally, one can recognise its potential to rebound strongly from the crisis, as my practice did in the context of *INVISIBLE BORDERLANDS* and believe in a bright future for Comuna 13 and its barrios. I believe that regeneration of a city’s marginalised areas can play a crucial role in urban renewal by generating centrifugal forces. Revival of an urban network brings balance. It helps lay a healthy foundation for the efficient functioning of the self-regulating city, and in the same time supporting the social, cultural, and economic activation of the countless spaces comprising the living built environment. Improving the chances of success for both individual and collective actions not only widens civic participation, but also ensures that urban diversity grows and surprising combinations arise. The place-making design strategy will allow the multiform city to bloom. Things will become interesting when multiple actions and people integrate through local actions, boosting self-sufficiency and resilience.

INVISIBLE BORDERLANDS can open up and accelerate public discussions about the future of the city. Among residents, the difficulties of the crisis of urban violence continue to be felt on daily basis, stimulating a strong desire for change. The coherent program of small-scale “urban acupuncture” represented through the toolbox in this strategy, can work as a catalyst for broader transformations, especially in vacant or under-utilised spaces that lack a sense of destination or purpose.

Ultimately, greater social cohesion leads to a more profound experience of urbanity. The tasks at hand may be major, but Medellín has its own strengths. Though the city has changed and improved a lot in the last two decades, this does not alter the fact that revitalisation of the marginalised neighbourhoods deserves the highest priority. In real terms, courage is required to start this project, while perseverance is required to complete it and watch it grow to fruition. But through such intervention, Medellín will become a city of and for its people.

Not letting the crisis go to waste, this book finds Comuna 13 to be fertile ground. The outpouring of modest ideas in this publication offers a more vibrant, participative, and convivial city.

APPENDIX

Literature review:

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List of figures

Chapter 1

Fig 1. A timeline of the erection of the world borders - some of the walls that have been built or are planned. Since the end of World War II, 51 countries have erected border fortifications - 25 of which are started in the past 15 years.

Fig 2. The US-Mexico Border; since the military took part in the region, the US-Mexico border is known as the location of Drug War. The Mexico-US border runs from California to Texas for a total of 1,989 miles, and has the highest number of legal, annual border crossings in the world. The zone is particularly dangerous in the El Paso-Juarez region which is known for narcotics traffickers who smuggle drugs, weapons, and people over the border.

Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/tag/donald-trump-border-wall/>

Fig 3. The Border between Israel and Syria; The border dispute between Israel and Syria dates back many years. The two countries have been at war several times taking control of various pieces of land. Today, the border is a live battle zone with bullets flying from both sides. The violence has markedly increased since the Syrian Civil War began.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_Lajas_Sanctuary

Fig 4. The Border between Ecuador and Colombia; The state at the border between Colombia and Ecuador is not dangerous because of the military interventions, but due to a Colombian rebel groups, especially those referred to as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (the People's Army or FARC). FARC members have invaded land along the border and are extremely violent groups using mortars and landmines which have forced thousands of indigenous members off of their tribal land.

Source: <https://www.dezeen.com/2017/04/25/turkey-completes-first-phase-900-kilometre-wall-syrian-border/>

Fig 5. The Border between India and Pakistan; The India-Pakistan border is 1,800 miles of heavily guarded and extremely dangerous land. It is so heavily guarded that it is the only border seen from space due to the high voltage flood lights on the Indian side. Since the 1947 partition which saw hundreds of thousands die, the countries have fought in 3 other wars and spent at least 25 years disputing claims to the Kashmir province as well as a mountain glacier. The number of casualties has passed the 50,000 lives mark.

Source: <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2019/03/09/india-detains-70-year-old-farmer-for-crossing-border-by-mistake/>

Fig 6. The Political Equator traces an imaginary line along the United States–Mexico continental border that extends directly across a world map, forming a corridor of global conflict between the 30 and 35 degrees north parallel that includes some of the world's most contested border regions. [Estudio Teddy Cruz + Forman]

Source: <https://rampages.us/gdtheory/tag/united-states/>

Fig 7. The Great divides: homes for the well-off from the wealthy neighbour, Morumbi and the poor from Paraisópolis are clearly demarcated in São Paulo, Brazil. This photo is clearly an illustration of social inequality, maybe the biggest problem for Brazil and Latin America. The unjust and brutal difference between rich and poor, inherited from slavery, is in the origin of many other problems – violence, below-par schooling, prejudice and many other issues. [Tuca Vieira, 2004].

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/nov/29/sao-paulo-injustice-tuca-vieira-inequality-photograph-paraisopolis>

Fig 8. People gather near a part of the Berlin Wall that has been broken down after the communist German Democratic Republic's (GDR) decision to open borders between East and West Berlin, circa November 1989. [Carol Guzy / *The Washington Post*]

Source: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/11/03/>

Fig 9. Black silhouettes representing missing civilians, victims of the invisible borders in Comuna 13, Medellín.

Source: https://news.vice.com/en_us/article/xw3xga/in-landfill-atop-medellin-colombia-begins-work-on-exhuming-bodies-in-mass-grave

Fig 10-12. Spatial distribution of the programme within the Vertical Gym, and the atmosphere of the interior of the built structure. [Iwan Baan (photography), *Urban Think Tank* (graphics)]

Source: <http://u-tt.com/project/vertical-gym/>

Fig 13-15. Concept and Photos showing the different types of reactivation of the public spaces in the city. [Bruce Sutherland, *CoCT*]

Source: <https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/deed.en>

Fig 16-18. Photos representing some of the projects done towards the reactivation of the public spaces in Sogum Gil in order to solve the violence issues. [City of Seoul, 2012]

Source: http://www.social-life.co/blog/post/Seoul_city_salt_road/

Fig 19-20. Exhibiting the modular construction of the project, which in the same time represents a plaza, a place for gathering, as well as space for sport activity. [Giancarlo Mazzanti / Jorge Gamboa, 2019]

Source: <https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl>

Fig 21-24. Exhibiting the project itself, as well as the designer details of its position within the landscape and division of different programme. [Etienne Perrot du Breuil (photography), EVA Studio (diagram / section), 2017]

Source: <https://www.archdaily.com>

Fig 25. Cable cars and escalators now carry tens of thousands of people a day between Medellín's comunas and the city centre. [The Guardian; Alamy, 2015]

Source: <https://www.theguardian.com>

Chapter 2

Fig 26. FARC guerrillas just days before their demobilization to the final concentration zones, in Veguez municipality, Antioquia department, Colombia. Women have made up about a third of FARC's fighters. [Raul Arboleda / AFP / Getty; December 30, 2016]

Source: <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2017/01/farc-guerrillas-demobilizing-in-colombia/513512/>

Fig 27. World map; positioning Colombia into the global context. Compared to Colombia, Austria is 13.6 times smaller size-wise.

Fig 28. Political distribution of Colombia; Antioquia Department

Fig 29. Political distribution of Aburrá Valley; Medellín's Metropolitan Area

Fig 30. Plano Futuro de Medellín (Future Plan of Medellín)

[Jorge Rodríguez Lalinde, 1913]

Fig 31. Sert and Wiener, The Pilot Plan 1950

[Departamento administrativo de planeacion Medellín]

Fig 32. Sert and Wiener, The Regulatory Plan 1951

[Departamento administrativo de planeacion Medellín]

Fig 33. Barrio Otrabanda (today Carlos E. Restrepo), 1960 [Legado Antioquia]

Fig 34. Barrio Santo Domingo Savio, 1960, [Album Padre Gabriel Diaz, Courtesy of the Sala mi Barrio]

Fig 35. Newspaper headlines in Glasgow's The Herald, 1989, formed a negative image of Medellín in the 1980s and 90s

Fig 36. Homicide rate in Medellín (1996 - 2019)

Fig 37. Areas of focus and selection criteria. Diagram from UNESCO's 1996 [based on PRIMED Report compiled by UNESCO]

Fig 38. Planning principles applied for neighbourhood upgrading. [PRIMED documents compiled by UNESCO]

Fig 39. PUI Main Components and Actions; [Adapted from: Urban Development Enterprise EDU - Medellín Mayor's Office]

Fig 40. España Library-Park in Santo Domingo Savio neighbourhood serves as a monument of the rhetorics of social, political, cultural and urban change. [Alcaldía de Medellín, 2017]

Fig 41. Parque Jardín Botánico de Medellín / Orquideorama. [Sergio Gómez, 2008]
Source: <https://www.plataformaarquitectura.cl/cl/727251/orquideorama-plan-b-arquitectos>

Fig 42. Photo overlooking at Comuna 13 and the electrical staircase (escaleras electricas) 385 m long, built in 2011. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 43. Medellín's Metropolitan Area, (2018 / 2019)

Fig 44. Medellín's Metropolitan Area Topography (2018 / 2019)

Fig 45. Medellín's City Centers & Urban Development (2018)

Fig 46. Medellín's Territorial and Economic Division (2018)

Fig 47. Medellín's Infrastructure (2018)

Fig 48. Medellín's Social Division (2018 / 2019)

Fig 49. Medellín's Informality (2018)

Fig 50. Medellín's Polygons of Violence (2018 / 2019)

Fig 51. Photo of the center of Medellín, overlooking at the Palace of Culture placed on the Botero Square. The photo depicts the Metro Medellín, one of the symbols of the urban transformation of the city. [Official Travel Guide of Medellín, 2007]
Source: *Guía de Viajes Oficial de Medellín* - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/54818270@N05/5277509393/>

Fig 52. Photo of Medellín, overlooking at the city, depicting the cityscape of Comuna 12 and Comuna 11 in the background and capturing the brick landscape of Comuna 13 in front plan. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 53. Photo of Medellín, overlooking the city at night and the hills of informality. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 54-56. Scenes from everyday life. (Fig.54) Busy street filled with different kind of commercial activities in the barrio 20 de Julio in Comuna; (Fig. 55) 13 Two children walking around the Viaduct in barrio La Independencia 1; (Fig. 56) Comuna 13 and Scene of social housing versus single family housing in barrio El Socorro. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]

Chapter 3

Fig 57. Photo of a local child looking at the hills of informality in Comuna 13. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 58. Colourful houses in barrio Independencia 1 in Comuna 13. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 59. Comuna 13 in the context of Medellín (2018 / 2019)

Fig 60. Siege of Comuna 13 during Operación Orión [published in *El Espectador*, 2017, (photography) Diana Durán Núñez / Santiago Martínez Hernández 2002]
Source: <https://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/corte-interamericana-condena-al-estado-abusos-y-excesos-articulo-674055>

Fig 61. Siege of Comuna 13 during Operación Orión, [Published in *Semana*, 2017, (photography) Jesús Abad Colorado, 2002]
Source: <https://www.semana.com/enfoque/articulo/operacion-orion-en-colombia-fue-condenada/512098>

Fig 62. Commemoration of 15 years since the Operación Orión in Comuna 13. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 63. Methodological Diagram [based on: Medellín Mayor's Office - BID; Integral Urban Project Document 2006]

Fig 64-65. Ground Floor Plan and Section from the Parque Bibliotheca San Javier. [Graphics by JAVIER VERA ARQUITECTOS, 2006]
Source: <http://arquitecturapanamericana.com/parque-biblioteca-san-javier/>

Fig 66. The Public space in front of the Parque Biblioteca San Javier. This area is often used as a plaza where the different local artists perform for the community. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 67. Parque Bibliotheca San Javier as seen from the Metro Station San Javier. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 68. The Metro Station San Javier as seen from the Parque Bibliotheca San Javier. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 69. The rail trucks of the Metro Medellín (Station San Javier) looking towards Comuna 12, Laureles. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 70. The interior of the Metro and Cable Car Station San Javier. Line J going towards neighbourhood Juan XXIII. [El Colombiano, 2018]
Source: <https://www.elcolombiano.com/antioquia/movilidad/metrocable-de-san-javier-los-suenos-al-viento-JA8424920>

Fig 71. The Cable Car going from San Javier Metro Station towards the barrio Juan XXIII. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 72. Comuna 13's steep and dangerous streets before and after the intervention [Monica Guerra]

Source: <http://actualidad.orange.es/internacional/medellin-tiene-primeras-escaleras-electricas-del-mundo-para-movilidad-urbana.html>

Fig 73. A view of the escalator, stairs and plazas afterwards in barrio Independencia. [EDU, 2017].

Source: <https://favelissues.com/2012/01/20/2011-leftovers-colombia-part-1/>

Fig 74. Political Borders of Comuna 13, (2018 / 2019)

Fig 75. Development Stages of Comuna 13, from 20th century until today (2018 / 2019)

Fig 76. Land Use in Comuna 13, (2018 / 2019)

Fig 77. Regeneration Projects (PUIs) in Comuna 13. [Urbam, EAFIT, 2014]

Fig 78. Comuna 13 Gang Distribution & Homicides' Density (2004 - 2018)

Fig 79. Location of the Comuna's 13 invisible borders and homicide (2018 / 2019)

Fig 80-97. Photos of the location of the Comuna's 13 invisible borders and homicides, (2018 / 2019)

Fig 98a -98b. Emotional topography and ad hoc workshop conducted by the author as part of the thesis research
2017 / 2018

Fig 98c. Location of the Comuna's 13 invisible borders and homicide, 2018/2019

Fig 99. A collection of the words that usually showed up during the interviews conducted with the residents of the Comuna 13

Fig 100. Stakeholder network on city level representing the relationships between the important actor in the process of execution of the social urbanism. [Adapted from urbam, EAFIT, 2014]

Fig 101. Collection of Interviews with experts & local community members conducted by the author, (2017 / 2018)

Fig 102. One of the most famous graffiti inside the Comuna 13 in barrio La Independencia 1. Picturing the story of two brothers members of a combo. The author of the graffiti is unknown. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 103. The members of Casa Kolacho. [Casa Kolacho, 2018]

Fig 104. Emerging issues within Comuna 13, represented through 6 levels: economic, political, social, security, environmental and spatial

Fig 105. Colourful Houses inside barrio La Independencia 1, Comuna 13 [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 106-108. Scenes of the living and housing conditions in different areas in the Comuna 13. (Fig 106-107) barrio Independencia 1 & 2; (Fig 108.) barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 109-111. Scenes from everyday life. Infrastructure, Mobility and Activities in Comuna 13. (Fig 109.) Barrio San Javier 1; (Fig 110.) Barrio La Independencia 2; (Fig 111.) Barrio XX de Julio. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 112-114. Scenes from everyday life. Using the public space in Comuna 13. (Fig 112.) barrio El Socorro; (Fig 113-114.) barrio La Independencia 1. [Photos taken by the author, 2017]

Fig 115. "Happy" as a statement written on the house wall. barrio XX de Julio. [Photo taken by the author, 2017]

Chapter 4

Fig 116. The core values of a great place. [PPS]

Fig 117. The Place Diagram
The Place Diagram is one of the tools PPS has developed to help communities evaluate places. The inner ring represents a place's key attributes, the middle ring its intangible qualities, and the outer ring its measurable data. [Adapted from: PPS]

Fig 118-120. Paseo Bandera: opened on December 21, 2017 and designed by Chilean visual artist Dasic Fernández, the entire 3298 m2 pedestrian promenade sprawls across almost four blocks and three sections. [City Lab, blvckimvges, 2017]

Fig 121-122. Children exploring and enjoying at Wawa Puklay. [CLEA; lealatinoamerica.com, 2013]

Fig 123-124. Multideportivo la Canchita: the project represents social coexistence, local empowerment and the right to territory, where architecture is a qualitative instrument that serves to formalise tangible aspects. [Diagram / Pictures PICO Colectivo, AGA Estudio, 2015/2016]

Fig 125-127. Street Renewal: different modes of transport could coexisting around art and culture in Panama City. [Inter-American Development Bank, 2018]

Fig 128-130. A sector of the old invasion district Moravia, today a public garden. *[Medellin Convention, 2017]*

Fig 131-133. Colourful graffiti in Comuna 13 are designed as part of the public spaces and everyday infrastructure. *[Pictures taken by the author, 2017]*

Fig 134. Locating the chosen area of intervention - barrio Nuevos Conquistadores in the general map of Comuna 13.

Fig 135. A drawing based on the stories the interviewed residents shared with the author during the site visits of Comuna 13 in 2017.

Fig 136. Results from a survey and cognitive mapping with the residents of barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. The survey and the mapping were done in 2017, during author's stay in Medellin, Colombia.

Fig 137. Mobility in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 138. Land Use in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 139. Places of everyday use in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 140. Vacancy in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 141. Invisible Borders in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 142. Spatial Potentials in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 143. Day-time Movement in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 144. Night-time Movement in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2017/2018.

Fig 145-146. Street as generator of movements and social interactions; Two different situations on street level in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores in Comuna 13. *[Photos taken by the author, 2017]*

Fig 147-149. Representation of the substandard conditions of infrastructure in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. *[Photos taken by the author, 2017]*

Fig 150. Scene of everyday life in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores. *[Photo taken by the author, 2017]*

Fig 151. The Place-Making Design Strategy Framework: constituted of three steps that are followed by various action in order to get from defining the issue to finding the solution.

Fig 152. The Place-Making Design Strategy Framework: seen as a strategic process of multiple activities, constituted of 9 steps.

Fig 153. Three scales of intervention that are used in the strategy with mutual correlation.

Fig 154. Actors and networks' correlation and their possible overlapping.

Fig 155. The Urban Goals of the Place-Making Design Strategy.

Fig 156. Place-Making Design Strategy for the barrio Nuevos Conquistadores.

Fig 157. Proposed safe street #1: economic street in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019.

Fig 158. Proposed safe street #2: social street in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019.

Fig 159. Proposed safe street #3: ecological street in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019.

Fig 160. Proposed nodes of safety in barrio Nuevos Conquistadores, 2019.

Fig 161. Safe Street #1: An axonometric representation of the Economic Axes from the Place-Making Design Strategy.

Fig 162. Safe Street #2: An axonometric representation of the Social Axes from the Place-Making Design Strategy.

Fig 163. Safe Street #3: An axonometric representation of the Ecological Axes from the Place-Making Design Strategy.

Fig 164 -176. 13 Ideas for Comuna 13: set of 13 urban tools for negotiating the invisible borders in everyday spaces.

Fig 177. Impact evaluation of the 13 urban tools based on the established urban goals from the Place-Making Design Strategy.

Fig 178. The five phases of the Place-Making Design Strategy and each step towards its fulfilment.

Fig 179. Involvement of the stakeholders within every of the 5 phase of the Place-making Design Strategy.

Fig 180. Relationships between the stakeholders important to fulfil the Place-Making Design Strategy.

Fig 181. Timeline of execution of the Place-Making Design Strategy and the urban toolbox with the period 2019 - 2024.

Glossary

Barrio

A district or a city part that forms a political and social unit and serves to further subdivide a Comuna. In English this is called "neighbourhood".

Barrio de invasion

Irregular settlement.

Calle

As Calle, short. "Cl" (e.g.: "Cl. 33") is a street with east-west course. Numbered from Calle 1. All streets north of Calle 1 (usually marking the city center) are numbered normally (Calle 2, Calle 3, ...), all the southern streets are named after sur ("South") (Calle 2 sur, Calle 2 sur, Calle 3 sur, ...). In Medellín the Comuna 13 is marked by the intersection of Calle 39 with the Carrera 49 and the following streets are numbered in ascending or descending order.

Carrera

As Carrera, short. "Cra" (e.g.: "Cra. 33") is a road with north-south course called. The individual streets are numbered from east to west. Address names are given at each intersection (Carrera 65, Calle 43) and house number (109) (Cra # 65 # 43-109).

Cancha

Court, field. Usually refers to sports field (football or basketball)

Centralidad metropolitana

The center of the metropolitan area "Área Metropolitana del Valle de Aburrá". At the same time, it also forms the center of the city of Medellín.

Combo

Illegal gang. A group of associates, friends or members of a family with a defined leadership and internal organisation that identifies with or claims control over territory in a community and engages, either individually or collectively, in illegal, and possibly violent behaviour.

Comuna

Political district of the city Medellín.

Corregimiento

Country subdivision for administrative purposes. The word is used for the population centers that don't reach the level of municipality. They are thus under a municipality or a department.

Departamento

The country of Colombia is divided into 33 administrative units. Since the constitution of 1991 there are 32 departments and a Distrito Capital (Bogotá).

Escaleras Eléctricas

Electric staircase

Estrato

The "Estratificación Socioeconómico" ("Estrato" for short) is a nationwide method of classifying apartments (at the level of blocks of houses) that use public services such as water, gas or electricity. The main purpose of this classification is fair distribution of costs and public funding. Thus, people with higher financial capacity (Estrato 5 and 6) pay more public dues to take on financial burdens in the lower Estratos (1 and 2). The middle Estratos 3 and 4 pay close to the real taxes.

Extorsión

Extortion (also called shakedown, outwrestling and exaction) is a criminal offense of obtaining money, property, or services from an individual or institution, through coercion. It is sometimes euphemistically referred to as a "protection racket" since the racketeers often phrase their demands as payment for "protection" from (real or hypothetical) threats from unspecified other parties; though often, and almost always, such "protection" is simply abstinence of harm from the same party, and such is implied in the "protection" offer. Extortion is commonly practiced by organized crime groups in Comuna 13.

Frontera

Border

Guerra

A Portuguese, Spanish and Italian term meaning "war".

Guerilla

Is a form of irregular warfare in which a small group of combatants, such as paramilitary personnel, armed civilians, or irregulars use military tactics including ambushes, sabotage, raids, petty warfare, hit-and-run tactics, and mobility, to fight a larger and less-mobile traditional military. Guerrilla groups are a type of violent non-state actor. The Spanish word "guerrilla" is the diminutive form of "guerra" ("war").

Municipio

Local community. Political subdivision of the departments.

Parques Biblioteca

Is an urban complex formed by buildings of modern architecture, with ample surrounding spaces for public use, green, pedestrian and decorative. These public spaces give the urban complex the name of Park. The central building or axis of the complex is equipped with a library with high-tech computation equipment in broadband, justifying the name of Library, and from there the compound expression "Library Park". According to the municipal administration of the city of Medellín, "The Library Parks are Cultural Centers for social development that promote citizen encounters, educational and

culture. And they are also spaces for the provision of cultural services that allow cultural creation and the strengthening of existing neighbourhood organisations."

Placemaking

Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well being. It is political due to the nature of place identity. Placemaking is both a process and a philosophy that makes use of urban design principles. It can be either official and government led, or community driven grass roots tactical urbanism, such as extending sidewalks with chalk, paint, and planters, or open streets events such as Bogotá, Colombia's Ciclovía. Good placemaking makes use of under-utilised space to enhance the urban experience at the pedestrian scale to build habits of locals. The concepts behind placemaking originated in the 1960s, when writers like Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte offered groundbreaking ideas about designing cities that catered to people, not just to cars and shopping centres.

Quebrada

Stream / Creek, often used as "Quebrada + proper name" (e.g.: Quebrada Santa Elena).

RÍO

River, often used as "Río + proper name" (e.g.: Río Medellín or Río Aburrá).

Tienda

Shop, store.

Urbanismo social

Social Urbanism, participatory urban upgrading strategy of the city of Medellín, Colombia. The social urbanism strategy uses specific projects to inject investment into targeted areas in a way that cultivates civic pride, participation, and greater social impact. Medellín describes these projects as Proyecto Urbano Integral, or integral urban projects.

Urbanizaciones piratas

Pirate developments, Colombian informal settlements.

Vacuna

An amount of money that is supposed to be paid by residents or small-business owners, charged by the armed groups.

Valle

Valley, often used as "Valle + proper name" (e.g. Valle de Aburrá).

