

SMALL SCALE / GLOBAL AMBITION

STRATEGIES OF ARCHITECTURAL PRODUCTION AND GLOBAL URBAN COMPETITIVENESS IN MEDELLÍN, COLOMBIA



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ABSTRACT

Globalization and the hegemony of neoliberalism has created a situation in which cities compete with other cities for business, wealthy residents, and tourism. This global urban competition spans national borders, and has exacerbated levels of inequality. Cities often employ strategies of architectural production, typically monumental, highly symbolic urban design projects to create a city image and brand that is attractive to global capital. Medellin, Colombia focused instead on building small scale, yet iconic, urban design projects in marginalized communities, primarily to reduce poverty, crime, and inequality under Mayor Sergio Fajardo (2004-2007). These projects, known as Integral Urban Projects (*Proyectos Urbanos Integrales*, or PUI), have raised the international profile of Medellin as a city reinventing its image using innovative strategies to raise the quality of living for its most disadvantaged citizens. Over the last ten years, however, the city's priorities have begun to shift as it receives more international media attention and recognition. Does Medellin's ability to leverage small-scale, peripheral strategy of architectural production represent a more egalitarian approach to attracting capital, inviting tourism, and generating influence, or do the pressures of global capitalism nullify the city's efforts to reduce inequality?

ACRONYMS

| Acronym | Spanish | English |
|----------------|---|--|
| AMVA | <i>Área Metropolitana del Valle Aburrá</i> | Aburra Valley Metropolitan Area |
| ACI | <i>Agencia de Cooperación y Inversión de Área Metropolitana de Medellín</i> | Agency for Cooperation and Investment for the Medellín Metropolitan Area |
| CEDEZO | <i>Centros de Desarrollo Empresarial Zonal</i> | Zonal Business Development Centers |
| DAP | <i>Departamento Administrativo de Planeación</i> | Department of City Planning |
| EDU | <i>Empresa de Desarrollo Urbana</i> | Economic Development Corporation |
| EPM | <i>Empresa de Publico de Medellín</i> | |
| POT | <i>Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial</i> | Territorial Ordinance Plan |
| PRIMED | <i>Programa Integral de Mejoramiento de Barrios Subnormales en Medellín</i> | Integrated Slum Upgrading Program of Medellín |
| PUI | <i>Proyectos Urbanos Integrales</i> | Integral Urban Projects |
| WUF | | World Urban Forum |

POLITICAL TIMELINE

| Years | Mayor | Party |
|--------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 2001–2003 | Luis Perez | Liberal |
| 2004–2007 | Sergio Fajardo Valderrama | Compromiso Ciudadana |
| 2008–2011 | Alonso Salazar | ASI |
| 2012–present | Anibal Gaviria Correa | Liberal |

INTRODUCTION

The desire for legitimacy and global competitiveness has become a top priority for major cities around the world as they seek status as a ‘global city.’ The term appears in promotional literature for a wide variety of projects and initiatives in cities in both the Global North and South. Political and economic developments over the last few decades have increased pressure on cities to compete not only regionally and nationally, but globally. Cities often construct a narrative of competitiveness to demonstrate their superior and growing ability to attract capital and tourism. Monumental urban projects have become a way for cities to project images of prosperity and power, and the image of global city ambitions have become familiar: dazzling skylines with signature urban projects, pristine and bustling airports, and most recently, wildly ambitious mega-projects like eco-cities and high-tech corridors. The construction of these identities, images, and narratives is a necessary part of city branding.

Beneath the symbolism, global cities are also characterized by high- and low-level service industries, growing income polarization and marginalization of large segments of the urban population. City officials take for granted that the influx of wealth and connectivity to global networks will lead to economic development of the whole city. However, inequality is growing in most global cities—as it is virtually everywhere—and the rise of neoliberalism over the last forty years has withered the welfare state that once protected vulnerable populations in many countries. Even today’s monumental public projects often benefit only a small

segment of the population. Although some mega-projects, like mass transit infrastructure, can potentially benefit a significant portion of the population, many projects simply serve an ideal type of urban resident: wealthy, professional, high-tech, and mobile.

Not all cities have the desire, financial resources, or political will to construct monumental urban projects, however. Particularly in Latin America, some cities are seeking innovative, smaller-scale projects as a way to reduce crime and poverty in marginalized neighborhoods. This approach is sometimes called 'urban acupuncture.' A term coined by Spanish architect Manuel de Sola-Morales (1999), it is a new approach for urban interventions for solving some of the city's most intractable problems, including inequality. Like the term 'global city,' urban acupuncture has no single definition, but generally urban acupuncture projects are small-scale, neighborhood-level projects that have been strategically targeted to set off a chain reaction of benefits throughout the city. Although the idea draws on Chinese medicine and philosophy, the idea was first developed in Europe and has taken off in Latin America where former Curitiba mayor and innovator Jaime Lerner (2005) has prescribed urban acupuncture as the most effective way of improving urban sustainability, mobility, and sociodiversity. In the context of the glitz of global city aspirations, small-scale, integral projects in the spirit of urban acupuncture may provide an alternative to mega-projects in targeting a city's most dire issues and underserved populations while highlighting its own innovation.

I will examine the case of Medellín, Colombia's second city, where a series of projects ostensibly designed to bring equitable development, security, and pride to the city's least developed neighborhoods has attracted the attention of the global media, planners, and policy makers. The narrative of transformation and economic development is similar to many globally ambitious cities, except that the location, scale, and stated purpose of the projects are different. Medellín's small- and medium-scale approach of Integral Urban Projects (Proyectos Urbanos Integral, or PUI) involves strategic physical, social, and institutional interventions within the most vulnerable neighborhoods to stimulate equitable development. The program includes highly visible projects like iconic library parks and cultural centers, public escalators for increased mobility in steep neighborhoods, bridges, pocket parks, and ecological restoration. These projects have earned Medellín titles like 2013 Most Innovative City of the Year by the Wall Street Journal and Citigroup (Wall Street Journal 2013), the and virtually endless media attention from around the world (2013, Alford 2013, Foster 2013, Kimmelman 2012, Silva 2013). Although

thoroughly evaluating the effectiveness of these projects in reducing poverty, crime, and alienation is important and not yet complete, this thesis will focus on the how these projects advance Medellin's narrative of competitiveness and search for global capital, and whether this represents a more equitable and sustainable approach for emerging global cities. Further, it will look at the effect of growing international attention and investment has had on the PUI project itself and on subsequent urban projects.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GLOBAL CITIES

Global urban competition is a relatively recent phenomenon, the result of the rise of neoliberalism and subsequent global city “craze.” Friedmann (1986) and Sassen (2001) identified how globalization was restructuring the relationships between cities. As cities around the world opt to integrate themselves into the global capitalist system, a number of changes take place. Global cities serve as circuits for the global economy in addition to articulating regional and national economies. The hierarchy of cities is essentially determined by the flows of capital and people among global cities and between global cities and others further down the global hierarchy. Not only do global cities act as economic command points, they also experience internal spatial and physical changes.

Global cities are not only the result of innovations in communication and transportation technology, but of the modern political and economic era, what Harvey (2000) calls “a new era of capitalist development.” The 1980s saw the growing hegemony of neoliberal policies, encouraged by the decline of communism. Enforced through institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and US and UK foreign policy, governments around the world cut welfare programs, privatized assets, and promised deregulation (Sassen 2010). As manufacturing declined in developed countries, the service sector has thrived. Low-level services grow to support high-level occupations, like finance and law. The social costs associated with these processes outpace the resources and political will of the

withering welfare state. These patterns are concentrated in global cities, resulting in increasing economic polarization and uneven geographical development (Friedmann 1986, Harvey Ley 2004, Sassen 2001).

The global city paradigm has become so popular not just in policy circles, but in the academy that it has effectively pushed out other ways of examining cities in a global context (Davis 2005). The terms “global city”, “world city”, and “global city-region” are often used interchangeably in spite of the specific phenomena they each identify related to cities, capitalism, and globalization (Derudder and Witlox 2008). The terms “global-“ or “world-class city” have proliferated throughout popular, policy, and political discourse to the extent that their meanings have become less exact than even their use in social science literature (Robertson and Khondker 1998). This imprecision, however, is an important aspect of globalization in itself. ‘Global city’ has become a buzz phrase used by urban policy makers and their more elite constituents to indicate a developmental ideal, whereby the city in question becomes a center for business, finance, travel, and luxury products.

A number of scholars dispute points of the global city hypothesis. For example, using only U.S. cities, Timberlake et al. (2011) tested the so-called “World City Hypothesis”, that the more global the city, the more polarized its citizens. While the study found weak evidence linking globality (represented through air passenger travel) to income polarization, and consequently suggests the hypothesis is null. However, the study did find stronger evidence linking globality to higher Gini coefficients. Additionally, the study found global cities have significantly higher upper quintile incomes, which suggests the spatial polarization exists on a larger scale than within each individual city.

The discourse today is virtually universal across the political spectrum and in both the Global North and South. The situation has become what Swyngedouw (2004) calls *un pensée unique*, “a hegemonic, incontestable and virtually naturalized and self-evident set of arguments and beliefs,” as “virtually every government, at every conceivable scale of governance, has taken measures to align its social and economic policy to the ‘exigencies’ and ‘requirements’ of this new competitive world (dis)order and the forces of a new ‘truly’ free-market based world economy,” a process that began in first in developed countries in the 1970s and 80s and had spread throughout virtually the entire world by the turn of the millennium. The weak attempts at resistance have typically been tied deeply to geography and reclamation of territorial identity (Swyngedouw 2004). Whether or

not they fit any of the specific definitions of “global city,” nearly all cities aspire to that ideal.

The global cities literature tends to take an understandably macro perspective on cities, eschewing topography and everyday life (Ley 2004). Yet the frictions caused by globalization on the local level are evident in what Logan and Molotch (2007) call “the growth machine,” whereby economic growth becomes the principal measure of success. Accumulation of capital becomes the driving force in the physical and social construction of cities. The privileging of exchange value leads to the creation of place entrepreneurs, who seek to meet the preferences of capital investors. So-called pro-growth policies—e.g. public subsidies or low corporate taxes—often fail to work, and the most economically desperate cities are often the first to give away public assets to in an attempt to attract investment.

The law few decades has complicated the relationship between the global and local. Spatial scales are the product of changing technologies, modes of human organization, and political struggle (Harvey 2000), and therefore are contested and constantly redefined (Swyngedouw 2004). For people, connection to place is often a mix of intense social and material attachments, which creates an asymmetrical relationship between individuals and communities at the local level and mobile global capital as private interests on the global scale are able to extract that personal and social value (Logan and Molotch 2007).

CITY BRANDING

Alternately called “place marketing” or “city branding”, Cities seek to articulate a set of images and associations that set themselves apart (Lang 2011). Quality of urban life has become a commodity, argues Harvey (2008), as “consumerism, tourism, cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy.” The narrative of competitiveness, then, is a form of marketing where the city itself is the product. Consciously producing a perception of the city in order to attract investment, residents, and tourists is not new, but only since the 1980s has it become conventional for the public sector to actively use these techniques. Often city branding is treated by planners and policy makers as simply a matter of writing catchy slogans and promoting favorable facts, but in fact city branding and place marketing means the careful construction and management of an image (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). Place branding builds on how people perceive places: through the built environment and planned interventions,

how they use spaces, and how places are depicted in various forms of media (Holloway and Hubbard 2001). City brands necessitate the use of a narrative that is not just promoted through media and word of mouth, but physically constructed in the built environment (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). Cities that have faced major crises face significant challenges in changing old perceptions of the city, not to mention solving the crises, but if successful it makes for a more compelling narrative (Hermakorpi et al. 2008, Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005).

Entrepreneurship and innovation are key components of the narrative of competitiveness. Tying urban identity to these traits makes cities more attractive to global investors, who seek out places with whom they can align their own corporate identities (Logan and Molotch 2007). These strategies commonly entail “visionary” political leaders (Spirou 2011). Cities, as the drivers of a significant portion of their countries’ economies, also drive innovation. Shearmer (2012) questions the city-driven innovation premise and although finds compelling evidence for its support, he distinguishes the “identification, marketing, and promotion of innovation” from innovation itself. Especially in developed countries where manufacturing and exports can no longer support the economy, international competitiveness must be accomplished through product or process innovation. Banks, business periodicals, and think tanks index and rank the levels of innovation and competitiveness of cities (Forman et al. 2013a, 2013b, Economist Intelligence Unit 2011, 2012), generating new marketing material for cities that make the list and furthering the narrative.

Relatively little difference exists between place branding in the service of tourism and place branding in the service of investment. Post-industrial cities commonly turn to tourism as to replace lost industries, and even UN identifies tourism as one tool to reduce poverty and protect against climate change. Entrepreneurial cities seek out business tourists because in their view any tourist could be a potential investor (Spirou 2011). The costs and benefits generated by these activities tend not to be evenly distributed. Today, despite all of the technological advancements, only a small minority of the world’s population can afford to travel abroad.

One irony lost in the frenzy of city competition is found in the same seminal work by Sassen that helped inspire the narrative of competitiveness. Despite the standardization of processes, frameworks, accounting, and visual order, globalization has led to increased economic specialization (Sassen 1991). There is far less competition between cities than is commonly believed, an illusion perpetuated

by transnational corporations to receive favorable regulatory and tax concessions.

URBAN DESIGN AND COMPETITIVENESS

Urban image making, the active and intentional production of a public perception, is a key component of city branding (Hermaakorpi et al. 2008). The process by which people build images of the city, through selecting, organizing, and endowing meaning which is then tested through repeated perception, is how the urban narrative is formed. The degree to how strong the images are and how easy it is for the observer to build the narrative is what Kevin Lynch (1960) calls “imageability” and “legibility”, respectively. Although it is a two-way process between the observers, who bring their own personal and cultural meanings, and the observed city, cities can intervene through providing symbolism and training the observer to privilege certain images over others.

Urban design projects, especially public ones, are symbolic and instrumental in the act of urban image making. Bourdieu (1986) observes symbolic spatial strategies for growth as common in post-industrial economies, where symbolic capital, “the (mis)recognition of honor or prestige” can be exchanged for other forms of capital—chiefly economic. Cities look to a small number of transnational architecture firms for high profile projects, and seek out these firms because of the pressure to design places with the aesthetics of global capital in order to attract it (Lang 2009). More and more cities look to monumental projects as a way to both proclaim their globality and eke out a competitive advantage over other cities (Smith 2008). World-class sports facilities, beautification, iconic parks, and convention centers are among the types of projects commonly used to project an identity of innovation and entrepreneurship (Spirou 2011). Cities express their economic prowess in projects like Kuala Lumpur City Center, Shanghai’s Pudong district, and Rio de Janeiro’s Olympic stadiums. Monumental urban projects have long been linked to state power and continue to, but today such projects typically involve the private sector to varying degrees (Ren 2011). In contrast to major urban projects of the mid-to-late twentieth century that were state-driven, contemporary projects are often initiated by the public sector, sometimes in collaboration with private interests, and implemented by private developers (Ben-Joseph 2009).

The city of Bilbao in Spain provides one of the clearest and most deliberate examples of a city using a strategy of architectural production to raise its international profile and attract tourism and business. Bilbao had historically been center of trade in northern Spain, and a manufacturing town specializing in iron and

steel. The withdrawal of manufacturing in the late twentieth century left the city struggling economically. Drawing inspiration from successful downtown revitalization projects in the United States, local and regional governments developed the Strategic Plan for Revitalization, which sought to turn Bilbao into the “Capital of the Atlantic Axis” through a strategy of cultural tourism (Sainz 2012). The US\$1.5 billion plan includes six “cultural flagships” designed by internationally famous architects, including the most famous project, the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum designed by Frank Gehry. The so-called “Guggenheim Effect” is named after this strategy of renowned architectural production and cultural regeneration, and in its success in increasing tourism and recovering its initial investment in just over ten years has become a model for other cities (Plaza 2006). The architectural attractions have led to a significant increase in tourism and service sector jobs, but the positive effects on overall employment and per capital income are debatable (Plaza 2006, Sainz 2012).

In addition to the projects themselves, design management is a tool for increasing urban competitiveness (Hermaakorpi et al. 2008). As previously mentioned, the image of a city is rooted in the built environment, and maintaining the attractiveness of it is crucial for design management. Hermaakorpi et al. develop a framework of city design management that involves city topography, the general impression, the presentation, and the management, all bound together by creativity. They find that proper design management creates “a basis for the distinction principle of reputation,” and recommend that cities actively involve its own citizens in the process to strengthen local identity and subsequently allow for a perpetuation of global perception.

Harvey (2000) is not the first to describe the city as a palimpsest, whose surface is constantly rewritten with new meanings. Bourdieu (1986) similarly conceptualizes the social world as accumulated history and thus the accumulation of capital and its effects. The symbolic power of iconic architecture and urban design is a particularly strong tool to change not just the image of the city, but its narrative as well. Through this process of building identity through iconic architecture, cities hope to convert symbolic capital into economic capital (Ren 2011).

METHODOLOGY

In investigating the complex motivations behind the policy of architectural production in the form of Medellín's PUI program, its international projection, and the subsequent effects on the city's narrative of competitiveness, I have undertaken a primarily qualitative approach. Competitiveness is largely about perception, image, and narrative than hard figures, although perceptions are typically rooted in some real data. Therefore, in addition to existing research on the PUI program and the collection of publicly available social and economic indicators, I conducted interviews, analyzed municipal development plans for the previous three mayoral administrations, and conducted a media analysis of both the international English-language press and architectural publications.

Interviews were conducted with public officials deeply involved with designing and implementing the PUI program, as well as with one interviewee involved in the current planning process. Interview questions were developed to be somewhat consistent, although tailored to the professional responsibilities of the interviewee. The interviews were conducted remotely through Skype. Although the majority of interviews were conducted in English, portions of one interview were conducted in Spanish through the aid of a translator.

Each mayoral administration of Medellín drafts a development plan for their four year term. These documents are crucial in shedding light on the motivations and self-conscious presentation of each mayor's political agenda, as well

as in providing specific proposals and goals. Beginning with the development plan of the administration that created the PUI program, I have evaluated the Development Plans for 2004-2007, 2008-2011, and 2012-2015. Additionally, I consider the Territorial Ordinance Plan of 2000, a long-term planning instrument unique to Colombia that lays out the framework for the development of the projects proposed in the three Development Plans.

Global media reports illustrate whether the city is successfully promoting its desired narrative, both in terms of the quantity of reporting and the actual content. Medellin has been in the global media spotlight for over three decades, first as the home of Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel and the "Murder Capital of the World," and now as a tourist destination and innovator in urban planning and design (1989, Alford 2013, Kimmelman 2012). As such, I analyzed media coverage of Medellin's global position through international English-language newspapers included in the LexisNexis database to determine more precisely the changing nature of the city's narrative. As much of the coverage and the focus of this thesis is concerned with the transformation of the built environment, I also conducted an analysis of architectural publications using the Avery Index.

To supplement the qualitative analysis, I collected publicly available social and economic indicators from the *Sistema de Indicadores Estratégicos de Medellín* (SIEM) and the *Sistema de Indicadores Turística Medellín–Antioquia* (SITUR), like socioeconomic strata¹, per capita income, and employment between 2004—the start of the program—and the present to not only determine the city-wide changes since the beginning of the program, but the localized effects of PUI projects.

¹Colombia has a six-level socioeconomic strata classification which it uses in a number of policy decisions including utility fees. Levels 1 and 2 are considered impoverished, while level 6 is affluent.

BACKGROUND

CONTEXT AND PRECEDENTS

The discourse of urban competitiveness dominates planning today, as previously mentioned. In Medellín competitiveness has been an official policy goal since at least the 1990s. The current Territorial Ordinance Plan (POT, *Plan Ordinacion Territorial*), adopted in 2000, defines competitiveness as its number one objective. Five years later, Mayor Sergio Fajardo's development plan would build on the POT, albeit rearranging priorities and the geography of intervention. Medellín has a particular history of capitalist production and business and government innovation that predates the city's crisis of the 1980s and 1990s.

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

Medellín has a long history, founded in the seventeenth century, but remained small until the industrial boom of the twentieth century. The city became the second largest in the country, and a regional and national center of textile manufacturing, energy production, and exporter of coffee and other food products. From a population of 168,000 in the 1930s to 2.3 million in 2010, the city grew first as rural Colombians came searching for manufacturing jobs and later to flee widespread violence in the countryside (Pérez-Ayala 2011, p. 18).

The city today is the capital of the department of Antioquia. It makes up 67 percent of the population of its metropolitan area, known as *Área Metropolitana del Valle Abúrra*, and creating a metropolitan population of 3.4 million people.

Medellín contains 16 *comunas* (districts) comprised of smaller *barrios* (neighborhoods)², plus five *corregimientos* (townships) that exist beyond either side of the Medellín River's valley. The valley itself only a few kilometers wide for most of the length of the 14 kilometer-long city, and as a result of the fast growing population, informal settlements proliferated up the edge of the valley in the last few decades and continue to today. Medellín has a long history of urban planning. The Society for Public Improvements (*Sociedad de Mejores Públicas*) was founded in 1899, thirty years before New York's Regional Plan Association (Hylton 2007, p.74).

Informal settlements on the peripheries of city have proliferated since the mid-twentieth century, as the city failed to provide adequate infrastructure and housing to poorer migrants in search of jobs and forced from rural communities by violence. Pirate developers, usually associated with one of the illegal armed groups, appropriated land on the edge of the city and sold plots to newcomers with few legal options. By the 1990s, around half of the population of Medellín lived in informal settlements (Echeverri and Orsini 2010). The *barrios*² that developed often sit precariously at risk of landslides, flooding, or are located too close to streams, causing pollution and sewage to run downstream into the Medellín River. Electricity is not uncommon in informal settlements, since it can be delivered at a relatively low price and the utility is eager to gain new customers. Other city services, such as water, sewage, solid waste disposal, and transportation are harder to deliver. The steep terrain and convoluted road networks made many of Medellín's informal settlements caused serious mobility issues.

The city and region have a long history of conservative politics, entrepreneurship, industrial paternalism, and Catholicism. Wealthy Antioquian landowners founded the textile and food and coffee manufacturing companies that would become the nation's largest. By the mid-twentieth century Medellín gained a reputation not only as the industrial capital of Colombia and "capitalist paradise" according to Life magazine in 1947 (Hylton 2007, p. 75), but as a model of efficient and honest government. Despite the economic divide between the elite and workers, Medellín was a thriving city with quality public spaces and amenities.

The same cultural heritage of entrepreneurialism that had made Medellín prosper in the first half of the twentieth century helped create the major crisis in the second half (Escobar 2014). During the second half of the twentieth century, violence escalated across Colombian cities and the countryside. By the 1980s, three illegal armed groups were wreaking havoc across the country: leftist guerillas, ultra-right wing paramilitary groups, and organized crime in the form of drug

²Barrios is both the regional term for "slum" or informal settlement (akin to favela), and also simply means "neighborhood." The *barrio* is also an official geographical unit used by the city below the *comuna* level.

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On Friday, President Virgilio Barco said Colombia was at war against drug traffickers. Nearly 11,000 people have been detained in a crackdown that began on August 18 immediately after the assassination of presidential candidate Luis Carlos Galan, an outspoken opponent of the drug lords.

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radio that police would probe whether reserve Colonel Yair Klein and his security firm Hod Hahanit (Spearhead) disclosed military know-how without authorisation to unofficial bodies abroad. Army Radio said the charge carried a maximum three-year jail term.—Reuter.



A Colombian army private stands guard outside a medieval-style castle in the Bogota suburb of Chia which was seized by the Government. The castle reputedly belongs to alleged cocaine trafficker Camilo Vasquez.

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Medellin — murder capital of the world

MEDELLIN, Sunday
A HEADY mixture of cocaine and murder, tinged by religion and the tango, powers Colombia's City of Eternal Spring, where the arrogant wealth of drug barons sets the tone.
The bucolic title given the first settlement here in the 17th century by Don Pedro Portocarrero y Luna, count of Medellin, finds little echo in this bustling industrial and textile centre of two million people.
Medellin is now a household name for cocaine and the world's murder capital, with 17 killings a day.
Inhabitants show a dedicated passion for the tango, perhaps because a legendary Argentinian tango singer, Carlos Gardel, died here in an air crash in 1935.
Medellin is the base of one of two Colombian cartels — the other is in Cali,

further south — believed by US officials to control the smuggling of up to 80% of the cocaine consumed in the United States.
From this unlikely centre, 5000ft high and ringed by formidable mountains northwest of Bogota, ruthless men run a multi-billion-dollar cocaine business — and their wealth dwarfs the city and its surroundings.
Colombians have glimpsed the drug barons' sometimes surreal taste since the Government of President Virgilio Barco declared war on them on August 18 after the murder of a leading presidential candidate, a Judge and a police chief.
Troops and police have seized nearly 11,000 people and about 200 palatial homes of suspected cocaine traffickers and their relatives, as well as cars, yachts and weapons.
El Aguila (the eagle) estate, about 50

miles north of Medellin, is one of the sumptuous residences belonging to Pablo Escobar, reputed leader of the Medellin cartel who, most local residents assume, has fled the country.
Perhaps to give his ranch a religious touch — the drug barons like to be seen as devout Roman Catholics — Escobar had a huge altar built in the lobby.
Standing on a crystal base two inches thick, a life-size crucified Christ, flanked by big candles, greets visitors.
The fortress-like mansion has cavernous rooms with marble floors or wall-to-wall carpeting. It has a swimming pool and a 50ft-wide satellite dish.
The reputed leaders of the Medellin cartel came from humble origins and long cultivated a populist image as champions of the poor. Escobar served as an alternate Member of Parliament for several years.

But military sources said local attitudes towards them have changed and Medellin residents last week helped the army pinpoint houses belonging to cartel leaders.
In another impounded property, a 20-room medieval-style castle owned by a man said by the army to have links with the Medellin cartel, the chapel contains gold ornaments and stained glass windows.
A Bible is open at a page exhorting Christians to shun vices.
In another room, apparently used for pagan rituals, a crystal bowl, tigers' teeth and about 30 religious statues among plates of apples and oranges formed a macabre altar.
The estate, said by an army officer to belong to one of the less wealthy traffickers, had 18 staff, 50 thoroughbred horses and a small lake with 100 swans.

There were garages for 10 cars, including two armour-plated Mercedes Benz.
The Government crackdown, backed by US aid, has sparked a fresh surge of violence in Medellin, and Barco has warned Colombians to expect “blood, pain and suffering”.—Reuter.
NAIROBI: President Daniel arap Moi has warned “loiterers” in Kenya's national parks risked being shot on sight — a warning to bandits who have killed several foreign tourists in remote areas this year. He also ordered security operations to be stepped up against the bandits, the official Kenya News Agency said. “We are a peaceful country and we are committed to maintaining the peace so that tourists coming to our country can feel protected,” he said.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
...ELL COLLEGE of

Police fire teargas to halt Vietnamese refugee riot

HONG KONG, Sunday
POLICE fired teargas today to High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
IBIZA: Police said they had found the bodies of four attempts to stop them. In Hamburg, West Germany's West



Israeli jets raid guerrilla base

SIDON, Sunday
ISRAELI warplanes nounded a base of Israel has offered to trade other Moslem Shi'ite prisoners i

cartels. In Medellín, Pablo Escobar's Medellín Cartel proved especially destructive. Without the rule of law, uninhibited capitalism turned to narcotics trafficking, with disastrous results. At its peak in 1991, the murder rate for Medellín reached nearly 400 per 100,000, earning it the dubious title of “murder capital of the world” in headlines around the world (figure 1).

After the death of Escobar at the hands of police in 1993, the terror of the Medellín Cartel began to decline, as did the murder rate. Guerilla and paramilitary groups continued to fight over urban territory, especially in the city's informal settlements. A national program launched in 2002 allowed many low ranking urban militants to turn in their arms in exchange for amnesty, and the following year Mayor Luiz Perez proposed a similar program at the municipal level in Medellín. Although violence continued to decline, as of 2010 the homicide rate remained at the relatively high rate of 55 per 100,000 inhabitants (Merchán-Bonilla 2011, p. 60). The vacuum caused by the erosion of the Bloque's hold on Medellín's poorer neighborhoods has led to an increase in small, more conventional neighborhood gangs.

Despite the relative decrease in violence throughout the 1990s, large parts of the city remained in the grip of paramilitary groups like the AUC. After decades of violence, patterns of economic segregation had become amplified, as Medellinenses were not willing or even free to move about town (Pérez-Ayala 2011). The wealthy comunas to the south of the city (Guayabal and El Poblado) became insular to in an attempt to shut out the violence further north, while in many of the comunas lines of paramilitary control prevented freedom of movement. Convinced that conventional political parties could not effectively deal with the

Figure 1. Newspaper headlines like the one above in Glasgow's The Herald, 1989, formed a negative image of Medellín in the 1980s and 90s.

Opposite: Figure 2. Map showing socioeconomic strata by barrio. Data: Alcaldía de Medellín

massive challenges, in 2003 the city elected Sergio Fajardo to the office of mayor, a mathematician who pulled together a so-called Civic Engagement coalition from the business, academic and social sectors. Fajardo's mandate rested on his promise to transform the city physically, socially, and institutionally, a commitment embodied by the *Proyectos Urbanos Integrales*.

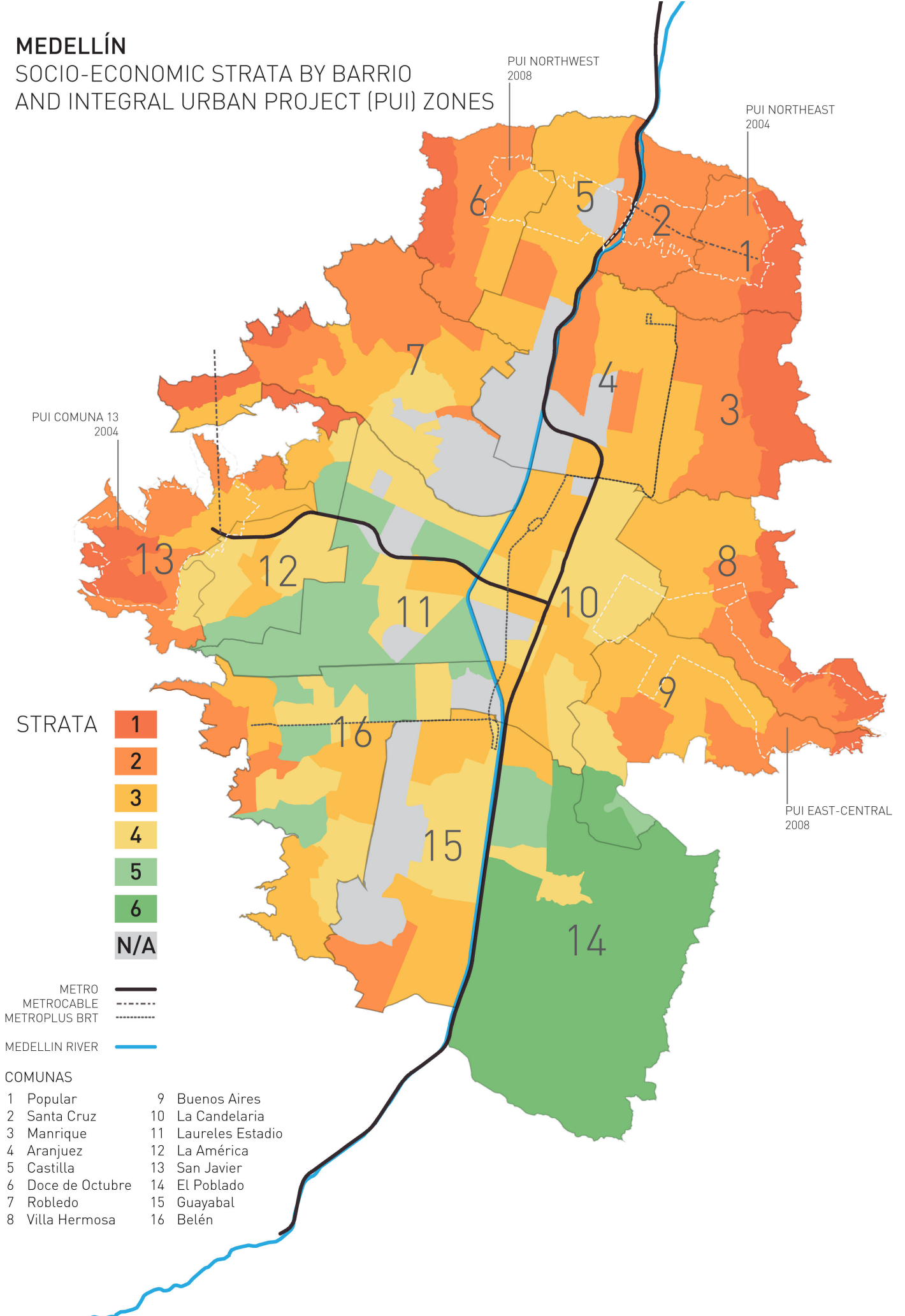
In the years before Fajardo's election, both the federal government of Colombia and the city of Medellín implemented several programs to address violence and poverty with mixed results. At the national level, the Presidency launched *Consejería para el Área Metropolitana de Medellín* (Counseling for the Metropolitan Area of Medellín) in 1990, compelled by the alarming level of violence even for Colombia at the time. Out of the *Consejería* came the *Programa Integral de Mejoramiento de Barrios Subnormales en Medellín* (Integrated Slum Upgrading Program of Medellín, or PRIMED). PRIMED was an ambitious program with partial funding from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation based on the premise that physical upgrading and regularization of informal settlements could liberate residents to improve their economic situation, reducing poverty and subsequently, violence. Two phases were planned, Phase I (1993-1997) meant to address the most vulnerable barrios, yet those with a minimal amount of past intervention, and Phase II (1998-2003), which would focus on upgrading the next level of vulnerable barrios.

PRIMED outlined six objectives for the interventions: establish a formal mechanism of planning and implementation, promote citizen participation, barrio upgrading, home improvement and relocation of those displaced, legalization of tenure, and mitigation of geological risks. Three zones were initially determined for the pilot program. PRIMED tried to break with the political patronage system of project management that had become prevalent, and sought coordinate work done by several different public and semi-public agencies and NGOs, such as EPM (Medellín's utility company), SENA (national job training program), and the United Nations Development Program. The program recognized the importance of community engagement with the neighborhoods receiving the interventions, as past interventions were often neglected and abandoned by the communities who did not feel they had ownership over them.

Overall, PRIMED accomplished many positive outcomes, but ultimately fell short of many of their goals. It succeeded in establishing a somewhat flexible structure and fostered inter-agency cooperation. PRIMED increased the amount of pedestrian infrastructure by 50 percent in its intervention zones, brought paved

MEDELLÍN

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA BY BARRIO AND INTEGRAL URBAN PROJECT (PUI) ZONES



road coverage to almost the same level as the formal city, built two health centers and 5,500 sq. m. of recreational space, and provided 95 percent of households in the project zones with access to running water. Additionally, 3,500 dwellings were improved, but slightly less than half of the 5,180 targeted for legalization were granted legal tenure. PRIMED fell short in its citizen engagement, with the process “[assuming] a rather passive/client form” (Betancur 2005, p. 340), and the program did not sufficiently keep track of the number of households displaced. Unfortunately, Phase I had to be extended to 2000, and Phase II was aborted after an initial planning stage. Although PRIMED fell short of its objectives, it laid the groundwork and provided a number of good examples of organization and administration for the PUI to emulate.

TERRITORIAL ORDINANCE PLAN, 2000

The Territorial Ordinance Plan (Plan de Ordenamiento Territorial, POT), adopted in 2000, is a planning instrument unique to Colombia. It lays out a fifteen-year plan for the city, identifies strategic areas for intervention, and sets broad goals for the long-term direction of the city. Whereas development plans reflect single four-year mayoral terms, the POT provides a longer-term and territorial framework for development plans to fit into. While the plan defines some specific projects, it only lays out a legal framework for them. So-called Partial Plans (PP) are then devised to actually plan and implement the projects outlined in the POT. The POT is an instrument made available by Planning Law 388, passed in 1997, and consequently the 2000 POT is the first to be adopted in Medellín.

The 2000 POT covers many areas in its attempt to articulate a “vision for the region,” including environmental, transportation, public space, and housing concerns, however it is competitiveness is the theme and number one objective. Specifically, the POT’s vision of the city is as a “competitive, environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, friendly and spatially integrated, and anchored by a system of structural axes and centralities” (Alcaldía de Medellín 2000, p. 4). The Plan is an instrument to strengthen Medellín’s competitiveness, and it hopes to accomplish this by providing “space that allows for a rewarding coexistence of friends and strangers, to provide sufficient conditions... to undertake modern and efficient economic and social activities” (Alcaldía de Medellín p. 1). This would then provide a “competitiveness platform” for the city to attract the investment and human capital it wants. In other words, according to the plan, the myriad public benefits sought by the plan are in service, though not exclusively, for making

Medellín and its region more competitive. It should also be noted that nowhere in the POT does it define what is meant by “competitive.”

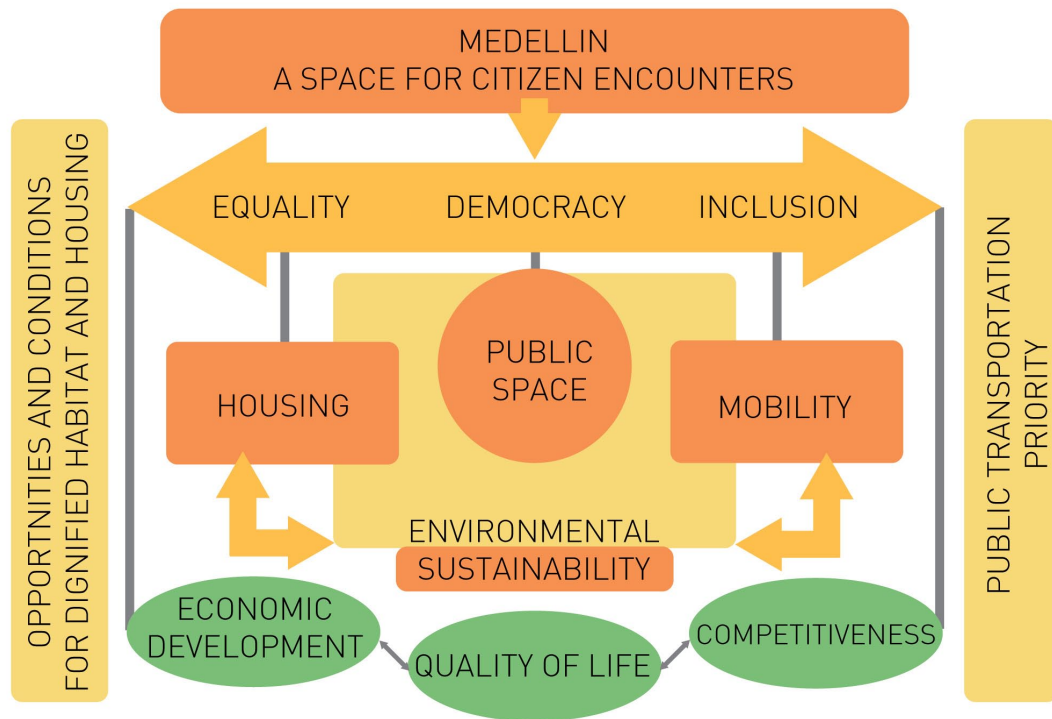
Centralities are a major focus of the 2000 POT. Where many development plans emphasize integration and all-inclusiveness, the 2000 POT defines numerous centralized hierarchies of networks and spaces. As such, the Plan defines a number of strategic urban projects, but nearly all are located in the central part of city and are most focused on competitiveness and recreation. The Plan outlines the revitalization of the Botanical Gardens, the construction of a Science Museum (built in 2007 as the Parque Explora), and the development of an area ripe for entrepreneurship and commercial activity between the Convention Center and a new headquarters for the city public utility company, EPM.

For the POT, planning in informal settlements focuses on provision of utilities, risk mitigation and security of tenure, as with the PRIMED program. In fact, it lays the groundwork for the PRIMED phase II program that never came to fruition. The informal barrios are areas in need of treatments including Consolidation and “Integral Improvement,” but are not imagined as places for strategic urban projects. In diagnosing areas for consolidation, the POT prioritizes informal settlements into three levels:

- Level 1, Management and Maintenance. This includes areas that receive many public utilities, but will require reconfiguration and management while the area is consolidated.
- Level 2, Qualification and Contribution. This includes areas that have an insufficient level of city services. The service gap will need to be filled in developing new consolidated housing and in planning future development.
- Level 3, Generation. This includes the areas most deprived of public services, typically due to economic vulnerability or areas that are populated too densely.

Within Medellín’s informal settlements, the POT also defines the treatment it calls Integral Improvement. Reserved for areas with some of the worst conditions such as a concentration of poverty, minimal housing sizes and overcrowding, poor sanitary conditions, physically and structurally inadequate buildings, and a lack of educational or health facilities, its purpose is to jump start neighborhood improvement by providing many physical, social, and institutional amenities at once. These programs include public space, roads, transportation, social facilities, housing improvement, and comprehensive legalization of land and buildings. The

Figure 3.
Conceptual
diagram of the
third line of
strategy. Source:
Alcaldia de
Medellin 2004



Plan emphasizes legalization of tenure for the sake of tamping down on the spread of illegal development and conflict between public and private land.

The 2000 Territorial Ordination Plan provides yet more precedents for the PUI program, but it lacked the vision to see the city's poorest neighborhoods as places where strategic intervention could both improve quality of life and turn around the narrative of the city. In this way, it also lacked the vision of combining strategic urban projects to boost competitiveness with barrio upgrading. These ideas would be linked in Mayor Sergio Fajardo's Development Plan for 2004-2007 and its articulation of Social Urbanism.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2004-2007

In terms of content, the Development Plan for 2004-2007 offered by Sergio Fajardo shares much in common with the sentiments of the POT. Crucially, however, Fajardo reorganized priorities. The 2004 Development Plan is organized into five lines of strategy:

1. Medellín, Governable and Participatory
2. Medellín, Social and Inclusive
3. Medellín, A Meeting Place for Citizens
4. Medellín, Productive, Competitive and United
5. Medellín, Integrated with the Region and the World

As is indicated by the order of priorities listed above, the most pressing challenges the plan hopes to tackle is the systematic crisis of governability, high

levels of poverty, growing inequality, obsolete social and economic infrastructure, and a lack of integration with the region and world. It emphasizes that “the core concern should be the welfare of human beings and citizens, and not just economic growth” (Alcadía de Medellín 2004, p. 8). The plan positions itself as a negotiator between the incentivization of economic growth and development and the generation of wealth with ensuring an equitable distribution of benefits. When these two forces are controlled, development is sustainable.

Unlike the POT, the 2004 Development Plan prioritizes first, the processes by which the city intends to implement its projects. The first line of strategy is not only about government overhaul, but also about ensuring that citizens are willing to obey the rule of law and engage with local institutions to reach common goals. Second, it defines who the projects will benefit and what does the city owe its citizens, including a minimum standard of health and education, and therefore opportunity. This also includes robust public spaces and the mobility necessary to move throughout the city. Third, it identifies opportunities to increase productivity and tap into global flows of capital. As with the first line of strategy, the fourth also emphasizes a change in attitude, not only a restoration of the “spirit of entrepreneurship” but one qualified with an understanding that for prosperity to be sustainable, it must be shared among all citizens. The fifth and final line is the outward looking counterpart to the fourth line.

The third strategic line, “A Meeting Place for All Citizens,” is key to understanding the underlying motivations and intent regarding the PUI. Emphasizing that public space is more than just its physical characteristic. The plan links public space to education by including the creation of libraries and new schools. Building on the framework provided by the POT, this line intersects with the other four, as “The territory and its dimensions are the habitat in which people live their lives, realize their hopes and initiate their businesses, in order to integrate into global flows” (Alcadía de Medellín 2004, p. 97).

The 2004 Development Plan laid the groundwork for several important strategic projects aside from the PUI. Three of them, the Parque Explora, an interactive children’s science museum, the renovation of the Botanical Gardens, and the Parque de los Deseos, a plaza featuring a planetarium, water features for children, a food court, and special events programming, are all adjacent to each other and located in the near-north of the city. All three also link public space and educational programming.

INTEGRAL URBAN PROJECTS

DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION, EVALUATION

The Integral Urban Projects (*Proyectos Urbanos Integrales*, PUI) were initiated in 2004 at the beginning of the Fajardo administration. Architect Alejandro Echeverri was tapped to head the Economic Development Corporation (*Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano*, or EDU), the decentralized state agency in charge of developing many of Medellín's urban projects with a focus on urban upgrading, revitalization, economic development planning, and public space generation. Consistent with the broad goals laid out in the 2004-2007 Development Plan, the PUI program hoped to embody the idea of "social urbanism" and create a city that was more participatory, accountable, and accessible to its citizens. With language drawn from the 1996 UN Habitat summit in Istanbul, wherein world leaders pledged to eliminate poverty by providing a minimum quality of life and housing for all inhabitants, the 2004-2007 Development Plan focuses almost entirely on tackling poverty and inequality. (Osorio 2009, p.63)

The PUI illustrate the shift in focus from the 1999 POT on legalization of tenure and risk management to an emphasis on public space, education, and culture. For many larger PUI, iconic architecture is explicitly called for. Fajardo's often reprinted quote, "the most beautiful architecture for the poorest neighborhoods," became a slogan during his administration and in the international media attention that has followed. For the PUI planners, creating iconic buildings generated new, hopeful images to replace older, darker ones. Historian Juan Luis Mejía

conceives Medellín as a palimpsest, where new images and narratives must overwrite the old on the same territory. (Escobar 2014) The planners of the PUI program felt the symbolism of iconic architecture in places previously traumatized. Library parks, the most iconic and largest-scale projects of the PUI, were often built on sites of extreme trauma. The San Javier Library Park was built on a former no-man's land where victims' bodies were often dumped, and the Leon de Greiff Library Park was built on the former site of a prison. Iconic architecture would also send a shock across both the informal settlement communities and the rest of the city, to symbolize the city's seriousness in combatting crime, inequality, and marginality and to demonstrate the possibility of beauty, culture, and education overlapping with violence and poverty (Escobar 2014).

PUI was meant to repay the social debt the city owed its citizens, especially its most marginalized (Alcaldía de Medellín 2004). Instead of focusing, as previous programs had, on risk management and land tenure, PUI sought to generate public space and construct public facilities with a deliberate emphasis on education. It was the culmination of the focus of Fajardo's vision for Medellín's transformation, as evidenced by two frequently used slogans at the time: "The most beautiful architecture for the poorest neighborhoods," and, "Medellín, the most educated." As such, PUI remained a major priority throughout Fajardo's term, with the mayor meeting with all the agencies involved several regularly scheduled times per month (Echeverri 2009). Although administered by EDU, the PUI program relies on the coordination of multiple city agencies, including the Department of City Planning (DAP), the Department of Public Works, the Department of Finance, the Secretary of Health, and the Secretary of Education.

PUI have three main components: physical, social, and institutional. Physical interventions typically occur in the most troubled parts of the PUI zone, and can include construction or improvement of public spaces, schools, streets, and environmental projects. The social element includes community participation through neighborhood organizations and councils. It also includes the improvement of living conditions and employment opportunities, and the assurance that those displaced by PUI interventions will be provided quality housing. In reality, some projects contained more community input than others. While many projects used ideas and designs developed by the community, in other cases community members felt plans were already finalized by the time their input was solicited. Lastly, the institutional component is the effort to provide competent planning through a deep understanding of the social and geographical dynamics of the

territory and by learning from previous interventions in Medellín and abroad. Conceptually, the program both top-down and bottom-up strategies of planning.

These three components comprise the five phases of each PUI:

1. Diagnostic phase
2. Planning phase
3. Design phase
4. Implementation phase
5. Animation phase

For example, during the diagnostic phase of a project, a great deal of time is spent conducting qualitative and quantitative field surveys and familiarization with the topographical and geographical context (physical), the organization of neighborhood committees to articulate their own greatest needs and wants (social), and the coordination of city agencies, private contractors, and NGOs to agree to be involved with the project (institutional) (Calderon 2008). The planning phase focused on tasks like prioritizing projects, delegating responsibilities to institutional partners—public, private, or NGO—and the assessment of each project in the context of the larger neighborhood plan. During the design phase, officials called “*Talleres de Imaginarios*” (Vision Workshops) to allow the community to have an active and steering role in the design of each project, including the name (Echeverri 2009). Although the workshops led to community-designed pocket parks and smaller projects, in some cases residents felt the plans for some projects were predetermined, and that the city was merely placating (Ortiz 2014). Next, in the implementation phase, the various institutions then involved in the project (e.g. Department of City Planning and Department of Public Works) coordinated and carried out the construction of the projects, with the requirement that contractors give a certain portion of the labor to local residents.

Finally, the animation, or programming, phase of the project seeks to ensure the lasting effectiveness of each intervention. Depending on the specific project, the Community Committees plan cultural events, social programs, marketplaces tied to entrepreneurship programs, or uses that otherwise imbue meaning to the space. The projects were not only intended to raise the quality of life of residents, but the pride and self-esteem as well (Echeverri 2009). Notably, the final phase includes the promotion of the completed project throughout the city and even beyond.

Key to the feasibility of the PUI is its financial structure. In the case of Medellín, a return to proper administration of municipal finances under the

Opposite: Figure
4. Map of the PUI
Northeast 2004-
2007 showing
projects. Source:
Alcaldía de
Medellín

Fajardo administration made a significant difference in the amount of money available for capital projects. The very first principle in the 2004 Development Plan stated, “Public finances are sacred” (Alcaldía de Medellín 2004). Tax records were checked for accuracy and kept updated, and a public relations campaign was launched to encourage the on-time payment of taxes. Signs were placed on completed projects with the statement “Your Taxes are Invested Here” to demonstrate that taxes were no longer financing corruption (Osorio 2011, p.76-7). The revenue generated by EPM is also crucial. As a public utility, EPM is required to transfer 30 percent of its financial surplus to the municipality of Medellín. For 2008, that amounted to over US\$250 million (EPM [website]).

Initially two zones were selected for intervention, beginning with the Northeast Zone and the Center-West Zone. The Northeast PUI zone covers 158 hectares of Comunas 1 and 2, and affects a population of around 230,000. In the mid-2000s, violence in Comunas 1 and 2 in the northeastern part of the city remained stubbornly high despite the city-wide decrease, with a homicide rate of 202 per 100,000. The Center-West Zone covers 700 hectares of Comuna 13, another district with high levels of crime and poverty, and was intended to benefit around 140,000 people. The neighborhood of Moravia in the near-north of the city was already in the midst of a program of intervention around the greening of a former city dump and skills training for local residents, so it is often grouped in with the PUI. Subsequent PUI Zones in the East-Central and Northwest parts of the city were defined during the following administration.

PUI NORTHEAST CASE STUDY

The PUI Northeast projects were not only some of the first to be implemented, but have also undoubtedly received the most media attention globally. For this reason I will cover a number of specific projects in the zone that demonstrate the various types of projects undertaken. The metaphorical crown of the PUI Northeast is the Parque Biblioteca España, a library, auditorium, and community space located most of the way up the valley slope. In less than ten years, it has become one of Medellín’s most iconic buildings. Another project is the creation of a vibrant neighborhood retail district among the Metrocable supports in Andalusia neighborhood into a vibrant neighborhood retail district. As previously mentioned, PUI’s effectiveness relied on coordination with other city agencies and programs. The Metrocable gondola line that connects to the Medellín Metro Line A and carries passengers to three stations in Comunas 1 and 2 was one of the key

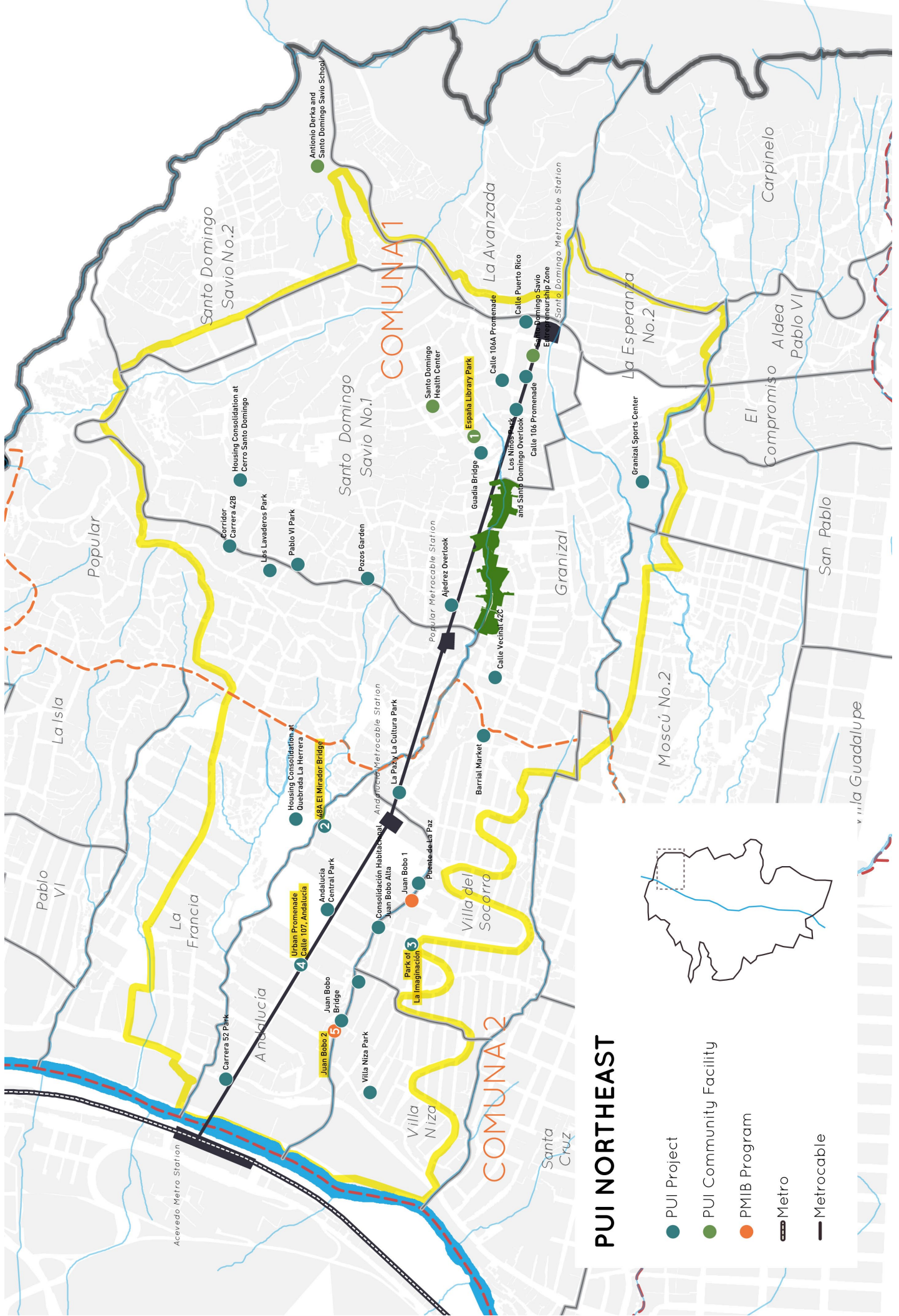


Figure 5.
Metrocable Line
L from Santo
Domingo Savio.
Source: Author.



projects in coordination with the PUI. Additionally The experimental Juan Bobo Creek Rehabilitation and Housing project further down the slope was developed through the Integral Neighborhood Upgrading Program (*Programa Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios*, or PMIB), a related EDU initiative spun off from the PUI. Finally, I will document two small-scale interventions within the Northeast Zone.

The city chose the Northeast zone for intervention specifically because of its high level of precariousness (Echeverri and Orsini 2010). The Northeast zone of intervention includes twelve barrios in Comunas 1 and 2. In addition to having the highest population density in the city with over 400 dwellings per hectare (Brand and Dávila 2011), the area also had one of the highest crime rates. The challenging geography—the steep valley slope leading down to the river, itself cut through with several steep creek valleys, kept residents isolated and municipal and state institutions out. 70 percent of Comunas 1 and 2 are categorized as strata 1 and 2, with 24 percent in strata 3 (Echeverri 2009).

In addition to being selected as one of the most economically and ecologically vulnerable parts of the city, the Northeast Zone was selected in light of the new Metrocable already under construction and that would open in 2004, the first year of the PUI program. The Medellín Metro initiated the first Metrocable lines in 2000, and with the help of Mayor Luis Pérez (2001-2003), the first and the one located in the Northeast Zone, Line K, opened in 2004 as PUI was getting started. A little over 2km long, Line K has four stations including the link with the Metro. The line was built at an estimated cost of US\$24 million over fourteen months (Metro de Medellín 2010).



Figure 6. Espana Library Park. Source: Author.

Figure 7. Signs of damage in the Espana Library interior. Source: Jet Richardson

The Metrocable lines have provided a net benefit for both the city and residents who have access to them. The Medellín Metro company, still paying off massive debts from the completion of its two rail lines, hoped that the construction of the Metrocables would increase Metro ridership and therefore revenue. While it has at least marginally, the Metrocables only meet the daily need for a small percentage of workers in Comunas 1 and 2, mainly formal sector workers in sectors like construction and manufacturing whose jobs are located in the industrial southern part of the city. The physical limitations of cable cars prevent many residents from using the Metrocable. For many informal sector workers, the inability to bring large loads into cable cars means they must seek other transportation options, while for the elderly, the constant motion of the cars passing through stations means boarding can be difficult. According to a study by Brand and Dávila (2011), less than 10 percent of journeys in barrios with Metrocable stations are by Metrocable. The same study finds that so far, the only dramatic economic development has occurred in the direct vicinity of stations. However, they conclude that the cable cars' greatest benefit is their enormous symbolic value. Crucially, the existence of the Metrocable lines provided an excellent advantage for the development and success of the PUI Nororiental.

The library parks have received the most attention of any other type of project, and of those, none more so than the Parque Biblioteca España. Designed by Bogotá-based architect Giancarlo Mazzanti, the library looms like a majestic rock formation over the Northeast part of the city. The Library Park features the three boulder-like structures for the library, auditorium, and community center,

respectively, all connected through an underground “covered public square” topped with a wooden deck that allows for a stunning overlook of the northern half of Medellín. The public space of the library park connects to a corridor of PUI renovated streets that connects it to the nearest Metrocable station. It is intended to be “the main reference for the community and a catalyst for knowledge and education, as an alternative to guns” (Echeverri and Orsini 2010).

Completed in 2007, the 11,500 square foot complex was built for just US\$4 million. The three multistory buildings are covered in black tile, with small windows cut diagonally in irregular patterns across the façade. The interior features balconies that allow light to illuminate every floor. The library structure features two-story reading rooms, computer labs, and an event space on the top floor. The community center has facilities like a day care center, workshops, classrooms, and another event and exhibition space.

The Parque Biblioteca España is popular with local residents, Medellíninos, and foreigners alike. However, the project has received criticism as well. Parts of the building began almost immediately to show signs of deterioration. Cracks and water stains are evident inside, and some of the black tiles affixed to the exterior have fallen off. According to Mazzanti, the low cost, rapid timetable, and inexperience of the construction labor all contributed to its deterioration (Broome 2008). An engineering team at the National University in Medellín has identified major issues with the facade, and estimates that repairs would cost US\$2.5 million in addition to the \$250,000 already spent on repairs in 2013 (El Combiano 2014).

The library has also received criticism for its lack of Colombian influence. Mazzanti, however, felt that for the building to be successful, it must “[disconnect] the people temporarily from their context,” providing a space free of the chaos of the barrio. For this reason, he felt that “inserting riskier, global architecture in this context was necessary to create the symbolic gesture he was after,” (Broome 2008). The combination of risky, global architecture with local “low-skilled” construction labor appears to have contributed to the building’s fast wear and tear.

Less visited by tourists are the genuinely small-scale projects like the creation of new public spaces, rehabilitation of commercial streets, and building pedestrian bridges across the steep creek beds, linking neighborhoods previously disconnected. The pedestrian bridges, visible from the Metrocable, are some of the most striking signs of intervention. Low cost and generally simple in design, they nonetheless make movement across the steep ravines caused by creeks much easier. However, the bridges are meant to tackle more than just mobility issues. The

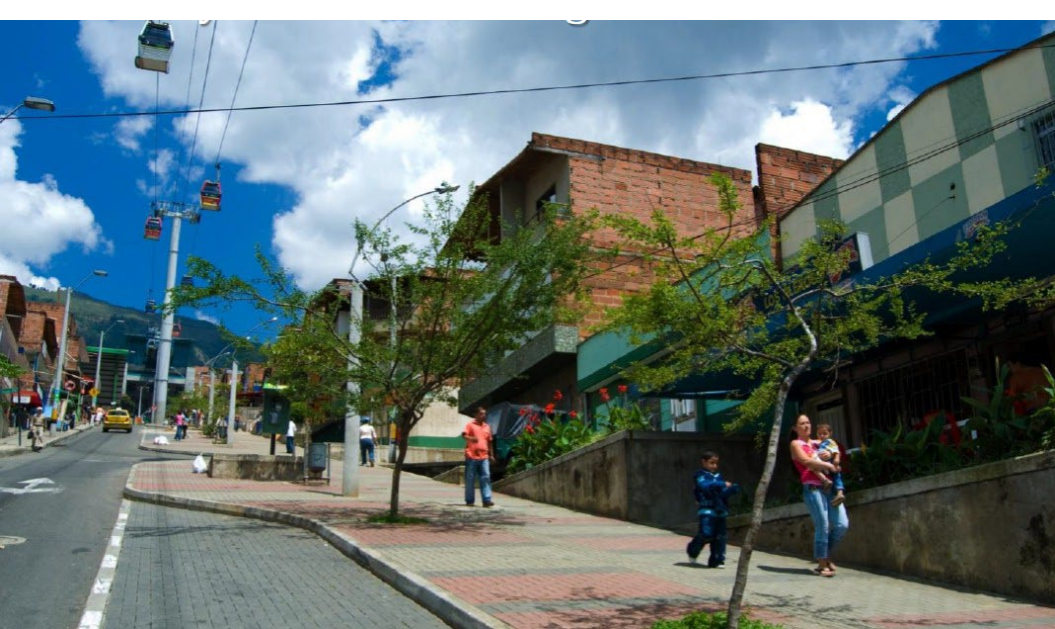


Figure 8. The completed Andalusia Urban Promenade project on Calle 107. Source: EDU



Figure 9. Bridge between Andalusia and La Francia barrios. Source: EDU



Figure 10. Park of the Imagination. Source: EDU



Figure 11. Juan Bobo Housing Consolidation before and after. Source: EDU

Bridge of Peace over the La Herrera Creek links two barrios whose urban militias fought violently over territory for years. In planning the bridge in community workshops, members of both warring communities were forced to work together (Guarnizo Álvarez 2007).

Calle 107 (107th Street) cuts through the center of the barrio of Andalusia. Running steeply uphill under the Metrocable, the street has been renovated into pedestrian- and bike-friendly formal commercial corridors. The Andalusia Urban Promenade project, completed in 2006, paved the street, widened sidewalks, and built in trees and benches, generating a total of 18,000 square meters. The US\$960,000 project was designed to “seek to consolidate the commercial corridor, giving people a big, comfortable and friendly public space to strengthen commercial potential [of the street]” (El Mundo 2006). As of six months after opening, a PUI survey indicated a three-fold increase in commercial activity (Ramirez 2006). In addition to generating commerce, as the center of the neighborhood, the creation of a great public gathering space was meant to improve quality of life for the entire barrio and become an invitation for outside visitors.

The Park of the Imagination, a pocket park on the side of a hill in the Villa del Socorro barrio, is an example of a PUI with significant community engagement. On the site of a neighborhood dump, the community and EDU developed a park that would be a gathering place appropriate for everyone from children to those with reduced mobility, yet fit on the challenging terrain. The resulting US\$40,000 park, named by the community, is a red and ochre series of concrete ramps and benches that are both easily accessible and fun for children to climb, with small interstitial green spaces (El Mundo 2006).

Although not part of the regular PUI program, EDU undertook the Juan Bobo Integrated Housing and Creek Rehabilitation Project within the PUI Northeast zone simultaneously. Housing was originally included as part of the goals of the PUI program, but eventually projects related to housing were spun off into a program called Programa Mejoramiento Integral de Barrios (PMIB, Integral Neighborhood Upgrading Program). Only around 100m from the Andalucía commercial center and the path of the Metrocable, the Juan Bobo Creek (quebrada) runs through Comuna 2, blocking north-south mobility. The area along the stream faced high level of both environmental and social vulnerability. The unauthorized construction of self-built housing precariously close to the edge of the creek caused a significant pollution, which then flowed downstream to the Medellín River. The location of the housing also put residents at risk of flooding. Because of the hazards, the area around Juan Bobo Creek housed some of the neighborhood's most socially vulnerable families.

The project was divided into ten steps grouped into three phases. As with PUI projects, community workshops and the hiring of local work crews helped ensure Juan Bobo's social success. The main difference with other PUI is the scale. While other PUI each addressed a single issue (e.g. public space deficit, lack of mobility), Juan Bobo confronted the issues of lack of quality housing, public space, city services, and environmental security with one project. The final plan involves canalizing the stream to protect it from erosion and pollution. Precarious homes were removed from within a certain buffer of the creek, and relocated into five- to eleven-story housing blocks. Green and public spaces were added, along with bridges to increase the accessibility of surrounding barrios.

Evaluations of the project have been generally positive. Juan Bobo increased both the quantity and quality of housing for residents, increased legal tenancy from 6 percent to 85 percent, and legal access to water, electricity, and sewage to all those within the site whereas previously only half had legal access to water, two-thirds to electricity, and none had sewage services. Public space per person was multiplied by a factor of six, from just 0.5 square meters per person to more than three (Perez Salazar 2011). Although residents impacted by the project had significant input, many found adjusting to vertical housing challenging. For example, some complained of other residents throwing garbage out windows. Nevertheless, anecdotally, residents of similar a similar neighborhood in Medellín see the Juan Bobo project as a model they would like repeated in their neighborhood.

In the same spirit as PUI projects, the Juan Bobo project sought to

QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX BY COMUNA, 2004-2012

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX BY COMUNA, 2004-2011

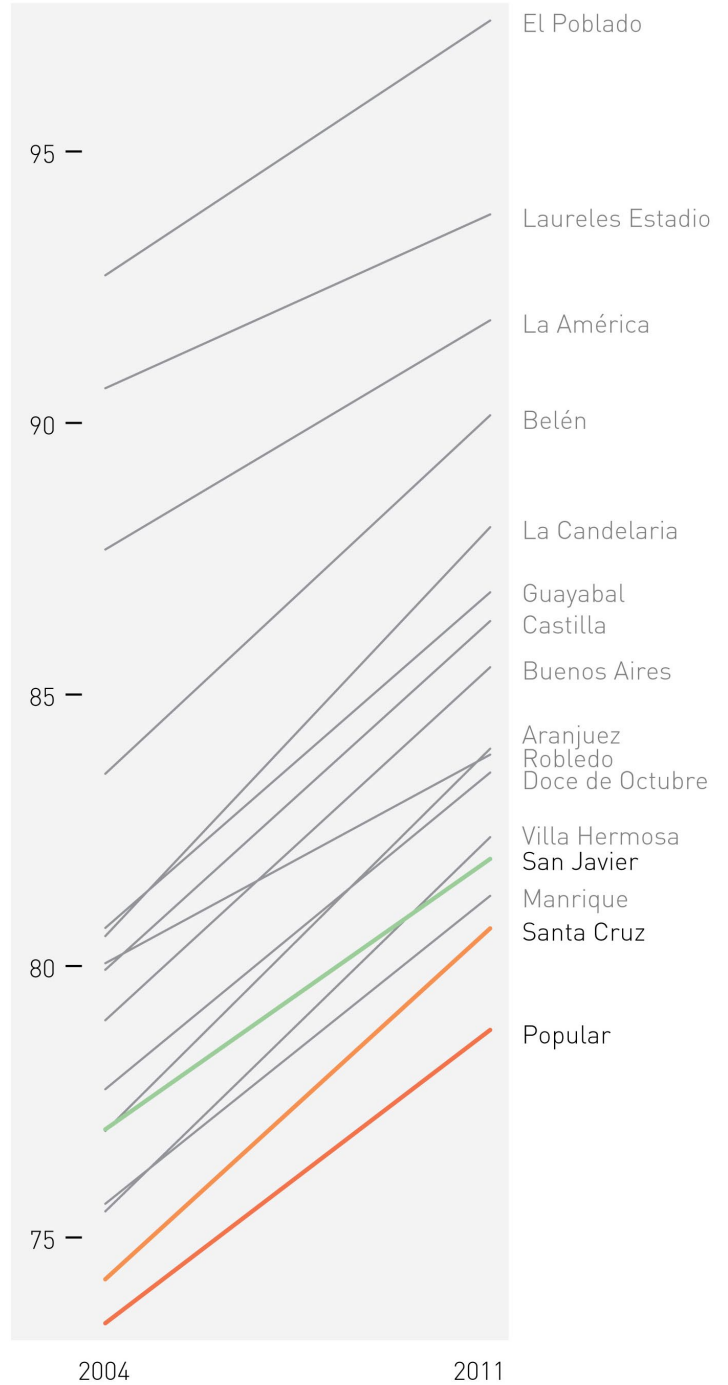
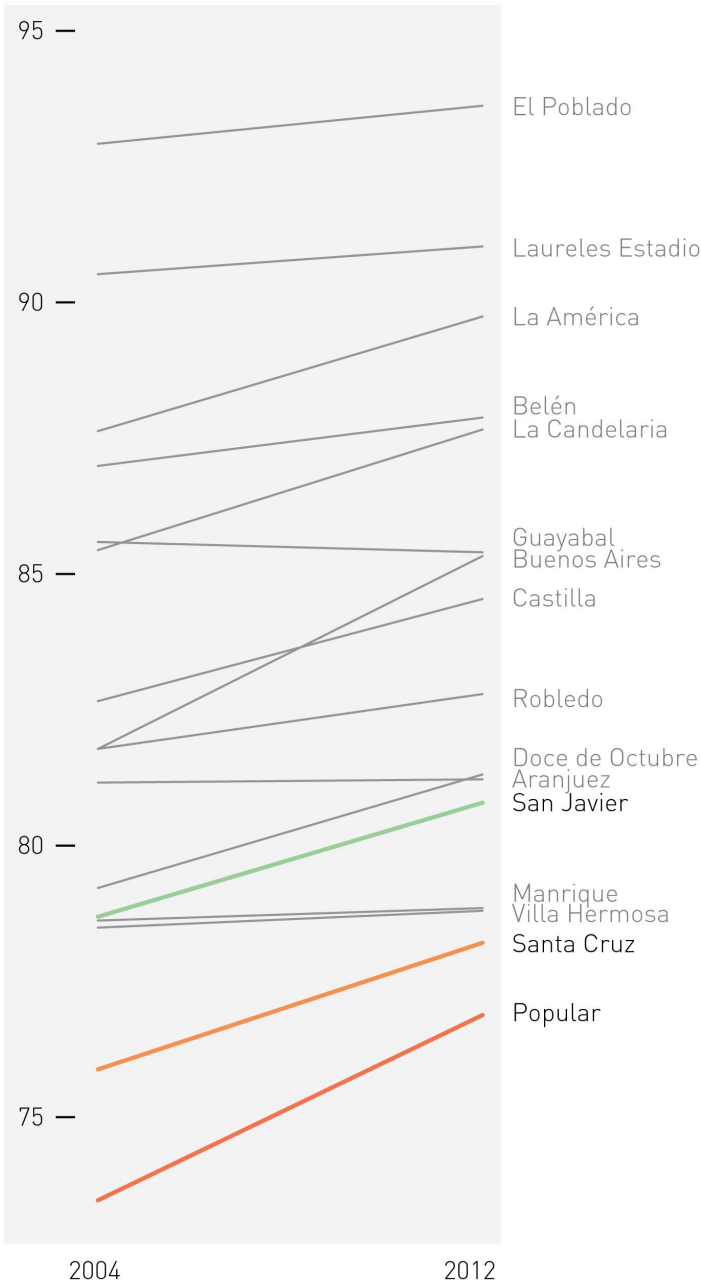


Figure 12. Quality of Life Index change by comuna, 2004-2011. Data: SIEM

Figure 13: HDI change by comuna. Data: SIEM

coordinate multiple city agencies and involve the community in every possible phase of the project. The US\$5.5 million project was built between 2004-07, and involved funding from six agencies, including the Secretary of Social Development, the Área Metropolitana del Valle de Aburrá (AMVA, the regional planning authority), the Housing Corporation of Antioquia, federal Minister of the Environment, Housing, and Territorial Development, Secretary of Public Works, Secretary of Farms, and the Department of City Planning (DAP), plus financial assistance from multiple community organizations. DAP along with the Subsecretary of Cadaster and EPM provided technical and political assistance. The

challenge of coordinating so many agencies is both the key to the project's success and the reason it has yet to be repeated.

EVALUATION

The projects recognized the complex socio-spatial contexts of their interventions, and it is the same complexity that makes straightforward evaluation challenging. Except for basic descriptive statistics, the city has not effectively evaluated the effectiveness of the PUI program as a whole, nor on the neighborhood level. Consensus exists on the general success of the PUI program in improving quality of life in neighborhoods where interventions took place to varying degrees, but most quantitative evaluation has been performed only on the most apparently successful zone, the PUI Northeast.

During its initial phase, the PUI program built dozens of improved streets and 189,300 sq. m. of public space, five library parks, ten new schools and the renovation of 132 others. The library parks, particularly the dramatic Parque Biblioteca España in the Northeast have received the greatest attention. The library parks serve 72 neighborhoods, offering internet access, childcare facilities, reading rooms, and community space, while the schools provide 418,000 students with a better learning environment (Castro and Echeverri 2011).

A public health study by a joint team from Columbia University and the University of Antioquia (Cerdá et al. 2011) surveyed 466 residents in 25 barrios with PUI interventions and 23 barrios without. Barrios with PUI projects experienced greater declines in violence, trust in municipal institutions, collective efficacy, and a higher quantity and quality of public spaces. Homicide rates in particular dropped from 188 per 100,000 population to 30.5 per 100,000 population between 2003 and 2008 in PUI neighborhoods, a 84 percent decrease compared to a 60 percent decrease in neighborhoods without PUI interventions. These figures suggest that PUI interventions complemented other policies in place aimed at cutting down violence. PUI neighborhoods experienced double the increase in trust in the criminal justice system, three times the increase in perceived collective efficacy, and three times the increase in reliance on the police than non-intervention neighborhoods. As for neighborhood amenities, interestingly there was virtually no difference in perceived increases of parks, playgrounds, and recreational areas, but PUI neighborhoods experienced a huge jump in venues for performing arts and educational activities.

While the city cannot provide any direct evidence of the effects of the PUI

³The Quality of Life Index (Indice de Calidad de Vida) was developed by the Medellín Department of City Planning.

on economic and quality of life indicators, they can provide The city collects data on both human development index (HDI) and Quality of Life Index (ICV)³ on the comuna level (figures 12 and 13). All of the original 2004-2007 PUI neighborhoods show an improvement in both indices, but the impact of the PUI is not clear. The HDI improved similarly for all comunas between 2004-2011, whereas the ICV change from 2004-2012 is more varied. Among the lowest five ranked comunas in the ICV in 2004, the three that showed improvement were the three that received PUI before 2007.

In terms of citywide performance, most indicators provide evidence of economic improvement. The GDP grew by 70 percent between 2005 and 2010, while the city's Gini coefficient has fallen from 0.54 to 0.50. The poverty rate has fallen from 31.6 percent to 17.7 percent in 2012. Of Medellín's strategic clusters (construction, energy, textiles, health, information and communication technology, and tourism), tourism is the fastest growing in terms of number of firms, followed by construction (SIEM 2014). While the number of strategic sector firms in comunas that featured PUI have grown, the growth has not kept up with wealthier comunas like La Canadalaria or El Poblado that already contain business districts.

SUBSEQUENT PLANS & PROJECTS

SHIFTING PRIORITIES

The impact of the PUI has been significant from an institutional point of view, although it is just one of several factors that have led to the transformation of Medellín over the last decade. National and local planning institutions like the POT and experimental land management techniques have greatly contributed to the city's success. Nevertheless, the PUI represent an agenda of equitable development, a symbolism that has continued even as actual priorities shift focus. The project designs and images of some PUIs and related equitable development-focused projects have been appropriated for other purposes. The institutional frameworks constructed for implementing the PUI have enabled subsequent projects to be built. Inter-agency cooperation and the financial structure of urban projects has remained an important tool for the following mayoral administrations. However, key factors to the PUIs success have fallen out of practice. Citizen participation, despite always being somewhat problematic, has largely deteriorated. Projects have also shifted focus from the most marginalized communities to a more general, city-wide, and middle-class constituency. In this chapter, I will review the development plans for the mayors following Sergio Fajardo, comparing them not only to the previous plans, but to their actual realization in the form of subsequent strategic urban projects.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2008-2011

Mayor Alonso Salazar, formerly Fajardo's Secretary of Government, succeeded Fajardo's term as a member of the same party, and with a generally consistent agenda. In the 2008-2011 Development Plan, this is reflected in the continuation not only of a number of programs, but of the general framework and the ideology of Social Urbanism. The "Principles of Public Management," which defines much of the ethical framework behind the plan, is the same for both the 2004 and 2008 plans, as is rhetoric about repaying the social debt. With its title, the 2008-2011 Development Plan demonstrates a shift in priorities from the previous plan: "Medellín is United and Competitive." Despite the shift, there is still continuity—the title is taken from one of the previous plan's lines of strategy, and the framework emphasizes solidarity above even development. The 2008 plan has six lines of strategy:

1. Medellín, a United and Equitable City
2. Development and Wellbeing for All
3. Economic Development and Innovation
4. Habitat and Environment for the People
5. City of Regional and Global Reach
6. Democratic Institutions and Citizen Participation

The Salazar administration continued and expanded the PUI, which the development plan includes under its first and fourth lines of strategy as a program of investment in works of physical improvement, the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the city, and citizen participation for the purpose of increased social integration, productivity, environmental sustainability, and the generation of public space. The plan proposes two new PUI zones, which would become the PUI East-Central zone and PUI Northwest, plus a reconfigured PUI zone in Comuna 13. However, the plan does not provide much detail under the first strategic line concerning social equity except for a brief description of the existing program and setting a goal of managing and executing two new PUI zones. Other programs within the same category under the plan, "Integral Urban Actions" have more detailed descriptions and goals (e.g. the positioning of the city center as a center of culture, security, and solidarity which includes facilities for vulnerable populations). Instead, most of the specific indicators of future PUI programs fall under the fourth strategic line as a tool of generating public space. Here, although described as a social and community investment program, only the physical aspect of the projects is mentioned. The plan calls for the creation of over 75,000 square



Figure 14,
Comuna 13
Escalator project.
Source: Jet
Richardson

meters of new public space, nearly 17,000 linear meters of new roads and trails, and 136,500 square meters of environmentally protected space across the three zones (Alcadía de Medellín 2008).

Crucially, the 2008 plan sees the ramping up of global outreach in the form of investment, international cooperation, and projection in the form of pushing for international events and expos. Global outreach, the plan makes clear, is necessary for the twenty-first century city, as cities today must depend on networks far beyond the scale of the metropolitan area to thrive. Left unplanned, the dynamics of globalization foster uneven growth within the city, which is why the plan hopes to direct development equitably. However, in discussing the lopsided development of global investment, the plan is vague in how it would redirect resources, saying only that as “a center of attraction concentrating resources” would attract the best professionals and create opportunities for those displaced by violence.

The 2011 Latin American Games and the 2009 meeting of the Inter-American Development Bank Board of Governors are specifically mentioned as a strategy for global outreach and increased competitiveness. As part of the Economic Development and Innovation line of strategy, the plan proposes the development of a medium-to-long-term tourism plan to make Medellín an

international tourist destination. As one benchmark, the plan aims for the tourist sector to make up 15 percent of GDP (Alcaldía de Medellín 2008 p. 3.16). The plan also proposes a more active role in attracting professional talent to boost economic development, though it does not specify from where.

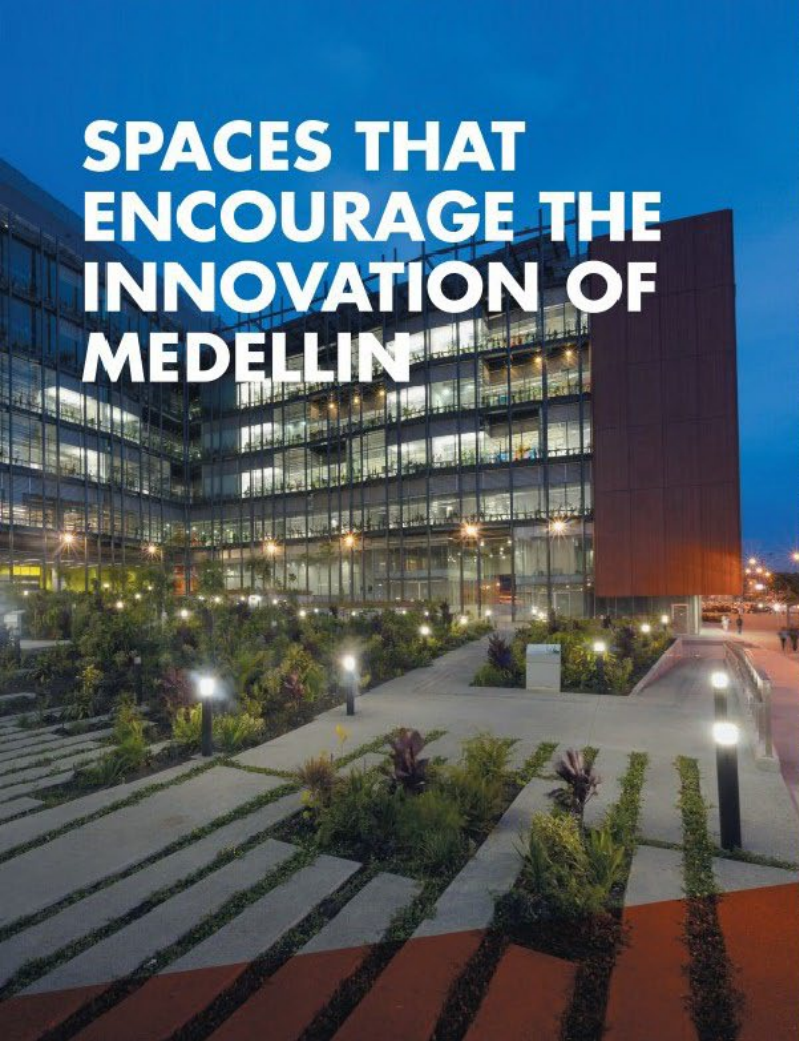
The fifth line, "A City with Regional and Global Reach" is explicitly linked to the previous two on economic development and the importance of public space (Alcaldía de Medellín 2008, p. 5.2). Under the logic of the 2008 plan, the three work together creating viable interventions that generate higher levels of human development. According to the plan, already in 2008 the city determines itself "an undisputed benchmark for the international community" in programs and projects that increase the quality of life in Medellín. However, the obstacles in the way of future international investment include high levels of inequality and segregation, poor infrastructure among a handful of other obstacles like tax incentives. The plan admits the progress yet to be made, but proposes using the enthusiasm produced by projects like the PUI so far as leverage to promote foreign investment.

Mayor Salazar proposed expanding the PUI program in the two existing zones, and adding three more zones: PUI East-Central, a large area that includes neighborhoods just outside the CBD to some of the most isolated and violent barrios in the city on the Eastern edge; PUI Northwest, a zone focused mostly on environmental projects, and PUI Iguaná, a small, linear area along the route of new tunnel link to the west.) In the PUI East-Central, a number of parks and public spaces were built during the Salazar administration, but few in the most socially and physically precarious barrios. Although the zone does house one of the library parks—the Leon de Greiff Library Park in La Llerena—it never developed the kind of flagship projects found in the PUI Northeast or PUI Comuna 13. One of the largest PUI East-Central projects is the Bicentennial Park, featuring a colorful interactive water feature.

The most internationally recognized PUI project during the Salazar administration is the Comuna 13 Escalators (figure 14). A series of six outdoor escalators allow local residents to travel between the up and down the 28-story slopes of the neighborhood in a fraction of the time. Paired with public spaces, geological stabilization techniques and a cantilevered walkway at the top, the project cost US\$6.7 million (Schwab and Aponte 2013). When the escalators opened in 2011, they received wide international press attention, and have become another iconic symbol of Medellín's transformation.

In 2009, the city launched Ruta N, a business and innovation center in "The

SPACES THAT ENCOURAGE THE INNOVATION OF MEDELLIN



Ruta N is a living space surrounded with hundreds of native plants

CONSUMPTION MINIMIZATION

The system of intelligent lighting is fully automated with occupancy and light sensors to have the lowest possible energy consumption.

The air-conditioning system is adiabatic, not mechanical; that is, cold air is removed from the building, and it is put it to circulate around its interior, and then it is released through the terrace.

The facade has a design cut off from the building, and it facilitates air circulation in the interior. To the same end, no office is closed up to the ceiling but allows access of air.

The aqueduct system allows rainwater to be recycled, through special treatment in tanks, and then used in the toilets and gardens of the building.

Moreover, thanks to the support of the Botanical Garden, the plants from the gardens and facades are native species that require little watering and need no pesticides.

It is a set of standards of sustainable architecture that take it into being the first public building throughout the country to receive the **Leed certification**, which would place it as a world reference of design, construction and commissioning of the project.

17

New North,” the area near the Botanical Gardens and Parque Explora. “The trigger of the knowledge economy [in Medellín],” Ruta N is meant to “connect the world creation processes in subject matters that contribute to the local and global development through the exchange of experiences and knowledge”(Ruta N [brochure], 2013).The striking, plant-covered building complex serves as a landing space for foreign firms looking to set up offices in Medellín and houses the Global Service Center of Hewlett-Packard. Ruta N is also a non-profit dedicated to attracting foreign businesses, especially communications and information technology firms, funding scientific and technological innovation, and entrepreneurship training. The official brochure places Ruta N into the city’s development plans and its narrative of transformation and innovation, but only as a tool to generate an increasingly globally competitive Medellín. Although the discourse of equity and integrating marginalized communities is absent, the project does continue the tradition of linking architecture and innovation (figure 15) and refers to itself as “a landmark that symbolizes the new north of the city” (Ruta N [brochure], 2013, p.13).

In 2010, the most recent Metrocable line, Line L, was opened connecting the end of Line K with the rural Parque Arvi 4km outside the city. In contrast to the

Figure 15.
Page from Ruta N brochure.
Source: Ruta N

‘Sergio Fajardo is now a member of the Green Party. The Compromiso Ciudadana is now defunct.

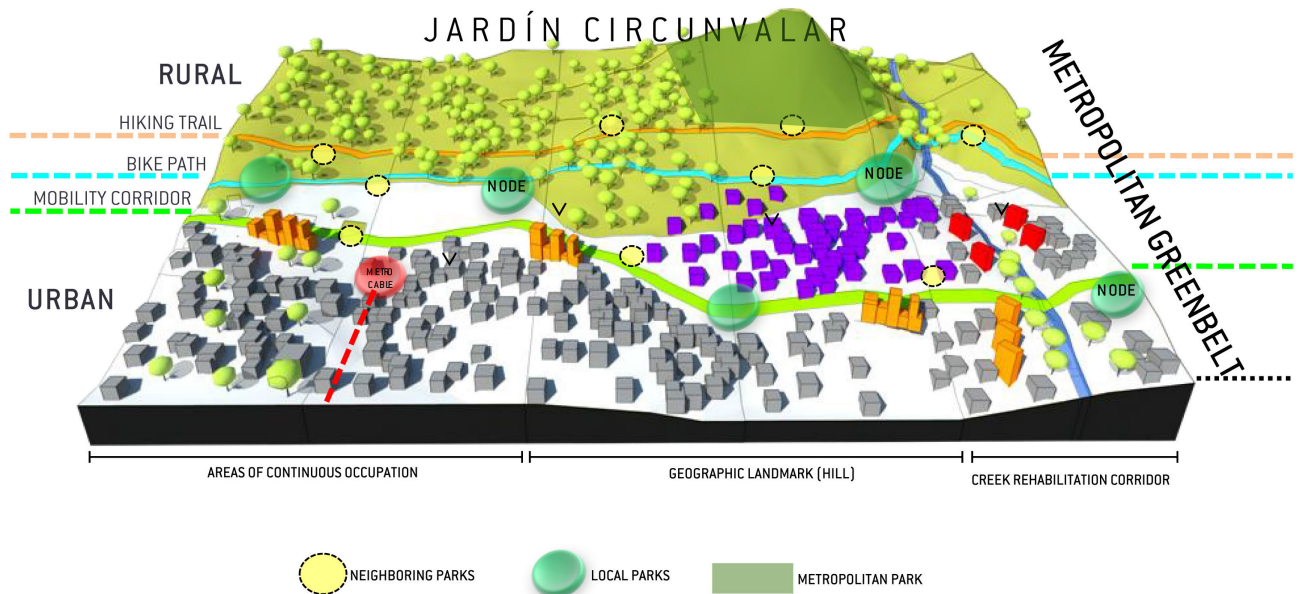


Figure 16. Greenbelt conceptual diagram. Source: EDU

first two, Line L is meant solely for tourism and recreation. Consequently, it has less capacity and a higher ticket price. One quarter of the US\$21 million cost was shared by the both the regional and federal governments. The higher fares mean the line is not as accessible to the residents of Comunas 1 and 2.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2012-2015

The administration of Anibal Gaviria of the Liberal Party marks the return to traditional political parties after eight years of the Compromiso Ciudadana. The rhetoric used in both his administration's development plan and in his campaign reflect the popularity of the message of Social Urbanism. Gaviria formed a partnership with now governor of Antioquia Sergio Fajardo to demonstrate the continuation of human development-focused public policy despite the difference of party.⁶ Gaviria has rebranded Fajardo's Social Urbanism as "Urbanismo Civico Pedagogico" or Civic Pedagogical Urbanism. The name of the 2012-2015 Plan is "Medellín, a Home for Life." Like his rebranding of Social Urbanism, Gaviria has changed the basic principles stated at the top of the plan. While still similar in rhetoric, the mayor has subtly distanced his agenda from the previous two. The plan's five lines of strategy are defined as follows:

1. A City that respects, values, and protects life
2. Equality, the priority of society and government
3. Competitiveness for economic development with equality
4. Sustainable territory: orderly, equitable, and inclusive.
5. Legal, legitimate, and institutional for life and equality

The plan does include a section on the PUI program, but provides only very vague concrete goals for the four year period. Other projects, like the Program

of Interventions related to the Greenbelt, receive much more specific information regarding the details of the project. In reality, the PUI program was placed on hiatus as the city shifted priorities. Although the PUI is not currently being built, some of Gaviria's projects are intended to provide similar benefits. In the place of the PUI East-Central, the pilot project for a massive greenbelt project proposes to share many of the public space generation and environmental protection benefits of the PUI.

Although Medellín is historically a manufacturing city, the 2012 Plan pushes economic development in the direction of information and communication technologies more than previous plans. In fact, the ICT sector was not even listed among Medellín's strategic economic sectors just a few years earlier (Alcaldía de Medellín 2008). A number of programs in the plan are aimed at strengthening competitiveness through enhancing the information and communications technologies sector receives—utilizing institutions like Ruta N, creating a Science, Technology, and Innovation District, and others with catchy names like the Medellín Intelligent City Program. The plan also capitalizes on the city's culture of entrepreneurship, building on many of the previous job and entrepreneurship training programs and emphasizing the promotion of strengthening the capacity of small and medium enterprises with high growth potential. In attracting foreign companies, the Plan also specifically seeks service sector businesses, recognizing that three quarters of the 46 foreign companies to open offices in Medellín during the previous administration are in the service sector.

The 2012 Plan also lays out the mayor's intention to capitalize on the positive narrative of Medellín in the international media. The plan aims to “Develop a marketing plan for the city and region, to establish medium and long-term positioning strategies and international expansion of the city's public private courses of action within the framework of competitiveness of the region, build a brand identity and the city from the products, services, culture, and future



Figure 17.
Rendering of
River PARK, 2030.
Source: EDU

prospects of the city” (Alcaldía de Medellín 2012, p. 410). By promoting Medellín to specific cities, countries, markets, and communities, the city can attract tourism, business, and more positive press to sustain the cycle of increasing competitiveness. Although the metric the plan uses is unclear, it sets a goal of 1,500 positive stories accumulated in the international press by 2015, up from 300 in 2011. Through strategies like this, the plan hopes to double foreign direct investment to US\$1.2 billion and receive 1.5 million national and international visitors between 2011 and 2015.

The current administration has also staked its image on several highly visible urban projects, including the Metropolitan Greenbelt, the Medellín River Park, new community sports and recreational facilities, new Metrocable, BRT, and tram lines, and large public-private-partnership “urban renovation” housing developments in middle-income neighborhoods. While maintaining a focus on public space, most of the projects are on a much larger scale than previous administrations’. The pet project of the Gaviria administration has been the development of a Cinturón Verde Metropolitano, or Metropolitan Greenbelt, to surround the city (Figure 16). Described as an “integral human development project,” the Greenbelt intends to address a number of issues including environmental degradation, the precariousness and expansion of informal settlements, and a lack of recreational spaces around the city (Alcaldía de Medellín 2012, p. 369). Although it promises many benefits to the citizens of Medellín, the sheer scale of the project, a 72 kilometer-long ribbon of parks, paths, and transportation suggests a broader audience beyond the city. The pilot project is under construction in Comuna 8 where the PUI East-Central was never fully implemented. Although Comuna 8 residents hope to benefit from the addition of public space and recreation, and risk management, they have major concerns about housing, employment, the way risk mitigation is determined, and food security. Most importantly, as it is key to addressing the other concerns, is their concern about the lack of community participation in spite of the rhetoric in the official literature and press releases (Barrows et al. 2013, Comuna 8 Planning and Local Development Council 2013).

In keeping with the mayor’s focus on public space and mobility, the Medellín River Park is a massive project to restructure the road and highway system along the river, create a large new public park, and integrate areas of development opportunity adjacent to the site (figure 17). By providing the highest quality infrastructure and public space, the River Park is intended to boost

connectivity and strengthen the city center, resulting in a more competitive metropolitan region (Alcadía de Medellín 2012, p. 381).

Some of Mayor Gaviria's programs and projects build on the success and popularity of previous ones. Although the PUI have been shelved in Comuna 13, EDU has launched a project called The Look of Life (La Pinta de Vida) in the barrio of La Independencia at the top of the escalators, assisting community members and artists in beautifying homes and neighborhoods with bright colors and murals (EDU website, 2014). The barrio's proximity to the famous escalators means it was already one of the most photographed barrios in the city.

COMPARISON OF THE PLANS (1999, 2004, 2008, 2012)

The reorientation of the city's priorities from emerging from a crisis to amassing prestige as a tool for economic development has changed the type of projects Medellín pursues. Competitiveness as an urban policy goal is certainly not new, and all four plans include it as a major priority. However, as the city has changed, the appeal and feasibility of becoming a top Latin American destination for investment and tourism has led to shifting priorities in the city's strategic urban projects. In the context of globalization, economic development and competitiveness is increasingly tied to high level services like ICTs. So much so, that there now exists a Deputy Mayor for Economic Development, Internationalization, ICT, and Public-Private Partnerships.

All of the plans draw on Medellín's cultural history of entrepreneurialism. While entrepreneurialism and capitalism has been part of the city's "cultural DNA" (Escobar 2014) for over a century, that heritage is now used as leverage for the entrepreneurial city in the current epoch of globalization. Entrepreneurship centers are one of the facilities included built throughout the city as part of the PUI, and more recently the city has been building infrastructure explicitly for foreign firms, such as the Ruta N complex.

There has been a shift in the territorial focus of strategic urban projects as well. The locations of projects of each plan span the width and length of the city, but there is a difference in scale. Generally, the 2004 Plan's projects are scattered throughout the city and its zones of intervention (e.g. PUI zones) are relatively small. Within the zones is an even smaller scale of projects. The territorial aspect of the 2008 Plan is similarly structured, but with more ambitious, larger zones of intervention. With the 2012 Plan, instead of a scattered distribution of smaller projects, its territorial focus is on monumental core and periphery projects.

LOCALIZED SOCIAL INVESTMENT BY COMUNA AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRATA, 2004-2012
ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION

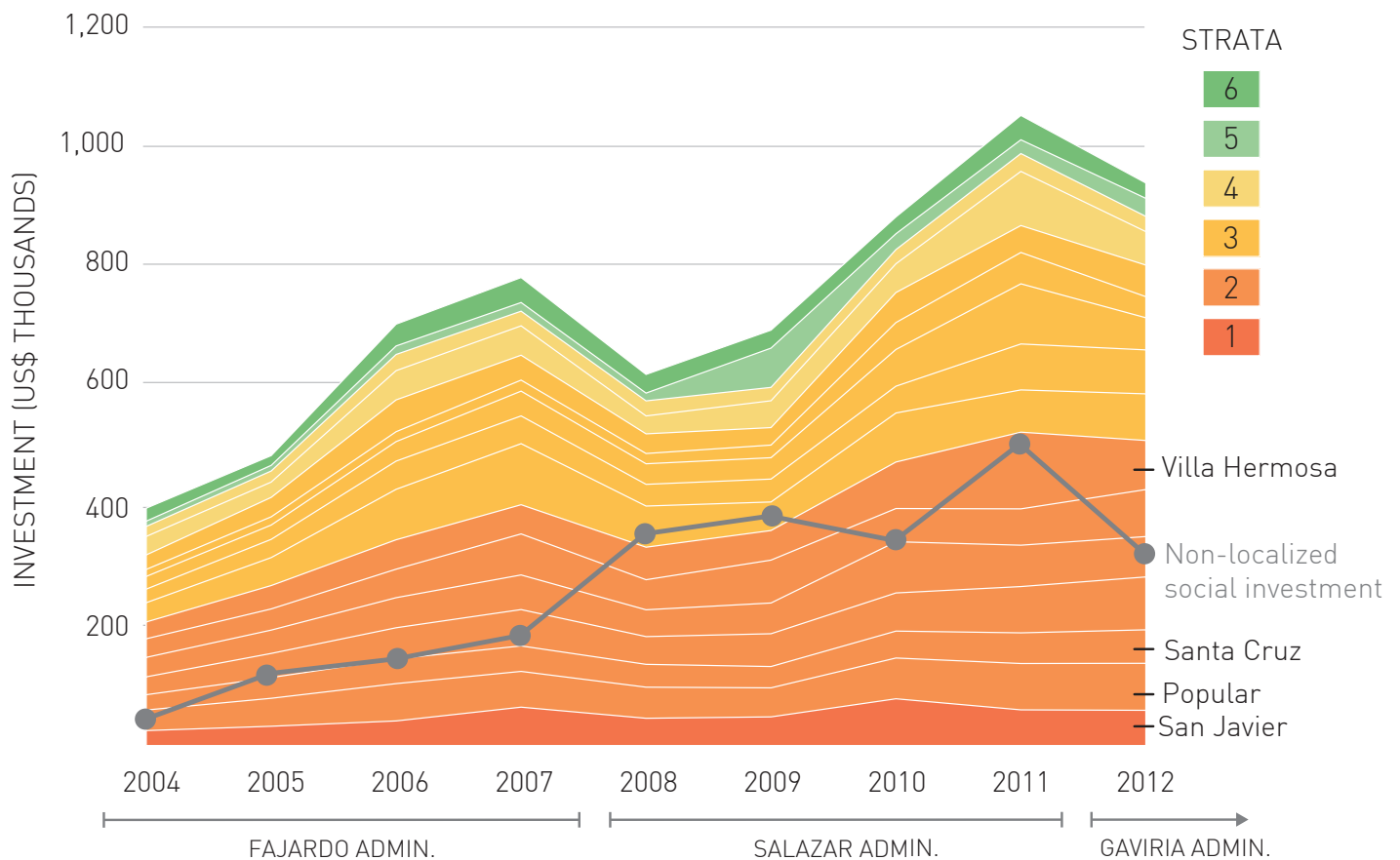


Figure 18. Localized Social Investment by Comuna, sorted by Socio-Economic Strata. Data: Alcaldia de Medellin

Since 2004, the public investment in all of Medellín’s neighborhoods has increased overall, with the share of investments in low-income neighborhoods remaining at about half of the total (Figure 18). As of the end of 2012, the latest year available, localized investment in Medellín’s comunas has declined in the first year of Gaviria’s term, but this is not necessarily a forecast of things to come. Investment also declined in 2008, the first year of the previous administration, before increasing rapidly. Additionally, most of the decrease occurred in more middle-income neighborhoods rather than in low-income neighborhoods. However, these figures do not describe the type of projects being undertaken. Additionally, the amount of non-localized social investment has increased faster than the total amount of localized investment. The trajectory of the current administration’s social investment remains to be seen, but as of 2012 the city has had an increase of social investment in general projects over local projects in the most socio-economically challenged comunas.

The lack of evaluation, the declining citizen participation, and the eventual shelving of the PUI program are likely the result of the political system. With strategic urban projects tied so closely to each mayor, there is little motive to properly evaluate or improve upon a past program if the new mayor has their own idea.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

PROJECTING IMAGES AND NARRATIVES

The images and narratives Medellín projects around the world have become more important as the city's situation has improved. The negative images of Medellín already held by the rest of the world were used to the city's advantage. The positive and hopeful images produced by projects like the PUI have produced a compelling narrative of rebirth. The city has consciously utilized this narrative in the global media to drive economic development, setting up agencies on the municipal and metropolitan level dedicated to international investment, outreach, and tourism.

MEDIA ANALYSIS

The competitiveness of a city lies both in perception and reality. Media, both domestic and international, is instrumental in shaping or reshaping the narratives and images projected by the city. In analyzing the narrative being projected to an international audience of potential investors and visitors, I conducted a media analysis of English-language newspaper coverage of Medellín from 2004 to March, 2014. The purpose of the media analysis to identify what projects, policies, events, and locations each piece specifically covers in order to understand what kind of narrative is being received by the (English-language) international audience. Additionally, as knowledge transfer and the image of innovation is also vital to the perception of competitiveness, I have undertaken

a separate analysis of coverage in the international architectural press since the beginning of 2004.

INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS

Using the LexisNexis database, I collected every article published about Medellín in the major English-language newspapers available in the database. Articles were limited to only those with a portrayal of Medellín, and those that only mentioned the city in passing were eliminated. Articles were then categorized as positive, neutral, or negative, and coded based on the subject of the piece (Figure 19). In total, 258 articles were analyzed from the period of 2004 to 2013. The 2004 start date was chosen as it was beginning of the PUI project.

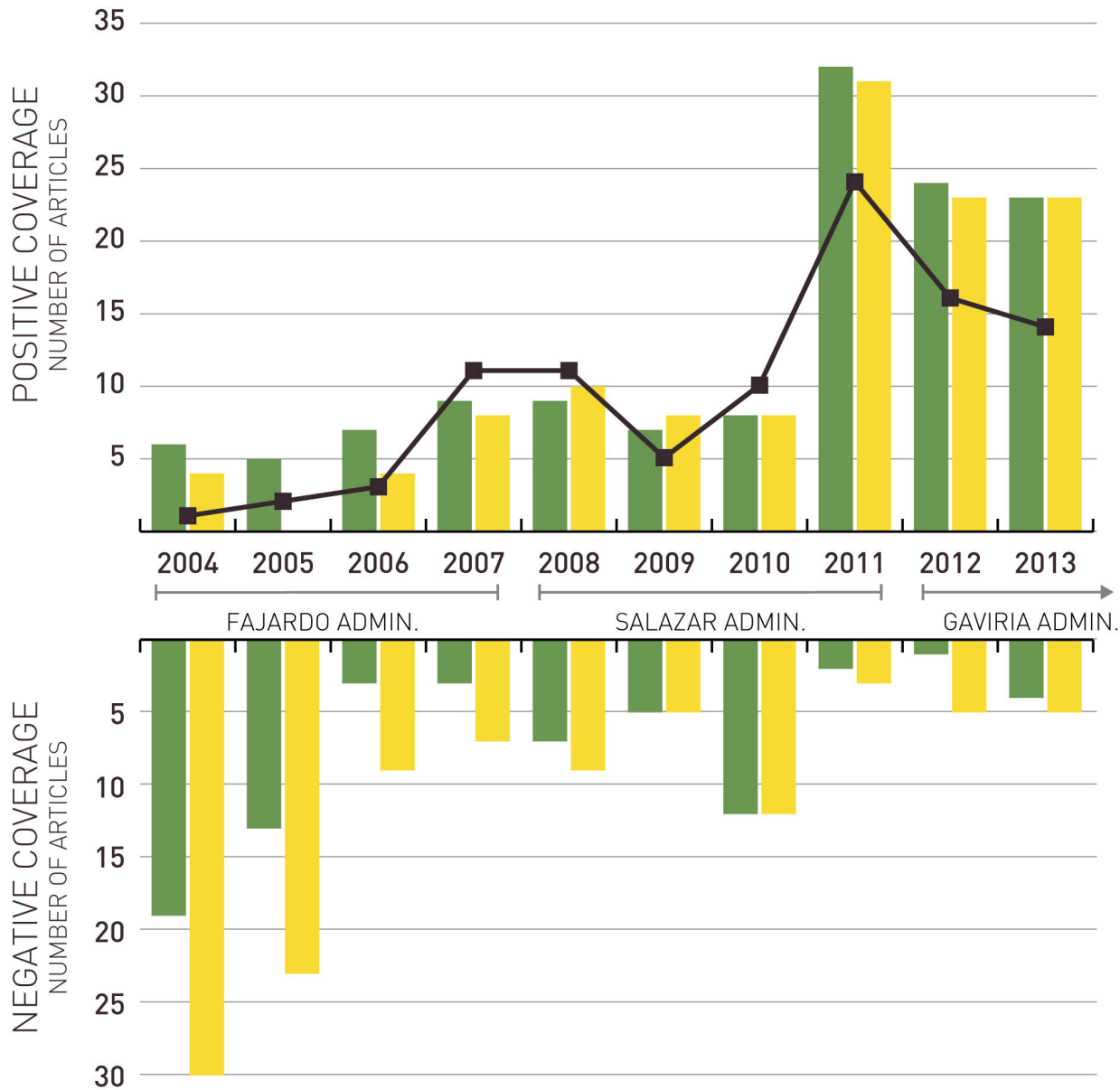
In determining the type of coverage, it became important to distinguish between the angle of the story and the portrayal of Medellín. For example, a story about the impactful work of a charity focusing on the tens of thousands of impoverished children in Medellín is a positive story with a negative portrayal of the city. In most cases, however, the angle and the portrayal were aligned. Each article was also coded based on its specific content, noting whether the piece concerned crime/violence/drugs, tourism, investment opportunities, or international cooperation. The mention of Medellín's narrative of rebirth and urban projects was also noted, as was the specific mention of a PUI, and in that case whether the article discussed any dimension of the program other than the physical or architectural dimension.

Although overall the trend is from negative coverage to positive coverage, it is not a gradual transition. There are jumps in the number of stories about Medellín's great turnaround coinciding with the end of political administrations, likely due to mayors' efforts to establish their legacies. The last years of the 2000s saw an uptick in violence, which led to an increase in negative coverage and a slowdown of the "Medellín, reborn" narrative. Another interesting pattern that emerges is the tendency for articles to be more positive than the portrayal of the city. In other words, coverage of Medellín has tended to include hopeful stories, which helps set up the comeback narrative.

It is no surprise that the first few years of the period in question featured few articles on urban projects, as very few were constructed. Most articles that mention Medellín's comeback also mention the city's strategic urban projects, and in turn, most of those articles mention one or more PUI projects. Very few articles that discuss the PUI mention anything beyond the physical dimension of

Positive/Negative Coverage of Medellin in English-language Newspapers, 2004-2013

■ Story Angle ■ Portrayal of Medellin ■ Articles featuring rebirth narrative



the program. In fact, the architecture of the España Library Park alone makes up most of the coverage of PUIs. It is hard to determine given the size and scope of the dataset, but it would seem that over time as the mentions of PUIs grows, the discussion of the social and institutional dimensions of the PUI makes up less of the coverage (Figure 20).

2011 appears to have been the peak year for positive coverage and coverage of Integral Urban Projects. As the last year of the Salazar administration and the last year of the 2008 Development Plan that stressed international outreach for the first time. It also marked the completion of the Comuna 13 outdoor escalators, a favorite project of the international media.

Figure 19. Positive/Negative Coverage of Medellin in English Language Newspapers, 2004-2013. Data: LexisNexis

Representation of Integral Urban Projects in Medellín in English-language newspapers, 2004-2013

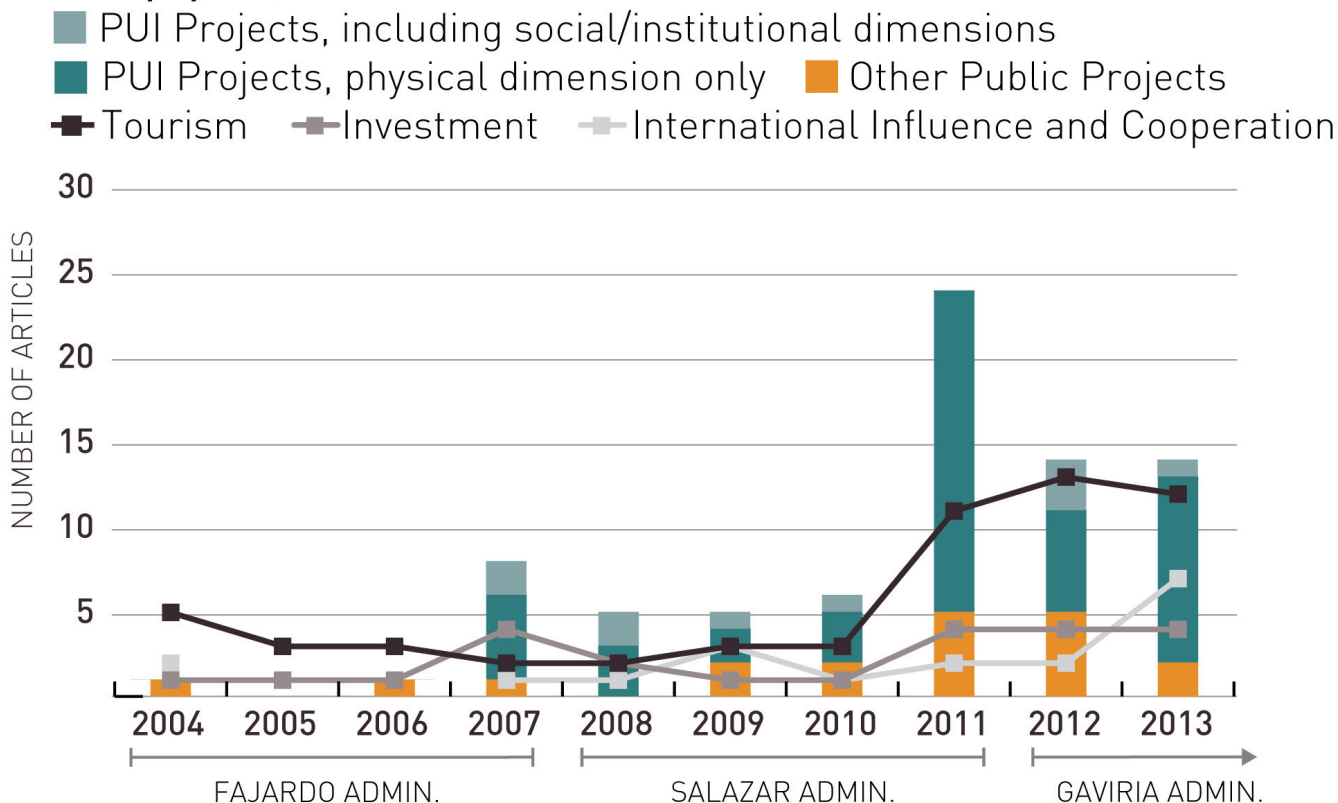


Figure 20. Representation of PUI in English-language newspapers, 2004-2013. Data: LexisNexis

This analysis has several shortcomings. Albeit extensive, LexisNexis only searches a portion of all English language newspapers. Additionally, articles of various lengths and readerships receive the same treatment in this analysis. Much of the international media attention focused on Medellín has been online in web publications and blogs, which cannot be accounted for here.

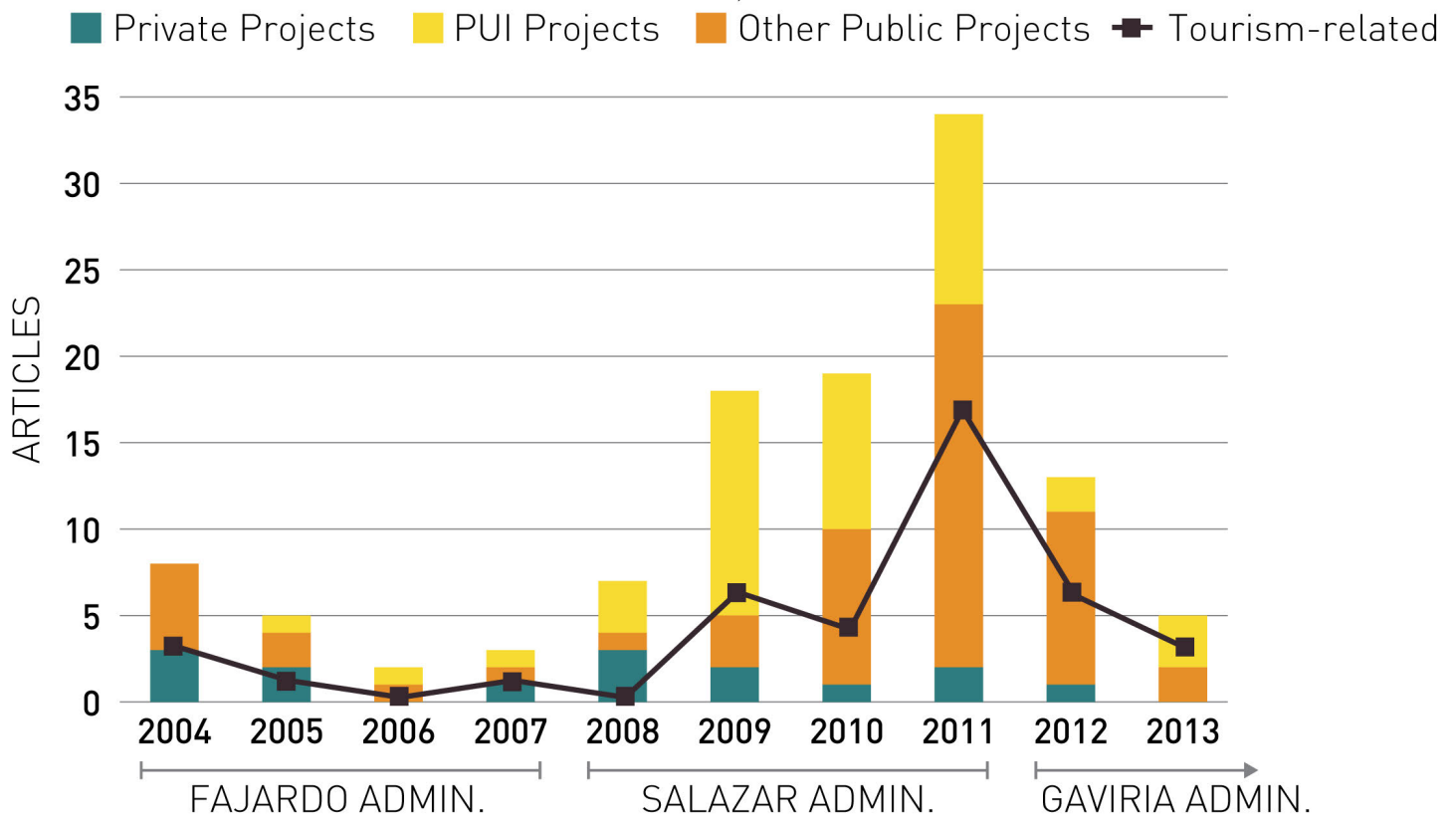
ARCHITECTURAL PRESS

The projects have become a favorite of the architectural press. Since the start of the PUI program in 2004, 114 articles have been written about Medellín in the international architectural press. Architecture publications are also attracted by the city’s compelling narrative as the mainstream press, but in their by-default focus on physical projects, it allows for a distilled analysis of the image of Medellín received by the international community (Figure 21).

Coverage of private projects in Medellín, has remained virtually unchanged over the period, wavering between zero and three stories per year, with an average of 1.5 stories per year. These stories include a new and modern private residences, luxury apartment complexes, and new headquarters for companies like Bancolombia, Colombia’s largest bank, and EPM.

In contrast, coverage of public projects in Medellín in the last ten years has

Architectural Press Stories on Medellín, 2004-2013



skyrocketed, peaking in 2011 with 32 stories. In total, 99 out of the 114 stories in the international architectural press about Medellín since 2004 have been about public projects, and out of those, 44 have been specifically or substantially about PUI-related projects. PUI-related stories peaked in 2009 with 18 pieces, two years after the completion of the first PUI zone in the northeast. As the PUI program lost steam and became less of a priority for city hall, so did the number of pieces showcasing the projects in architectural publications. The data also shows an increase in coverage related to tourist destinations in Medellín, including the Botanical Gardens and España Library Park.

The last few years have seen a decline in coverage of Medellín in architecture publications, with a number of possible explanations. PUI projects have come to a halt, but the city continues to build several large-scale projects that continue to receive praise as “innovative.” A “Medellín fatigue” may have set in, as many publications have already written multiple articles about projects in the city, editors may simply have chosen to cover other cities. The excitement generated by the images of Medellín’s comeback are no longer as novel, even if the city continues to build projects that distance it from its troubled history.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Figure 21. Architectural Press Stories on Medellín, 2004-2013. Data: Avery Index.

The attention, no matter how well-deserved, has not simply an organic phenomenon. The municipality has established agencies specifically tasked with the promotion of Medellín abroad, as both a tourist destination and as a site for investment: the Medellín Convention and Visitor's Bureau (MCB) and the Agency for Cooperation and Investment in the Medellín Metropolitan Area (ACI). Both agencies were established in 2002, but both received their current mandates during the Fajardo administration.

The Agency for Cooperation and Investment in the Medellín Metropolitan Area (ACI) is a regional agency that seeks to promote Medellín and its region as an attractive place for investment. Among their duties is to seek out and apply for international awards, providing the city with more and more superlatives (e.g. "The Most Innovative City in the World"). The ACI was also founded in 2002 solely to foster international relations. Over the next several years, the agency was tasked with coordinating foreign direct investment, and with projecting Medellín's successes and best practices around the world, fostering South-South cooperation. The ACI, as a decentralized agency in charge of internationalization, is particular a product of today's period of globalization.

The 2004 and 2008 Development Plans were the first to include the ACI, providing it with a mandate to support many of the programs defined in the plan through projection of the city's innovative urban projects. Like the development plans, the ACI's mission to "lead the internationalization of Medellín and the Aburra Valley through actions of cooperation, business, and investment that help increase the Human Development Index and competitiveness in the region" (Bañales 2011, p. 183) ties together development of the city's poorest communities with global competitiveness. To accomplish this, the ACI actively projects an image of Medellín as an urban laboratory.

Part of the ACI's mandate is to seek out and apply for international awards for the city to add to its growing collection. Numerous accolades and awards have been presented to Medellín and those responsible for carrying out the PUI and other projects from NGOs, international foundations, and architecture critics. Alejandro Echeverri and Sergio Fajardo were awarded the Curry Stone Design Prize in 2009 for "implement[ing] a bold and ambitious public works program that transformed what was 'the world's deadliest city' into a vibrant, more live-able place. Their work has contributed to a drop in crime and the emergence of a nascent tourism industry while it has helped better link Medellín's disenfranchised to the city's cultural and economic fabric," and specifically citing the



symbolic importance of the projects (Curry Stone Design Prize 2009). The Harvard Graduate School of Design awarded the Veronica Rudge Green Prize in 2013 to the Northeastern PUI in particular, in recognition of the “improv[ement of] the quality of life for approximately 170,000 residents experiencing severe social inequality, poverty, and violence” (GSD 2013). Since 2008, the city has won over 35 international awards from architectural festivals, prominent NGOs, think tanks, and city and national governments around the world (See Appendix).

Perhaps the most prestigious award won by the city is the title of Most Innovative City of the Year 2013, awarded by the Wall Street Journal, Urban Land Institute, and Citibank. Finalists in the competition were selected based on eight criteria including environment, culture, investment climate, progress and potential, places of power, education and human capital, technology and research, and infrastructure, and voted on by readers of the Wall Street Journal. The profile of Medellín that ran in the paper and drew the most votes points specifically to the PUI and the España Library Park and Comuna 13 Escalators in particular as key innovations. Quoting Fajardo’s characterization of the PUI as “architecture as social program,” the article focuses mainly on the power of architecture and citizen participation. Except for the mention of the 2011 Comuna 13 Escalators, the entire article focuses on the Fajardo administration and its work (Mehaffy 2013). City Hall quickly launched a public relations campaign around the award, putting up billboards and banners (figure 22) and publicizing the award in local media and social media. Although the award only mentions Medellín’s innovations in delivering beautiful public spaces and community facilities to its poorest communities, in its publicity, the city has again drawn a tenuous link between innovation in public

Figure 22. Billboard announcing Medellín’s title of “Most Innovative City in the World”. Source: Author

Figure 23.
Citibank ad
celebrating "the
most innovative
city in the world,"
and featuring
the Comuna
13 escalator.
Source: Patricia
Gouveia



projects and in business.

The success and popularity of the projects has also drawn attention from urban leaders from around the world, including from developed nations. The incredibly low cost when compared to other cities' projects—two of the largest and most lauded projects costing US\$11.6 million for one Metrocable and \$6 million dollars for an architectural landmark, community center, and symbol of Medellín's rebirth to the world. The ACI is responsible for inviting delegations from abroad and coordinating international—especially South-South—cooperation.

Particularly in the case of the library parks, PUI projects have become a major tourist attraction for Medellín as overall city-wide tourism has increased. Hernandez-Garcia writes that "Medellín, perhaps without noticing or anticipating, has found a role for informal settlements in branding the city, and promoting the tourism to those areas." (Hernandez-Garcia 2013, p. 44). He argues that Medellín's informal settlements are differentiated and authentic places that contain a high level of symbolic value. The current and previous administrations recognize the change in Medellín's tourism and investment appeal over the past ten years, but it is not clear the extent to which such factors were taken into account during the planning and implementation of PUI. One of the stated goals of the interventions was to change the mindset of Medellín residents, to make them feel integrated into and inspired by their city (Echeverri 2009), but the impact is much broader. Medellín is now the most competitive city in Colombia (Pérez-Ayala 2011) and the most innovative city in the world (Wall Street Journal 2013). As subjective as these titles are, they reflect the changing mindset of political, business, social, and academic actors both within the city and around the world. The perception of Medellín has certainly changed over the previous decade since the program began, and evidence for a shifting narrative with less focus on civic society and more on global urban competitiveness is evidenced by the projects built by subsequent administrations.

It is clear that Medellín has experienced rapid economic growth in general terms. GDP has grown by 70 percent since 2005 to over US\$20 billion (SIEM 2012). Foreign direct investment has varied with the recovering global economy, however. From US\$137 million in 2008, down to \$81 million in 2009, FDI reached its peak in

2012 at \$215 million. Although 2013 saw a decline to \$185 million, making it only the fourth ranked receiver of FDI in Colombia that year, the city is still on track to the goal laid out in the plan of \$600 million of FDI during the 2012-2015 term (ACI Medellín 2012, *La Republica* 2014). The city has also begun to draw in multinational firms like Hewlett-Packard, Kimberly Clark, and the Swiss company Holcim. According to the ACI, these outsourcing operations have produced 10,000 jobs and generated \$600 million per year.

The Medellín Convention and Visitor's Bureau (MVB) was established by City Hall and the Medellín Chamber of Commerce. The agency's objective is to increase tourism in the Medellín metropolitan region by supporting the improvement of the city's image and through joint promotional strategies with the local tourism sector (public-private partnerships). Specifically, the MVB has set a goal to make Medellín one of the top five hosts of international events in Latin America, to increase international arrivals by 61 percent and domestic arrivals 21 percent over 2010, and host at least 120 international and national events per year in the form of trade shows, conventions, conferences, and sporting events. Responsible for fostering both business and leisure tourism, the agency promotes an image of a clean, open, and prosperous city in its ad campaigns, featuring downtown plazas and skyscrapers, cultural venues and festivals, natural beauty, and the library parks and Metrocables. Interestingly, the images of projects in informal settlements are almost always shot to hide sign of the surrounding neighborhoods, and when they are visible, they are typically in the distant background. The agency's Flickr account contains over 1,700 images, only five of which contain informal settlements.

Air travel to Medellín has more than doubled since 2005, although there are still few foreign direct flights to the city and most international passengers arrive via Bogotá. The MVB categorizes tourists into three types: backpackers, who typically spend around US\$50 per day, families, who typically spend \$200-300 per day, and business tourists, who spend between \$300-1,000 per day (*El Colombiano* 2013). The preference for business tourists is clear. The Bureau boasts a surge in events held at the Plaza Mayor, from 560 in 2011 to over 1,400 in 2013.

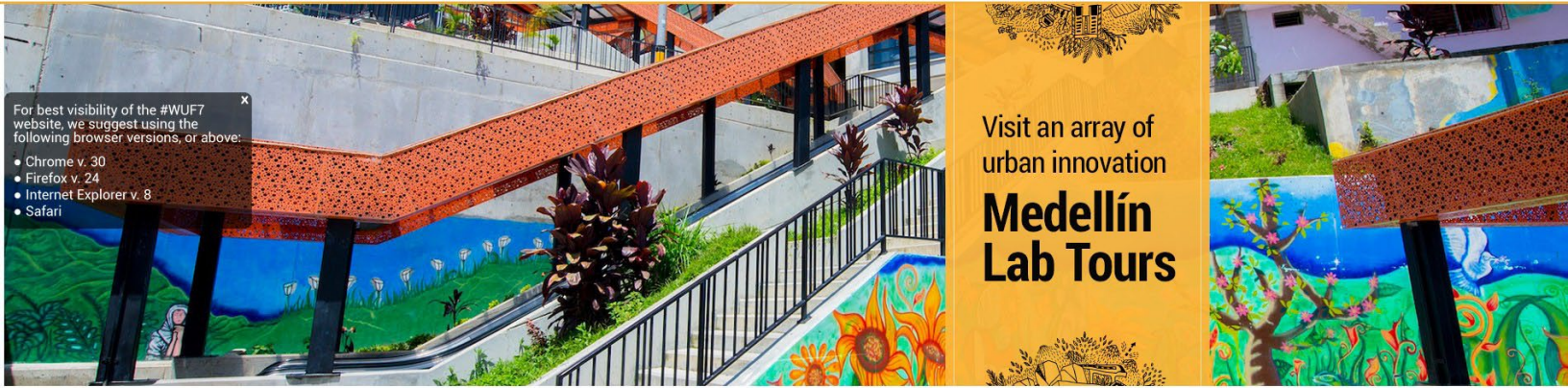
WORLD URBAN FORUM

One culmination of the all the efforts to attract investment and tourism through the projection of urban innovation is the Seventh UN-HABITAT World

Urban Forum, which will be held in Medellín April 5-11, 2014 at the Plaza Mayor. The Forum, “the World’s Premiere Conference on Cities,” is held every two years in a different city and brings together governmental officials of all levels, NGOs, scholars, and United Nations agency officials to discuss the most pressing urban problems of the day (WUF 2014c).

The theme for the 2014 conference is “Urban Equity in Development,” which closely resembles the themes of the past three Medellín development plans, the most recent, “Medellín, A Home for Life” in particular. In fact, the theme was inspired by Medellín itself, citing “the programmatic approach to equity implemented by the city of Medellín for more than 15 years” (WUF 2014c). It is entirely aligned with the image Medellín hopes to project of a city with innovative strategies to share. The conference will focus on what cities can do to alleviate poverty and inequality, particularly in slums, and chose Medellín specifically for its narrative of rebirth. According to General Coordinator of the WUF7, Ana Moreno, “Experiences this city and region in the past 40 years are a model to show the rest of the world of transformation that has occurred in Latin America” (Avané Cataño 2014). The WUF Concept Paper characterizes Medellín as a city “that endorses that the notion ‘Equity in Development’ can be operationalized at an urban level by the ‘Cities for Life’ concept” (WUF 2014c) and where “Creativity and innovation are words behind Medellín’s development and prosperity” (WUF 2014a). The logo for the conference features (Figure 25) a hand-drawn wreath of many of Medellín’s iconic projects against a stylized background of vegetation and mountains— including the España and Leon de Greiff Library Parks, the Metro and Metrocable, the Orquideorama at the Botanical Gardens and the EPM headquarters.

The Forum will feature a Medellín Pavilion to exhibit the many of the city’s innovative projects. The curator of the pavilion, Francisco Sanin, told *El Mundo* the aim is to “show how architecture, urbanism and the social-economic components and Public-Private Partnerships transformed the city, through very specific interventions, which have been recognized on the world stage as a new tool for urban planning” (Avané Cataño 2014). The pavilion will focus especially on the Green Belt and River Park. A special session at the World Urban Forum is planned for Medellín with the title, “Medellín: a City for Life.” The session demonstrates the city’s role in modeling an exciting model of planning and development for the rest of the world. The special session will showcase the city’s urban transformation of Medellín “into a city for life on the basis of equity, inclusion, education, culture and citizen cohabitation,” and allow Medellín to lead the international community



in “construc[ing]... the elements of a new way of urban thinking and the tools needed to create life and equity in cities...” (WUF 2014b). The concept note links the city’s current pedagogical urbanism ideology with its international cooperation.

The World Urban Forum allows the Medellín to exhibit its urban projects and innovative strategies as a model for the world. Tours of the “Laboratory Medellín” are built into the conference programming with four specifically designed to showcase urban projects (figure 26). By taking note of the tour destinations offered to WUF participants, it is possible to get a snapshot of the images currently being projected.

- The New North tour “covers the main public interventions to public space and the new generation of centres of citizen and community inclusion.” The tour will take visitors to the Parque Explora, Parque de los Deseos, the



Above: Figure 24. Front page of WUF website featuring PUI

Figure 25. World Urban Forum 7 logo.

Opposite: Figure
26. Location
of Laboratory
Medellin Tour
destination for
WUF Participants

Ruta-N innovation office center, the Moravia Cultural Center, and the España Library Park.

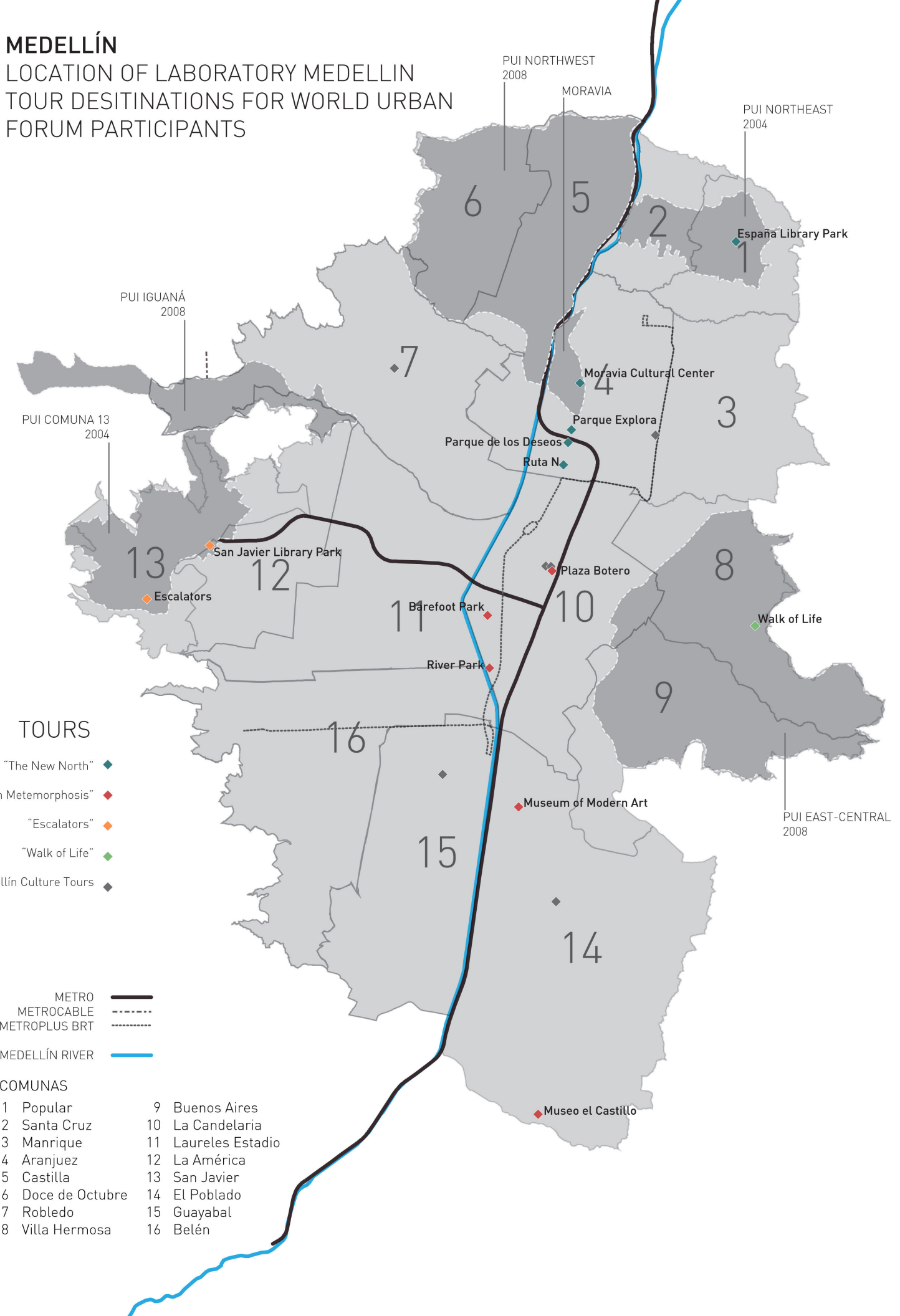
- The Urban Metamorphosis tour “showcases part of the urban transformation that has taken place in the city, where renewal, innovation, and the relationship with the environment have played important roles,” and takes WUF attendees to the under-construction Medellín River Park, two downtown cultural museums, the EPM headquarters, and the nearby Barefoot Park.
- The Escalators tour takes visitors to the Comuna 13 outdoor escalators, in what the WUF website says is “often described as the city’s most violent neighbourhood, visitors can see an example of the efforts to increase social inclusion and the quality of life of the residents of the Comuna.” The tour also visits the San Javier Library Park not far from the escalators.
- The Walk of Life tour visits the “the first section of the Garden Belt, a construction that strived to close the divide between the urban and rural in the Comuna 8, an area much afflicted by the city’s violent past.” (WUF 2014d)

Planned in part by the Medellín Convention Bureau, these tours, especially the first two, demonstrate the effort the city has made to draw links between strategic urban projects and innovation. It also demonstrates the importance of specific physical projects as landmarks that can be visited. The New North tour does include the Moravia Cultural Center, a building that is more interesting for its social and cultural programming than its architecture, but by and large the tours focus on the most striking architectural projects, whether PUI projects or more recent ones.

The MCB will also offer WUF attendees six “Medellín Cultural Tours” in addition to the four “Medellín Laboratory Tours,” with themes about coffee and dance. Figure 24 shows the distribution of attractions visited by the tours offered to WUF visitors. With the possible exception of the Moravia Cultural Center mentioned previously, the Laboratory Tours visits to only the most well-known and widely recognized projects in the informal settlements. Smaller scale physical and social projects and such as the renovation of Calle 107, the pedestrian bridges, pocket parks, upgraded high schools, and job training centers are not on the list of destinations. By only focusing on the most iconic structures of Medellín’s urban upgrading, the tours perpetuate the process of increasing recognition of the most

MEDELLÍN

LOCATION OF LABORATORY MEDELLIN TOUR DESTINATIONS FOR WORLD URBAN FORUM PARTICIPANTS



TOURS

- “The New North” ◆
- “Urban Metemorphosis” ◆
- “Escalators” ◆
- “Walk of Life” ◆
- Medellín Culture Tours ◆

- METRO ———
- METROCABLE - - - - -
- METROPLUS BRT ·····
- MEDELLÍN RIVER ———

COMUNAS

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Popular | 9 Buenos Aires |
| 2 Santa Cruz | 10 La Candelaria |
| 3 Manrique | 11 Laureles Estadio |
| 4 Aranjuez | 12 La América |
| 5 Castilla | 13 San Javier |
| 6 Doce de Octubre | 14 El Poblado |
| 7 Robledo | 15 Guayabal |
| 8 Villa Hermosa | 16 Belén |

architecturally and aesthetically striking interventions and marginalizing the contribution of a myriad of social, institutional, and small-scale physical projects. While it may be understandable that tourists visiting the city for leisure may have little interest in the intricacies of the PUI and other interventions, it is important to keep in mind that these tours are specifically for participants of the World Urban Forum—planners, urban experts, policy makers, and government officials. As the conference tackles the complexities of, among other things, equitable planning and intervention, participants are given a tour of the same iconic images and oversimplified narrative of success that has been represented in the media and reflected in more recent projects developed by City Hall.

The exercise of hosting the World Urban Forum allows Medellín to showcase its images of equitable and surprising development, project a narrative that ties innovation in urban projects to innovation in business, and attract thousands of influential urban experts and officials to the city—not only for the duration of the conference, but its continuing influence as a feather in the city’s cap. Even the Marca país Colombia, the international tourism and competitiveness agency of the federal government, has seized on the promotional opportunities to associate national urban policy with global competitiveness. As with other large events the city has hosted or competed for (e.g. the 2009 IDB Board of Governors Meeting, the 2011 Latin American Games, and the 2014 Youth Olympics), the World Urban Forum not only attracts tourists for the event, but increases urban competitiveness by imprinting prestige and legitimacy as a global city. The nature of the conference is especially significant, as it specifically singles out Medellín as an innovator and an example for the world.

INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The Medellín Model represents a strategy for even the most desperate cities to encourage investment and growth while improving quality of life for all residents. Mayor Sergio Fajardo and his successors have argued that tackling inequality and enhancing global competitiveness are not mutually exclusive policy goals. The hopeful message has certainly gained popularity over the last ten years, and the PUI have been at the center of both the city's strategy and its image in the eyes of the international community. Yet the image obscures the difficulty of sustaining such a strategy in light of global economic pressures. Is Medellín's strategy of using architectural production to transform marginalized communities replicable? If so, how can it avoid succumbing to the greatly inequitable forces of globalization?

BUILDING PROJECTS

Without more comprehensive evaluation, it is difficult to assess what are the PUI's greatest successes or even how successful the program has been overall. However, there is enough quantitative and qualitative data to suggest the PUI program was at least successful in improving physical and social indicators in the Northeast (Cerdá et al. 2011), and the program has been an effective tool in attracting investment and tourism. A number of factors stand out.

In dealing with issues of scale, the PUI Northeast was a large-scale program

of small- and medium-scale interventions. This arrangement allows for a number of positive outcomes. As a large, city-wide initiative like the PUI, the program had a great deal of focus from City Hall, and was able to take advantage of institutional economies of scale in planning and implementation. It also allowed for wide public recognition, boosted through public relations campaigns, even among those residents far from any projects. As a large program, it was also able to target more communities in need of intervention.

It is also critical that the interventions themselves were on a small scale, both the zones of intervention (relatively) and the individual projects themselves. The PUI Northeast had the narrowest geographical focus of all the zones, allowing for a greater consistency of social and geographical dynamics throughout the zone. On the level of each project, the relatively small scale allows for a greater accounting of the social and physical dynamics that create its context. Small-scale means greater flexibility as the program advances—failures minimized and not repeated and successes replicated where possible. Most importantly, small-scale projects have a better capacity for citizen engagement. Communities do not have only one voice, and a smaller project means that individual input has a greater impact, which increases the likelihood that the community will have ownership over the project. It also means the project is more likely in the service of the community instead of being dominated by it. Combined, a large-scale program of small-scale interventions allows for concerted effects, in which each project benefits from the existence of the others.

Image and narrative is crucial, and not only through promotion and public relations and political campaigns. The Metrocable and the España Library Park became icons of the PUI Northeast, which the city was able to leverage in order to maintain support in the community, around the city, and across the world. The narrative of the PUI, (over)writing a new and hopeful history on top of the old, is symbolized in those two projects in particular.

BUILDING IMAGES

Utilizing the symbolic capital of images is both the PUI's great strength and its ultimate weakness. The capacity for iconic PUIs to advance less visible, yet equally important projects seems to have kept up political support and provided excitement about the program. However, over time the iconic images have come to dominate and marginalize the social and institutional goals of the PUI. The program's replacement with the current mayor's megaprojects demonstrates the

increasing ambition of the city in creating urban projects that impress foreign investors and tourists, but do less to ensure more equitable distribution of new capital. The images of equitable development do not necessarily help drive it.

The España Library Park has been demonstrated to have benefited the community in many ways—simply as a community resource, and as symbol the neighborhood takes a great deal of pride in. Yet despite the hundreds of thousands of visitors every year, many of them tourists, the surrounding barrio of Santo Domingo Savio remains one of the poorest. Yet the Library Park as a symbol of Medellín's resurgence has helped generate millions of dollars for the city and certain economic sectors not found in Santo Domingo Savio.

The political reliance on powerful images is understandable for the positive reasons mentioned previously. The mayor must use images to “sell” his vision for the city. But when the vision becomes a series of images for their own sake, the city suffers. The megaprojects underway in Medellín are not substance-less, and will likely generate many positive outcomes. However, these outcomes will not be equitably distributed and move further away from the image Medellín has projected to the world over the last decade.

BUILDING NARRATIVES

Urban narratives, although based in reality, can be consciously and constructed to fit local and global agendas. Constructed from the city's images, Medellín's urban narrative has been an effective tool to inspire its citizens and attract foreign capital. Medellín's comeback narrative has been shaped by external and internal factors. Externally, in the current epoch of globalization, certain kinds of narratives are valued over others. Specifically, narratives that demonstrate the positive effect of markets for everyone, and those that promote the values of innovation and self-reliance in generating capital. Internally, the city has aligned its agenda with global advanced capitalism and its competitive pressures. This is not to say that the narrative is false, that conditions of violence have not improved or that the PUI or subsequent projects do not benefit local marginalized communities. However, in emphasizing certain projects and indicators others and in strategically projecting certain images over others, Medellín has been able to exercise control over the narrative.

Medellín has realized the potential of exploiting the power of a compelling narrative to realize urban projects and generate growth. Cities should recognize that in constructing narratives, they have a choice in the matter, and need not

simply conform to global, elite-centric pressures. For example, for all its early twentieth century successes and late twentieth century disasters, Medellín's cultural legacy of capitalism and entrepreneurialism has proved a compelling point in its projected narrative. Social urbanism promoted this heritage while also intervening in it by stressing the importance of the rule of law and the social contract. The race for global urban competitiveness may be too engrained a policy goal to dismantle, but perhaps it is possible to use its mechanisms and dynamics to leverage more equitable development. Medellín has succeeded in this to some degree, but it has lost the self-awareness and long-term focus.

BUILDING EQUITABLE CITIES

Creating equitable, sustainable development means creating projects that balance top-down and bottom-up planning, global and local dynamics, and macro and micro scales. These paired dynamics are not binaries, but multidimensional spectrums. To do this, understanding these dynamics and how their relative strength within existing global frameworks is crucial. Today the pull of authority (top-down), globality, and the macro are stronger, and even well-balanced programs will begin to drift in those directions if political will is not sustained. If planners seek to thwart the unwanted consequences of globalization—namely, increasingly uneven development—Medellín's innovative approaches to delivering public goods equitably utilizing the symbolic capital of architecture provides both a model and cautionary tale.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF INTERNATIONAL AWARDS WON BY MEDELLÍN, 2008-2013

| Year | Award | Organization | Recipient |
|--------------------|--|---|----------------------------------|
| 2008 | Best Work of Architecture | Architecture and Urbanism Biennial VI, Portugal | Orquideorama, Botanical Gardens |
| | Best Work of Architecture | Architecture and Urbanism Biennial VI, Portugal | Parque Biblioteca España |
| | Excellence Award | Concrete Producers Association (ASOCRETO) | San Javier Library Park |
| | National Mention for Architecture, Architectural Design category | Colombian Architecture Biennale | Orquideorama, Botanical Gardens |
| | National Mention for Architecture, Architectural Design category | Colombian Architecture Biennale | Parque Biblioteca España |
| | National Mention for Architecture, Urban Design category | Colombian Architecture Biennale | San Javier Library Park |
| | National Mention for Architecture, Urban Design category | Colombian Architecture Biennale | Paseo Carabobo commercial street |
| | National Architecture Award, Land Management category | Colombian Architecture Biennale | EDU, for PUI Northeast |
| | First Prize, HOLCIM Awards | HOLCIM Foundation | EDU, for PUI Comuna 13 |
| | Honorable Mention, Urban Design category | Quito Panamerican Biennale XVI | San Javier Library Park |
| Urban Design Award | Quito Panamerican Biennale XVI | PUI Northeast | |

| Year | Award | Organization | Recipient |
|------|---|---|---|
| | Pan-American Award for Architectural Design | Quito Panamerican Biennale XVI | Parque Biblioteca España |
| | Successful Public Project | Administrative Department of Public Service | CEDEZOS |
| | Ibero-American Digital Cities Award, E-Inclusion category | AHCIET | City of Medellín |
| | Dubai International Award | UN-HABITAT | EDU, for Housing and Environmental Consolidation project at Juan Bobo Creek |
| | Successful Public Project | Administrative Department of Public Service | Fair Transparency Medellín project |
| 2009 | Santiago de Compostela Prize for Urban Cooperation | Consortium of the City of Santiago de Compostela | Bicentennial Park |
| | Second place, Ibero-American Award for Digital Cities | | Digital Medellín |
| | Access to Learning Award | Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation | Library Network Access to Knowledge |
| | Best Practices in Policies and Programmes | UNESCO, IDB, IDB Youth, OECD, OAS, et al. | “Two of the best youth programs in Latin America and the Caribbean” |
| 2010 | Santiago de Compostela Prize for Urban Cooperation | Consortium of the City of Santiago de Compostela, AECID, and the Director-General of External Relations of the European Union | EDU, for Santo de Villatina Park, PUI Comuna 8 |
| | Best Digital Initiative, Internet Awards | Internet Users Association | City of Medellín |
| | Habitat Honor Award | UN-HABITAT | Medellín Partnership Programs: Healthy Start and Quality of Life Survey |
| | Special Award | International Awards for Liveable Communities | City of Medellín |
| | Hispano-American and Ibero-American Award for Best Practices in Planning and Health | World Health Organization, American Health Organization | For programs “bridging the social, environmental, and physical vulnerability of the city, through a strategy of community involvement and responsibility for risk management” |
| 2011 | First place, Ibero-American Award for Digital Cities, Large City Category | Asociación Iberoamericana de Centros de Investigación y Empresas de Telecomunicaciones | City of Medellín |
| | Active Cities, Healthy Cities Award | Pan-American Health Organization, EMBARQ, US Centers for Disease Control | Medellín in Motion Program (INDER) |
| | Cities for Mobility Award | Red City for Mobilities, | Medellín’s mobility and transport strategies |

| Year | Award | Organization | Recipient |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| | Award for Best Local Practices with a Focus on Gender | Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) | City of Medellín |
| 2012 | IBM Smarter Cities Challenge | IBM | Medellín City Region |
| | Third Prize | AGFUND International Prize | CEDEZOS business development centers |
| | Reina Sofia Universal Accessibility Award for Latin American Municipalities | Royal Board on Disability, AECID and the Construction Activities Services Foundation. | “Other Ways to Read” project at the Fernando Gómez Martínez Library |
| | Conscience Award, Sustainable Infrastructure category | José Celestino Mutis Biosphere | Mayor of Medellín, EPM |
| | Conscience Award, Environmental Corporate Responsibility | José Celestino Mutis Biosphere | Ruta-N and the Science, Technology and Innovation in |
| 2013 | Most Innovative City in the World | Wall Street Journal, Urban Land Institute, and Citibank | City of Medellín |
| | Veronica Rudge Green Prize | Harvard GSD | EDU for PUI Northeast |

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